



Greenlife Industry Australia

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Connecting with customers through the power of marketing

Marketing means different things to different people. It's a broad discipline which can mean everything from big TV commercials, to search engine optimisation. But one nursery marketer has a much simpler definition: customer relationships.

For Carole Fudge, sales and marketing manager at Benara Nurseries, her role as the marketing lead is simple, bringing customers closer to the business and closer to green life.

Benara Nurseries is a large production business based north of Perth in Western Australia. It's one of the leading suppliers of plants in the state, with over 300 acres under production across 500 acres of property.

Benara operates under a dual business model targeting both the retail and landscape markets, which means their customers could be anyone from a small shop looking to buy and sell some plants, right up to major urban renewal project managers. But according to Carole this does not change the fundamental principles of her role as a marketer.

"We've been able to successfully grow our business by simply listening to our customers, getting out there and meeting them and working with them to deliver a product and service that meets their needs," Ms Fudge said.

"Whether it's myself or our sales teams attending landscape events or garden expos, or making the time to visit our customers' sites, marketing doesn't have to be all about spreadsheets and textbooks. Customer connections will always be paramount."

But in order to have productive conversations with customers, nurseries need to be able to talk about more than just their products. This is where the marketing levy comes in.

Plant life Balance and *Greener Spaces Better Places* are two initiatives funded through Hort Innovation using the nursery marketing levy, which provide Benara Nurseries with the research and information to help them have impactful conversations that often leads to greater sales.

Plant Life Balance is a consumer facing campaign which aims to educate the Australian community about the value of plants, and to promote the establishment of greenlife into homes, businesses and communities. Although the content produced is primarily consumer facing, according to Carole Fudge, they are still useful assets for wholesale nurseries.

"We use the assets created under *Plant Life Balance* to have different conversations with our retail customers. For example, the latest *Plant Life Balance Trend Report* identifies the different ways people are buying plants, which might not always be at your traditional garden centre or nursery. Knowing this we can adapt our marketing strategies by targeting new customer segments we might not have thought of previously."

The *Greener Spaces Better Places* marketing initiative is targeted more towards key customer segments including local councils, developers, landscapers and planners. This national program aims to encourage greater collaboration between these stakeholders to increase greenlife in Australian cities and towns, and help them understand the positive impact that greenlife has on the urban environment. In particular, it investigates and reports on how plants mitigate the urban heat island effect, improve air quality and promote healthy living in our towns and cities.

Ms Fudge says the positive impact that *Greener Spaces Better Places* is having is clearly evident when driving around the City of Perth.

"Our industry is changing the way our councils make planning decisions through outcomes of the marketing levy. Developers, Ministers and Councilors are increasingly engaged in the content and like to see greenspace becoming a more prominent reality in our cities and towns. Five years ago you would notice councils lining streets with trees every 100m, now we are seeing trees being put in every 20m."

According to the nursery's managing director, Gavin James, the most important channel to reach an audience for Benara Nurseries are its own people.

"We put a big emphasis on arming our sales staff with the information they need to have the right conversations with customers. An educated



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salesperson is a very powerful tool. The content that comes out of the marketing levy not only helps shape our own business strategy, but also helps us better understand our customers so we can work with them on theirs," Mr James said.

"There's no doubt that it is improving our sales all the while painting a powerful picture for our industry."

Benara Nurseries often share *Plant Life Balance* and *Greener Spaces Better Places* content through their own communication channels, receiving positive feedback from retailers, landscapers and developers.

Benara Nurseries has a mission statement to 'Grow for a Greener Community' and by focusing its marketing efforts on delivering research-based, impactful information, it ensures that not only the bottom line of the business improves but that we are seeing more greenspace in our urban communities.

For more information on Plant Life Balance or to download the Trend Report visit:
<https://myplantlifebalance.com.au/>

For more information on Greener Places Better Spaces and how to get involved, visit:
<https://www.greenerspacesbetterplaces.com.au/>

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For more on how Benara Nurseries is utilising both Greener Spaces Better Places and Plant Life Balance to drive genuine business benefits, check out this video [here](#).



Carole Fudge, sales and marketing manager, Benara Nurseries.

**Hort
Innovation**
Strategic levy investment

**NURSERY
FUND**

This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the nursery research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the fund and strategic levy investment visit horticulture.com.au