



Market Knowledge

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Attention Marketers: The Irrigation Association has declared July as Smart Irrigation Month!

You've no doubt seen commercials for fire extinguishers and smoke detectors during National Fire Prevention Month. So as a savvy marketer you've made the connection. Smart Irrigation Month is not only a positive way for the industry to share the good news about efficient irrigation; it is also a good way for you to boost your sales.

With July being right around the corner, now is the time for you to plan how to promote Smart Irrigation Month in your marketing program. Here are some ideas:

First, you need to educate yourself on the products and related services that you can offer to your clients. Many new items have been introduced recently to make irrigation systems more efficient. To name a few: ET-based controllers monitor on-site weather conditions and create watering schedules that precisely apply only the water needed so there's no waste. Innovations in rain, wind and freeze sensors, including new wireless models, make it easy to retrofit these inexpensive, water-saving devices to any system. New pressure-regulating valves and sprinklers reduce fogging and water loss to wind.

Make certain you are able to articulate the benefits of these products when you are selling them to your customers. For example, ask the manufacturer for the payback analysis on the pressure-regulated sprays or ET-controller. Prove to your customer that these products will save money while maintaining a healthy landscape. Many of the products, particularly rain sensors, will pay back their installation cost in just one season.

Second, engage your customers to learn about water efficiency through your communication efforts. Traditional tools like monthly newsletters, invoice stuffers and leave-behind flyers can work wonders to inform and educate your clients. Describe the benefits and the payoff. Remind customers of the growing trend toward these water-savers becoming commonplace on all systems (they're already mandatory in many states) and how they can immediately implement these savings by calling you. Make your communications more official by including the handy list of smart watering tips for homeowners prepared by the Irrigation Association. (available for download on their web site at www.smartirrigation.org)

Third, get creative by offering special programs. One contractor plans to offer a "10 point irrigation system check-up" during Smart Irrigation Month. For a modest fee, one of his service technicians will go to the customer's home and check the system for correct operation and maximum water efficiency. His techs will be looking for things like a correct schedule in the controller matched to the sprinkler application rates, adjustment of the heads, clogged nozzles, and more. The technician will provide the customer with a one-page system check-up summary that includes options and pricing



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for any corrective actions or improvements that can be made to the system for increased efficiency. You can bet he will be selling lots of pressure regulators and sensor stations this summer. And his customers will be enjoying lower water bills for years to come.

Smart Irrigation Month isn't just another industry hype on your calendar. It's an opportunity for you to promote water-saving products and practices to your clients. You will be doing yourself a favor while boosting the professionalism in our industry for all of us.

About the Author:

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