

PRSA Silver Anvil – Troy-Bilt Fence Talks Influencer Program

Category: Influencer Marketing Program to Expand Awareness

SUMMARY:

As a leading manufacturer of outdoor power and lawn care equipment, Troy-Bilt is on a mission to make yardwork less of a chore by being a helpful partner in the yard. One way the brand does that is through influencer-partnered content. Research revealed a serious need for content addressing common lawn and garden challenges, so Fence Talks launched in 2020 to meet that need. Influencers paired up to answer typical yard questions driven by seasonality and social listening insights, creating high engagement and building brand awareness during peak gardening season. Building initially on the lockdown-driven interest in outdoor projects, the program has continued through 2021 and has shown measurable increases in brand awareness, preference and perceptions of Troy-Bilt as helpful.

INSIGHTS AND ANALYSIS:

When planning for Troy-Bilt's 2020 influencer program, we took a closer look at insights from 2019 and past influencer activations to better understand what the audience is looking for from influencers:

- Social media scans showed that traditional before-and-after type content was being overdone.
- Previous influencer activations proved that expanding collaborators outside of traditional gardening experts and tapping into new categories broadened brand reach.
- Social listening research revealed there was an appetite for mistake-driven, nontraditional content as consumers found these topics relatable.

We took it a step further with social listening to really understand what conversations homeowners were having about their yards and how they were feeling. Research showed there were nearly 215,000 organic conversations in 2019, with 70% of them being negative and 47% categorized as "pure anger." People were having a ton of trouble and issues with yardwork and weren't finding time outdoors to be enjoyable.

PLANNING:

Our insights and analysis left us with a big problem to solve: How do we help homeowners actually enjoy yardwork?

Objective: Leverage yard-related experts to curate helpful, valuable partnered content and digital experiences by solving common yard pain points that interrupt enjoyment outdoors by:

- Increasing positive sentiment around partnered influencer content, which had tracked at 28% in 2019.
- Establishing and building relationships with new influencer partners to expand brand reach.
- Increasing potential influencer impressions from the 3.9MM achieved in 2019.
- Assessing changes in perceptions of Troy-Bilt as a helpful brand, which was measured through survey data.

Audience: Millennial "Do It with Me" Homeowners. Brand audience research revealed that Millennial homeowners approached home, yard and garden projects differently than previous generations. This generation searches for help on social media, with 56% of Millennials turning to how-to videos for knowledge and tips.

Strategy: Influencers from different backgrounds come together to solve common pain points in the yard, combining their expertise to provide inspiration and actionable how-to's. Each season, topics that speak directly to the challenges people are facing are identified to create relatable and seasonally relevant social content. Topics from pet damage to neighbor issues to organizing the garage or shed were identified through social listening insights. Influencers could then bring the brand promise of helpfulness to life in addressing these issues.

EXECUTION:

Social listening research helped identify common complaints that were top of mind for consumers. The Fence Talks program partnered with influencers from different backgrounds to provide helpful content that guides consumers to overcome these obstacles and get to yard happiness, ultimately increasing their yard chore enjoyment. For example, for a topic focused on resolving neighbor issues, Troy-Bilt partnered with a DIY influencer and a therapist expert to share tips on how to approach this pain point.

The campaign initially kicked off in June 2020 with four topics highlighted. Because of the success of the initial activation, the Fence Talks program has continued each season through spring and summer of 2021. Fence Talks topics have included:

- [Resolving neighbor issues](#)
- [Controlling weeds and pests](#)
- [Fixing pet damage](#)
- [Identifying and selecting plants](#)
- [Saving plants from winter](#)
- [Building a winter patio](#)
- [Organizing outdoor storage](#)
- [Working together with neighbors to create shared spaces](#)

Influencers collaborated with other experts to create a variety of content such as blogs, YouTube videos, social feed and Stories to share snackable, tutorial-like content that addresses their Fence Talks topic.

Influencers also helped promote an online survey that was used to measure changes in perception as a result of being exposed to influencer content through the Fence Talks program. The survey was distributed in both 2020 and 2021 to measure year-over-year changes in Troy-Bilt's distinctiveness as a helpful brand and evaluate perceptions among its competitors.

EVALUATION:

Key Findings: Even though the program was planned before the pandemic, we found that because people were spending more time at home and in their yards, outdoor tip content was more relevant and timely than ever before. Consumers found Fence Talks topics extremely relatable. Because of its success, Fence Talks has continued with new seasonal topics through summer 2021. Within the first year, influencers have:

- Generated 372 pieces of influencer-curated content.
- Created content with comment analysis that showed 45% positive sentiment during the spring/summer 2020 Fence Talks program, increasing from the 28% benchmark from the 2019 influencer program.
- Earned 567.4K total engagements.
- Averaged a 12% boost in Troy-Bilt awareness among influencers' followers.
- Earned a higher brand score on "helpfulness" in comparison to competitive brands.
- Garnered 15.36MM total potential impressions.
- Garnered 9K landing page visits.