

Friends of the High Line



Spring Cutback Campaign Ideas

Kristen Byers

www.kristenbyers.net

Project Background

In keeping with planting designer Piet Oudolf's appreciation for a landscape's seasonal variation, High Line plants are not trimmed back at the onset of cold weather, as is typical in many gardens. Instead, the wild grasses, plant stalks, and dried seed heads define the park's winter landscape.

That means the High Line Gardeners must work quickly in the late winter to cut back the plants to make way for new growing season. The process is called Spring Cutback, and it is a monumental task, the biggest horticultural initiative of the year at the High Line, and it requires the hard work of our entire horticulture staff and hundreds of volunteers over several weeks.

Goal: use digital communications to make Spring Cutback awesome.

Process

Conversation

First, I spoke with my husband, who has a background in horticulture. I asked him to explain the cutback process so I could get a better idea of what is involved and why it might be beneficial for the park and its plant life. I also bounced a few initial ideas off him to see how he responded as an agricultural professional.

Exploration/Analysis

To begin tackling this project, I started by exploring the links provided. I wanted to get a sense of what had already been done to promote Spring Cutback in the past. I took a spin around the High Line's blog and Flickr pool. I also looked at social media platforms where the High Line maintains a presence. I analyzed which web and social media outlets were the most active; perhaps these platforms are the ones where the High Line experienced the most success last year.

Brainstorming

I started brainstorming ideas about how these platforms could be better used to promote Spring Cutback. I chose to focus the majority of my efforts on platforms where the High Line isn't particularly active so as to expand the park's online reach. I have outlined some of my ideas below.

Web & Social Media Initiatives

Infographic

First and foremost, I would suggest designing an illustrated infographic that explains what Spring Cutback is, how it is unique to the High Line, and what it does for the park's plant life. To the average person who doesn't know a lot about horticulture, the term "cutback" sounds like it might have a negative connotation; we need to outline the cutback process and show potential visitors/volunteers that this initiative actually promotes new plant growth.

The infographic should be posted to the web as an image so that it can be shared on the High Line blog as well as Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms.

Pinterest Campaign

An example of a brand that has a great Pinterest strategy is [Allens Boots](#) of Austin, TX. They selected a Pinterest handle that is great for SEO (pinterest.com/cowboyboots). Of course, they have several boards and many pins dedicated to their products (cowboy boots and western clothing). However, their products are often presented in interesting ways. For example, instead of just showing stock photos of their boots, Allens Boots has a pinboard dedicated to outfits that match each of their boot styles. I think that they key to the success of Allen Boots on Pinterest is their ability to engage their audience in ways that go beyond promoting their products. They also have pinboards dedicated to country living and style, particular colors, and Austin small businesses.

I would suggest that the High Line launch a Pinterest initiative with several Pinterest boards to help promote Spring Cutback: these pinboards could focus on topics including New York City, spring, and the color green.

Sample pinboard: [I Love New York](#)

Sample pinboard: [Green With Envy](#)

There are already lots of beautiful photos in the High Line Flickr pool that could be pinned to various Pinterest pinboards. This would bring more exposure to the photographers who participate in the Flickr pool while also promoting the High Line. The "Plant of the Week" posts from the High Line blog could easily be repurposed into a pinboard. In fact, going forward we should make sure that all blog posts contain at least one "pinnable" image.

The High Line would have to tread carefully in the Pinterest landscape, making sure to actively engage users and not merely using the platform to self-promote. While the High Line is awesome and certainly worth promoting, our Pinterest campaign should embody the spirit of the Pinterest community. We should actively follow and repin other Pinterest users (especially those who live in New York City).

Many Pinterest users create season-focused pinboards, so the couple months leading up to spring would be a perfect time to sneak in some pins related to Spring Cutback.

Instagram Contest

Internet users love a good contest, especially ones with low barriers to entry. Assuming the High Line can put together a few enticing prizes for the winners, I would suggest running a contest on Instagram to help promote Spring Cutback.

A sample Instagram contest might instruct users to do the following:

- Follow @highlinenyc on Instagram
- Post a photo you took at the High Line; tag @highlinenyc and use the hashtag #springcutback

The Instagram contest could include ways for users to earn multiple entries. For example, a participant may earn additional entries for each of the following actions:

- Include a friend in your photo and tag your friend
- “Like” the High Line on Facebook
- Follow @highlinenyc on Twitter

Of course, the Instagram contest could be promoted through other web and social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, the High Line blog, etc.).