



COMMENTARY

So, you want to sell to Home Depot? Get in line.

BY KEN CLARK

In his book, “The Truths, Myths & Secrets of Marketing Products in the Lawn & Garden Industry,” author Rick Pontz looks at a variety of aspects of the lawn and garden market in specific, and the retail industry in general.

In Chapter 27, Pontz, the founder of the Lawn & Garden Performance Group, explains the dangers of product infringement and the difficulties of patent law. It’s titled: “Patent Insurance, Is It Worth It? (Short answer: probably.)”

Elsewhere, he enumerates “18 ways to shamelessly promote yourself.” (No. 4, write one thank-you letter a day.)

In another chapter, the author takes the reader through the process of deciding when to continue or discontinue a product line. Here’s a bit of inside information to consider: it usually takes three to four years for a lawn and garden product to become profitable, Pontz writes.

Full disclosure: Pontz is an official “friend of Home Channel News” and contributes to HCN’s new Outdoor Living Digest ([Click here.](#))

The chapter that’s likely to be of most interest to readers of Big Orange Report is Chapter 3:

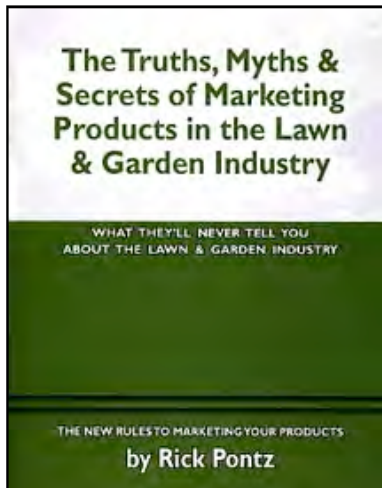
“How to sell your products to the Home Depot!”

Unlike most how-to books, Pontz’s first piece of advice is actionable, quantifiable and — best of all — easy. Here’s rule No. 1: “Go to <https://supplier-center.homedepot.com/wps/portal>, and do what the site tells you to do.”

Got it? Good. Of course, that’s just the first step. Steps two, three and four, according to Pontz, force the reader to look hard into a mirror and examine his business in detail. There are three questions the potential supplier must ask himself: Do you understand what the world’s largest home improvement retailer expects from you? Do you really want to sell to Home Depot? And finally, can you really pull it off?

Home Depot is a very large organization that has neither the time, interest, nor ability to adjust its business to match the idiosyncrasies of individual vendors. “They expect vendors to comply with [the retailers’] needs and requirements.”

So, if you want to sell to Home Depot, get in line with the retailer’s communications requirements, inventory control require-



In general nuts and bolts categories, Menear expressed interest in products that have an innovative technology story. On the decor side, he pointed to improved design, or improved functionality, or a combination of both, as keys to entry.

“Are there game changers, are there things that can help

make the category simpler for the customer to buy or for associates to sell, and bring more value to the customer?” Menear asked.

Then he answered: “There’s no question, all you have to do is look at retail space today, and you’ll see how important value is to the consumer.” Menear made clear the chain is looking for products that tell a greater value message.

“And value isn’t just price,” he said. “It can be a combination of what you get from a feature-benefit standpoint, to what you pay, to a simplification of the purchase process. That all adds up to value.”

According to Pontz’s count, there are more than 8,000 companies that are doing business with Home Depot. Get in line, then provide value, then communicate your business in a language the retailer can understand. It’s easier said than done. ■

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Home Channel News’

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