

What it takes for green businesses to advertise online

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The green industry in the United States is comprised of production and wholesale nurseries and wholesale/retail distribution centers, as well as related marketing interests. While the green industry traditionally has been among the fastest growing business sectors in the U.S. national economy, recently some of its segments have become stagnant or have declined in economic health.

There is substantial evidence that marketing efforts, in all [business](#) sectors, deter the decline to a significant extent, and [online advertising](#) is viewed as another dimension for businesses trying to reach more [potential customers](#) for a low to moderate investment.

Technology-based marketing has become a much more advantageous avenue for products and services to reach customers—not bound to their area, state, region, or even to their country.

Even with overwhelming amount of anecdotal benefits within view, not every business makes the jump into the realm of social media and other forms of online advertising.

Researchers Ariana Torres, Susan Barton, and Bridget Behe initiated a study from a national survey of plant producers and retailers to investigate the business and managerial characteristics that influence the decision to adopt online strategies among green [industry](#) firms.

The results of this investigation are published in the article "Evaluating

the Business and Owner Characteristics Influencing the Adoption of Online Advertising Strategies in the Green Industry" as found in the open-access journal *HortTechnology*, published by The American Society for Horticultural Science.

The internet has facilitated the growth of online advertising over the past decade, and online advertising has moved from being a peripheral to a central advertising medium because of its unique targeting capabilities. Yet, green industry firms struggle to integrate online advertising into their existing advertising strategy.

To many running green-related businesses, there is some reluctance in stepping forward into communicating with potential customers through computer-oriented or technology-based [business models](#). More than 70% of US farms have internet access, but less than 50% of them use the internet for farm business. Acquiring a computer is the first step to modernizing the [advertising strategy](#).

Torres further states, "Online advertising seems to help green industry business to overcome geographical isolation by drawing customers from wider geographic range. This is especially true for smaller firms and firms selling directly to customers."

To delve into the characteristics of green industry business owners who advance their businesses with the use of online advertising, the researchers considered two factors: 1) those influencing investing in online advertising at all, and 2) those influencing the amount invested in online advertising. The researchers were interested in understanding how managerial decisions regarding [market](#) diversification may affect online advertising adoption.

Businesses in markets facing maturity have seen the return on investment that advertising can bring, and green industry firms are no

exception. Although most promotion and advertising is effective for green industry businesses, online advertising seems to have the most impact businesses with smaller sales, but most business owners perceived that online marketing efforts were either somewhat or very successful.

Torres adds, "While smaller businesses tend to be more reluctant to engage in online advertising—maybe due to the lack of marketing resources and technology knowledge—once they invest in it, they dedicate a larger percentage of advertising to online methods than do larger businesses. This finding suggests the need for education programs that help green industry businesses integrate online advertising to daily operations to break the initial barrier of adopting this type of marketing."

The findings in this article can help any green industry business, or any other type of business for that matter, understand the two-step nature of the decision to invest in online [advertising](#): 1) whether to take that step at all, and 2) how much to invest.

More information: Ariana P. Torres et al, Evaluating the Business and Owner Characteristics Influencing the Adoption of Online Advertising Strategies in the Green Industry, *HortTechnology* (2019). [DOI: 10.21273/HORTTECH04274-19](#)

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