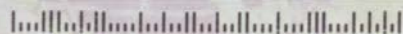


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December 1999



Keeping the Vision The Morrell Group

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Keeping the Vision

George Morrell had a vision of what a landscape company should be, and this Atlanta-based company is the product of 11 years of work toward that vision. **10**

Mower Maintenance

Recurring maintenance service is the hub around which The Morrell Group operates. **20**

The Landscape Group

While landscape construction work may not be profitable for the company right now, it gets the ball rolling for the entire operation. **32**

Add Ons Add Up

Maximizing the value and profitability of add-on services is the key to The Morrell Group's success. .. **44**

Human Resources

Managing personnel issues at The Morrell Group is primarily a two-person, two-language effort. **54**

90
Advertisers' Index

6
Calendar

85
Classifieds

4
Editor's Focus

departments

On the Right Track

Perfecting company business forms and keeping them in order can make a world of difference when it comes to delivering profit and customer satisfaction. **67**

1999 Article Index

A look back at the news and issues covered throughout the past 12 months. **78**

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Editor's Notes

The Joy of Seeing a Vision

"When a decision has to be made, make it.

There is no totally right time for

anything." – Jack Welch

If you're looking to learn what it means to have a "corporate vision," then visit with The Morrell Group in Atlanta, Ga., because this is an organization that has made its vision the driving force throughout the company.

A company's vision is commonly thought of as a document hanging on a wall by the front door or gracing the first page of the employee handbook. Neither of these methods of display are guaranteed to make a vision statement mean something to employees, however. After all, any sign hung on a wall or any words on the cover of an employee manual can be easily ignored, and they will likely be ignored unless the business is run in such a way that those words are reinforced on a daily basis.

Clearly, that is the case at The Morrell Group.

Before I went to Atlanta to meet with George Morrell and his employees, the company had sent me background information, marketing pieces and other informative materials. In one newsletter, Morrell wrote, "It seemed to me that a landscape management company should be capable of providing for its customers needs in every discipline pertaining to the landscape."

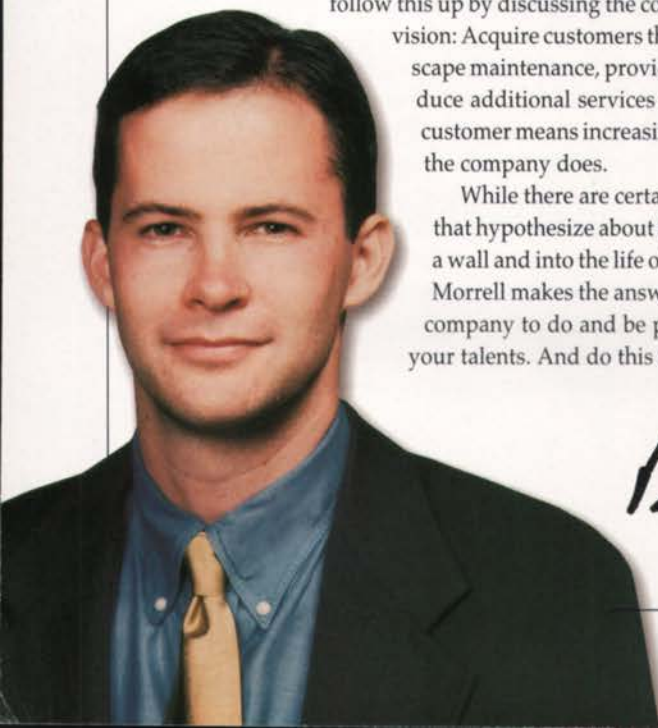
Obviously, developing into a full-service organization isn't a revolutionary concept. But what is unique about this concept at The Morrell Group is how thoroughly his vision has penetrated this 150-employee organization.

Throughout my day-and-a-half visit with the company, I met with more than a dozen of his key employees representing nearly every facet of the business. At some point during each interview the employees talked about the company's focus: taking care of all of the customer's horticultural needs.

What makes this vision a success, however, is that these employees would follow this up by discussing the company's strategy for accomplishing its vision: Acquire customers through landscape installation and landscape maintenance, provide exemplary regular service and introduce additional services to the customer. And, if satisfying the customer means increasing its service offerings, then that's what the company does.

While there are certainly a number of business publications that hypothesize about how a vision gets off a piece of paper on a wall and into the life of an organization, meeting with George Morrell makes the answer obvious: Know what you want your company to do and be passionate about doing it to the best of your talents. And do this every day.

Bob West



Lawn & Landscape

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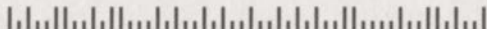
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2000

- JAN. 5-7** Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association's 2000 Great Lakes Trade Exposition, Lansing, Mich. Contact: 800/879-6652.
- JAN. 5-7** Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association Convention & Trade Show, Minneapolis, Minn. Contact: 651/633-4987.
- JAN. 5-7** Mid-Atlantic Nurserymen's Trade Show, Baltimore, Md. Contact: 800/431-0066.
- JAN. 6-8** Montana Nursery & Landscape Annual Meeting & Trade Show, Missoula, Mont. Contact: 406/721-7334.
- JAN. 9-11** Western Nursery and Landscape Association's The Big Show - Western 2000, Kansas City, Mo. Contact: 816/233-1481.
- JAN. 10-14** Advanced Landscape IPM Short Course, College Park, Md. Contact: 301/405-3913.
- JAN. 10-14** ProGreen Exposition, Denver, Colo. Contact: 303/756-8028.
- JAN. 11-13** Canada's International Horticultural Trade Show and Conference, Toronto, Ontario. Contact: 905/875-1805.
- JAN. 11-13** Eastern Pennsylvania Turf Conference & Trade Show, King of Prussia, Pa. Contact: 610/828-0253.
- JAN. 11-13** Kentucky Nursery & Landscape Association, Lexington, Ky. Contact: 502/899-3622.
- JAN. 11-14** INLA Professional Landscape and Nursery Trade Show, Indianapolis, Ind. Contact: 317/573-2848.
- JAN. 12** Professional Turf and Landscape Conference, White Plains, N.Y. Contact: 914/636-4195.
- JAN. 12** California Landscape Contractors Association Landscape & Nursery Expo, Sacramento, Calif. Contact: 800/448-2522.

- JAN. 12-15** North Carolina Green and Growin' Show, Winston-Salem, N.C. Contact: 919/266-3322.
- JAN. 12-16** Sports Turf Manager Association 11th Annual Conference, St. Louis, Mo. Contact: 800/323-3875.
- JAN. 17-20** Michigan Turfgrass Conference, Lansing, Mich. Contact: 517/321-1660.
- JAN. 18-20** Midwest Turf Expo, Indianapolis, Ind. Contact: 765/494-8039.
- JAN. 18-20** Mid-America Green Industry Council/Mid-America Green Industry Convention, Kansas City, Mo. Contact: 816/561-5323.
- JAN. 19-21** Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show, Chicago, Ill. Contact: 847/526-2010.
- JAN. 19-21** Idaho Nursery Association Horticultural Trade Show, Boise, Idaho. Contact: 800/462-4769.
- JAN. 20-21** Northern California Turf & Landscape Exposition, Santa Clara, Calif. Contact: 510/505-9600.
- JAN. 20-22** ALCA Interior Plantscape Conference/Tropical Plant Industry Exhibition, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Contact: 800/395-2522.
- JAN. 23-25** Nebraska Nursery & Landscape Association Winter Conference & Trade Show, Omaha, Neb. Contact: 816/233-1481.
- JAN. 24-26** Ohio Nursery & Landscape Association CENTS Show & Nursery Short Course, Columbus. Contact: 614/899-1195.
- JAN. 24-26** Iowa Turfgrass Institute Turfgrass Conference, Des Moines, Iowa. Contact: 800/605-0420.
- JAN. 24-28** Professional Horticulture Conference of Virginia & (continued on page 8)

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Calendar

(continued from page 6)

Trade Show, Norfolk, Va. Contact: 757/523-4734.

JAN. 26-28 Iowa Nursery and Landscape Convention and Trade Show, Des Moines, Iowa. Contact: 816/233-1481.

JAN. 27-28 Iowa Nursery & Landscape Association Annual Convention & Trade Show, Des Moines, Iowa. Contact: 816/233-1481.

JAN. 27-29 New England Grows, Boston. Contact: 508/653-3009.

JAN. 27-29 Oklahoma State Nurserymen's Association Trade Show, Tulsa, Okla. Contact: 405/942-5276.

JAN. 28-29 The Gulf States Horticultural Expo, Mobile, Ala. Contact: 334/502-7777.

FEB. 3-5 PLCAA Management Conference, Tampa, Fla. Contact: 800/458-3466.

FEB. 3-6 ANLA Management Clinic, Louisville, Ky. Contact: 202/789-2900.

FEB. 6-9 ALCA Executive Forum, Las Vegas. Contact: 800/395-2522.

FEB. 10-12 Turfgrass Producers International Midwinter Conference, San Antonio, Texas. Contact: 800/405-TURF.

FEB. 14-16 Lawn & Landscape School of Management, Dallas, Texas. Contact: 800/456-0707.

FEB. 14-20 Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Conference and Show, New Orleans. Contact: 800/472-7878.

FEB. 16-17 The CLCA Landscape Industry Show, Long Beach, Calif. Contact: 916/448-2522.

FEB. 16-18 Contractors of Maryland, Washington, D.C. and Virginia Winter Workshop, Bethesda, Md. Contact: 301/948-0810.

FEB. 21-25 International Erosion Control Association Conference and Trade Exposition, Palm Springs, Calif. Contact: 800/455-4322.

FEB. 23 New Jersey Landscape Trade Show & Conference, Secaucus, N.J. Contact: 201/664-6310.

MAR. 9-12 ALCA Student Career Days, Starkville, Miss. Contact: 800/395-2522.

JULY 11-16 ANLA Annual Convention, Vancouver, B.C. Contact: 202/789-2900.

JULY 24-25 PLCAA Legislative Day on the Hill, Washington, D.C. Contact: 800/458-3466.

JULY 29-31 Outdoor Power Equipment Expo, Louisville, Ky. Contact: 800/558-8767.

JULY 31-AUG. 1 Missouri Landscape & Nursery Association, Kansas City, Mo. Contact: 816/233-1481.

AUG. 4-6 Southern Nurseryman's Association conference and trade show, Atlanta. Contact: 770/953-3311.

AUG. 18-21 TAN-MISSLARK, Houston, Texas. Contact: 512/280-5182.

SEPT. 21-23 Florida Nursery & Allied Trade Show, Orlando. Contact: 407/295-2994.

SEPT. 24 Missouri Landscape & Nursery Association Field Day, New Franklin, Mo. Contact: 816/233-1481.

NOV. 4-7 Green Industry Expo, Indianapolis, Ind. Contact: 800/458-3466.

NOV. 12-14 International Irrigation Show, Phoenix, Ariz. Contact: 703/573-3551.

NOV. 14-16 Turf and Grounds Exposition, Syracuse, N.Y. Contact: 770/973-2019.



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by Bob West

Keeping the Vision The Morrell Group

George Morrell had a vision of what a landscape company should be, and this Atlanta-based company is the product of 11 years of work toward that vision.

TLandscaping wasn't always part of the plan for George Morrell, who today owns one of the largest full-service landscape companies in Atlanta, Ga., with 1999 expected revenues of \$14.3 million. Morrell did receive his master's degree in horticulture from Clemson University, but fruits and vegetables were his focus at that time.

However, the poor job market in that field led Morrell to seek other options, and one of them was landscaping. After performing landscape work around the Clemson campus for professors doing landscape design work, Morrell saw the potential within the landscape industry and took a job as a grounds manager at a resort in Connecticut.

Again, the struggling economy took its toll as the resort Morrell worked at cut back its staff, and he decided the best way to make a career out of landscaping was doing it 12 months a year, and that meant moving to the South.

"I started working for a small landscape company down here owned by Harold Bailey, who is still in business today," Morrell explained. "I really learned landscaping from him over those few years."

From there, Morrell bought into a partnership with a contractor whose personal interests focused on landscape installation and initially complemented Morrell's focus on landscape maintenance. Together, the pair formed a full-service landscape company, CLD Unlimited, which came to be known as Clark Morrell.

THE MORRELL GROUP

P.O. Box 620245
Atlanta, GA 30362
PH: 770/662-8775

EDITOR'S NOTE: There are an untold number of well-respected landscape companies across the country. These companies may be respected for the quality of service they provide, their commitment to training employees, the efficiency of their operations or any number of other parts of their operation.

When talking to contractors and industry observers about the Atlanta market, which is likely the most competitive and dynamic market for landscape services in the United States right now, one name has always come up in conversation - The Morrell Group. In fact, few companies are mentioned as regularly and with such high praise as this company is, and for that reason *Lawn & Landscape* asked George Morrell and Don Smith to let us come to Atlanta and spend time with their employees in an attempt to learn what has made this company so successful.

While The Morrell Group is unique in this industry because of its size - its \$14 million in revenues in 1998 placed the company 42nd on *Lawn & Landscape's* Top 100 list - there are still models to study and lessons to learn from throughout this company for contractors of all types and sizes.

Keeping the VISION



The company's landscape installation division and its effective employment of Hispanic individuals are two keys to the entire operation's success. Photo: Mary Buck

THE MORRELL GROUP

HEADQUARTERS: Atlanta, Ga.

FOUNDED: 1989

PRIMARY SERVICES: Landscape maintenance provides 40.8 percent of revenues, followed by installation at 20 percent, season color at 11 percent, arbor care at 10.4 percent, irrigation at 5.3 percent, lawn care at 5.25 percent and tree care at 2.25 percent.

1999 REVENUES: \$14.4 million

EMPLOYEES: The company has 160 year-round employees and typically hires 50 seasonal employees.

EQUIPMENT: The company has 68 walk-behind mowers, 15 riding mowers, 40 trimmers, 135 blowers, 75 edgers, 40 pruners, 20 chain saws, 55 hedge trimmers, 35 maintenance trucks and seven spray vehicles.

THE COMPANY

MISSION STATEMENT: Our shared vision is to be a leader in the landscape industry; a company committed to innovation, customer focus and excellence in all that we do.

FUTURE CHALLENGES: One of our greatest challenges is finding enough good people in a very tight labor market. Also, we must provide new opportunities to keep and challenge the good people we already have.

THE OWNER

GEORGE MORRELL

BACKGROUND: Received a master's degree in horticulture from Clemson University. He formed a partnership in Atlanta that became Clark Morrell. Formed his own company, The Morrell Group in 1989.

**At a
Glance**

Landscape contractors want to be full service so they are meeting as many of their customers' needs as possible, but the challenge is offering a multitude of services without losing your focus.

For example, if you expand into seasonal color services, should the employees that mow the properties also maintain the beds? If you say yes and cross-train the employees, then you run the risk of minimizing these employees' ability to become experts on one, focused area of work. If you say no and have dedicated employees for each service, then you incur extra costs by having two sets of employees driving out to the same property for service calls.

The Morrell Group, Atlanta, Ga., offers five add-on services in addition to landscape maintenance. Each of these groups is set up to operate as an independent profit group within the organization with its own employees, its own budgets, its own organizational structure and its own equipment.

"We separated each of our services out so we can look at them and see how they're performing," noted George Morrell, chief executive officer. "Breaking them out like this was the idea from day one."

And the benefits of this specialization are realized in the quality of service delivered.

"In some companies, seasonal color is handled by mowing crews after they've cut the grass or they work over the weekends to get the annuals and perennials installed," observed Charles Tankersley, director of the landscape/design group. "Our seasonal color work is handled by people who do nothing but seasonal color 12 months a year."

The company has followed the same steps when putting a new group together.

"We're a pretty conservative group, so we start any new group with one person, and we take that person and we orient him first to our company," Morrell explained. "That happens before this person even meets any of our customers. This person has to be familiar with our company, our culture, the other managers, who our customers are, how we do business, where the customers are and what their expectations are before they are ready to meet customers."

"Then we send this person out to start meeting with the customers and telling them about our new service," Morrell

continued. "Once everyone is comfortable, the new group manager is charged with making the capital expenditures to get the equipment and hiring the people he wants for his division. For example, our arbor care manager designed the truck that he wanted and hired the people he wanted."

"Now, it's his group to run," Morrell added.

"Once we sit down and go over the numbers with our managers, we empower them to run their book of business and as long as they maintain the right vision and remember that the customer is most important, George and I stay out of their way," explained Don Smith, president. "We go over their performance numbers every month, the managers do their own projections and they decide on their own capital expenditures."

"Basically, every group is like its own business," Smith noted.

The other management challenge associated with having multiple groups is instilling an overarching the-company-comes-before-the-group attitude in the employees of different groups.

"We have to continually work at getting the groups to work as 'we' instead of the seasonal color group vs. the landscape group vs. the tech services group and so on," recognized Smith.

"Some companies send out crews to do everything on a job from mowing to fertilization to pulling weeds, but we specialize our crews," he continued. "Sometimes, maybe we specialize too much, but we like to have experts in each group who know their job because that is all they do. The seasonal color folks do seasonal color, and maintenance does maintenance."

"Where there can be a problem is if a maintenance employee sees a weed in a flower bed but doesn't pull the weed because he thinks beds are only for the seasonal color people," Smith noted. "Those issues are worked out by training the groups to understand that whenever a customer sees one of our orange shirts on a job, that customer doesn't care what group that employee is in. If there is a problem, the employee should fix it."

"Getting the groups to work well together really starts in my office and goes through Don's office and all the way down through the organization," added Morrell. "How do you filter that process down? There are a lot of subtle ways - you don't create a competitive atmosphere. Instead, create an atmosphere of harmony and cooperation and continually discuss the benefits of having the groups support each other in meetings with the managers."

"Everything around here is about 'we,' and employees will simply not be allowed to have a bad attitude about another group," Morrell continued. "We have to be team players to make ourselves as strong as possible."

- Bob West

Setting Up Groups

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Over the course of their 14 years together, the company grew to handle about \$6 million in annual sales, but, ultimately, the two men's preferences for installation vs. maintenance work led them to split the company. Morrell ended up with about \$3.5 million of commercial maintenance work, which served as the base for The Morrell Group, founded in 1989.

STARTING FRESH (AND BIG). Not many landscape companies already have \$3.5 million worth of contracts to service on their first day in business, but that was the case for The Morrell Group. Having this solid base of work gave Morrell the opportunity to build a company to suit his vision of the ideal landscape company.

"My vision was always to build a company around a central customer to do business with, and we would take that customer and see what he or she needed in terms of horticultural services," Morrell explained.

"Then we would build the company around the horticultural needs of that customer."

Today, the company's operations remain centered around its core mowing maintenance services, and that's exactly the way Morrell wants it.

"As we went along and the market grew and became more sophisticated, we had a landscape installation group that we started up, but we've always wanted to keep everything centered around mowing," Morrell noted. "Then we can add-on services to support that core mowing maintenance service."

Subsequently, the company has added lawn care services, which it refers to as tech services, irrigation, seasonal color and arbor care to go along with landscape installation as add-on groups around the maintenance core of the business. And each of the services operates as its own profit center within the company. (See sidebar, Setting Up Groups, page 12)

"We started with seasonal color, and we

separated this work from the maintenance group as soon as we had enough work to justify doing so," Morrell explained. "Once we got that group up and running, irrigation was our next addition because our customers have irrigation systems and we had been subcontracting out the work.

"From there, we looked at our customers' properties and there was a need for arbor care," Morrell continued. "We had been subcontracting that work as well, but I knew that at some point we needed to offer this service ourselves, so we started an arbor care group two years ago.

"So we continue to evolve the business around a core customer base and adding different services that meet the needs of that customer base," he concluded.

As the company added these additional services, overall sales continued to grow as well. And the Atlanta market changed significantly in the early 1990s when the city

(continued on page 18)

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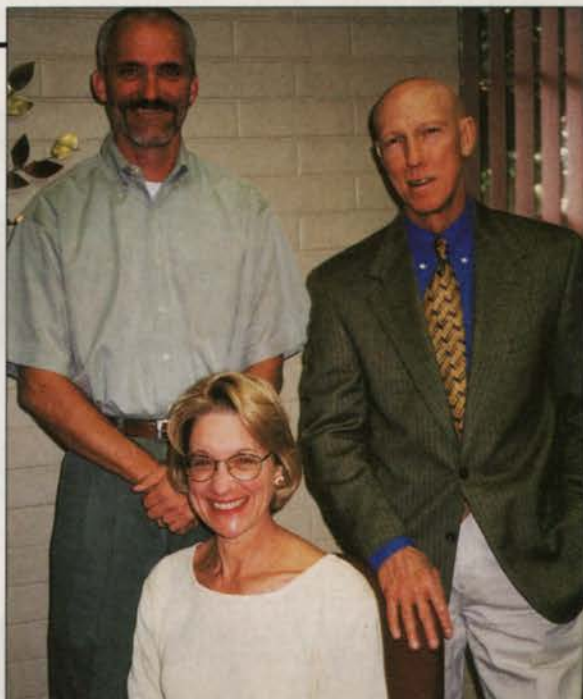
(continued from page 15)

learned it was going to host the 1996 Olympic Games and a tremendous amount of dollars were spent by the government and various corporations to prepare the city for the arrival of thousands of athletes and tens of thousands of visitors.

In addition, the Olympics also brought a number of new landscape companies to town as they looked to capitalize on all of the work being done. Morrell said that the current price for maintenance services are still below the level of the early 1990s.

"Competition here has become so intense, and we saw a lot of national landscape companies show up in Atlanta with a lot of resources, people and experience," Morrell recalled. "Having these companies in our market has been our biggest challenge because they all came to town and immediately started knocking on our customers' doors. None of these companies had established a local reputation yet, so all they could offer was a lower price, and they kept going lower until they

Don Smith (left),
George Morrell (right)
and Gail Havron
(center) comprise the
company's management
team. Photo:
The Morrell Group



attracted customers, which meant cutting costs 8 to 12 percent. That meant we had to come down in pricing as well in order to keep our customers, and the prices haven't started going back up again since then."

This competitive pricing placed greater priority on the importance of the company's various add-on services to drive profitability.

"Mowing maintenance is not a good profit center for us right now and neither is our

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landscape installation group," Morrell noted. "We look for our mowing group to retain the customer by providing a quality service each week, and then we'll have the opportunity to provide the more profitable irrigation service, tech services, seasonal color, arbor care or any other services we offer."

Currently, the various add-on services—irrigation, arbor care, tech services and seasonal color—account for 34 percent of the company's overall sales, which is enough to please the management and provide continued strength and market advantage for the company.

"We would like to see some more growth in our arbor care group, but that's our newest group, so we expect it to be a little behind at this point," noted Don Smith, president.

"Because of the competition, we're going to continue developing our custom, add-on services where we can add value to our service and be able to negotiate our work, as opposed to just mowing the grass, planting a shrub or laying sod for the lowest cost," commented Morrell.

MAKING FRIENDS. In addition to focusing on diversifying its service offerings, The Morrell Group has benefited from its ability to develop mutually beneficial relationships with key property managers, landscape architects and general contractors.

"Another challenge for us in the last few years was the rapid consolidation of the REITs (real estate investment trusts)," explained Smith. "We had built strong relationships with a lot of property managers who were gone all of a sudden, and now that property was usually being handled by a national or regional property management company that had a relationship with one of the national landscape companies.

"These national landscape companies could bid jobs lower than we could because they could handle a broader range of properties for the client," Smith continued. "We lost one property by \$30,000 and we weren't even making \$30,000 on that job."

Smith noted that the pace of REIT consolidation seems to have slowed, and The Morrell Group feels somewhat less threatened by the possibility of losing jobs to its national competitors today.

"I think our customers are starting to realize the importance of looking for value in a contractor," Smith explained. "Contractors have to work on educating the customer, and this is something that we can do because our product is so visual and we can even touch it. But to truly educate the customer you first have to find out what they are looking for from a service provider. What is important to them? Price? If so, do they understand what the actual costs are to maintain a landscape? Yes, some companies can do the same job for less than other companies because of economies of scale, but they can't beat someone on a bid by 15 percent or 20 percent and deliver the same level of service the client is accustomed to."

Such relationships can prove invaluable to the landscape group as well.

"Relationships are best built through recurrent business," noted Charles Tankersley, director of the landscape/design group. "General contractors often specialize in a certain type of work, and that allows the opportunity to really get to know these companies and work with them often."

(continued on page 67)

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Turfco Manufacturing Inc., based in Minneapolis, has announced a new direct purchase program for its lawn care products line. The new program will be available to landscapers and lawn care firms involved in commercial turf maintenance.

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"This new program was developed after very deliberate and careful market analysis," said George Kinkead, Turfco President. "The fast pace of product development and improvements makes it imperative that new products be made available to end users as rapidly as possible. For example, Turfco has introduced 12 new products to the market just in the past seven years. Yet, the "main-line" dealer operations focus most of their efforts on their primary product lines, so renovation and specialty products tend to get lost in the shuffle."

Kinkead says offering both products and replacement parts directly to customers will shorten their turn-around time for getting new equipment into operation, as well as getting machines back to work quicker. "Our product designs now make it possible for equipment owners and operators to make most repairs and adjustments right in the field, using regular hand tools."

Kinkead continued "Our turn-around time will be shorter and our factory will be more responsive. The company's golf course products will continue to be marketed through our existing distribution channels."

The new "Turfco Direct" phone number is (800) 679-8201. Fax requests and orders can be sent to (612) 785-0556, mailed to Turfco Manufacturing, Inc., 1655 101st Ave. N.E., Minneapolis, MN 55449-4420 or e-mailed to sales@turfco.com. For fast, immediate savings, visit the company's website at www.turfco.com.



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by Bob West

Keeping the Vision The Morrell Group

Recurring maintenance service is the hub around which The Morrell Group operates.

M

Most landscape companies' success is directly dependent on their success with mowing maintenance services.

Lawn mowing is by far the most commonly offered service among contractors, and the ease of offering mowing services is what draws many people into this industry.

But how many people can watch their profit margins in maintenance services slide in the face of intensifying competition and still use these services as the vehicle for growing the company?

The Morrell Group, Atlanta, Ga., has been able to do just that. Maintenance services represent 40.8 percent of the company's over-



all revenues each year, but those dollars aren't necessarily the most important contribution that the maintenance group makes to the company each year.

Because the competition has forced maintenance margins down so low and the company's landscape installation work typically comes from low-margin bid work, the key to profitability at The Morrell Group is the company's myriad add-on services, such as seasonal color, irrigation and arbor care.

"Our maintenance group is not a good profit center for us right now," recognized

(continued on page 22)

The regional maintenance manager monitors direct vs. indirect time to maximize employee productivity.

Photo: Mary Buck

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Keeping the Vision

(continued from page 20)

George Morrell, chief executive officer. "We use this group to take care of our customers' needs in such a fashion that we're then able to get our other groups on to the property."

A REGIONAL APPROACH. The company has about 250 maintenance customers,

and the management of these accounts is divided up geographically among four regional maintenance managers.

"Customer service is our primary responsibility," noted Kirk Talgo, one of the regional managers. "We are the point of contact for our customers, and every one of our

other groups' work travels through us. We either generate a work order for a job or we fill out a customer request that the other groups use. We're then responsible for coordinating the completion of the job among our crews, the group that is performing the work and the customer."

"When we do our regular quality inspections, we look for opportunities to generate revenue for other spokes in the wheel," explained Brad Catanach, one of the regional managers. "We look at everything on the property – do the flower beds have good preparation as far as elevation? Should we change the bed design? Are there potential irrigation or arbor care upgrades?"

Even though the regional managers aren't part of the tech services group or any of the other add-on service groups the company offers, the regional managers' overall responsibility for the property and retaining the customer mean they approve any work done on one of their properties by the other groups. This check-and-balance system not only requires a cooperative work environment, but also demands that employees from all of the different groups constantly put the company's interests ahead of their own group's. (see sidebar, Setting Up Groups, page 12)

The organizational structure within the maintenance group includes nine operations managers who are typically responsible for the daily activity of three or four crews and an average of 45 to 75 properties generating \$1.75 million to \$3 million.

Just as Morrell and Don Smith, president, give the regional managers a great deal of independence to manage their own areas, the regional managers empower their operations managers with labor budgets and the responsibility to meet them.

"Crew productivity is so important, so everything we do is based on job set up," noted Catanach. "This market is so tight that we have to find ways to trim labor use, so we make sure that we go out to each of our new properties and work with the operations manager and the crew to figure out how we'll approach each job."

"For example, doing a lot of office parks means we're challenged by cars in parking lots," Catanach continued. "So we want to set up the route to have the crew at these properties by 6:00 a.m. and have them edge the

(continued on page 26)

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Keeping the Vision

(continued from page 22)

concrete curbs on the parking lots and make the first mowing pass around the edges right away. Then we can blow off the concrete before any cars arrive."

The Morrell Group's aggressive approach to job productivity even extends to crew and equipment set up for jobs.

"We used to think we had maintenance crews down to a science, and our standard was three men in a truck, two walk-behind mowers, two blowers, a stick edger and a trimmer," explained Catanach. "But then we decided we needed to think more out of the box. Now, we think we can put more people in a crew-cab truck and do bigger jobs and really maximize productivity."

Part of having the job approach down to a science also used to mean assigning strict responsibilities to various employees so their tasks were the same for every job.

"Every crew used to be set up with a supervisor, lead man and crew man in the

(continued on page 28)

W

hen an installation job is complete and the maintenance crews from the same company inherit the property, contractors want that transition to be as seamless as possible.

In these situations, The Morrell Group, Atlanta, Ga., begins moving client contact responsibilities from the landscape group to the appropriate regional maintenance manager when the installation is about 90 percent complete.

"At that point, we'll have a walk-through with the regional maintenance manager who will be responsible for the job and the foreman or senior project manager who oversaw the installation," explained Charles Tankersley, director of the landscape group. "We have an internal punchlist of items to go through, such as the location of the irrigation components.

"We really like to have the property manager there as well in case there are parts of the job that we have specific concerns about or where we wanted to do something specific as part of the installation that the client couldn't budget for," added Tankersley. "The property manager should know about our areas of concern

ahead of time so they know what we think they should budget for future enhancements." — **Bob West**

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Keeping the Vision

(continued from page 26)

three-man truck," Catanach noted. "Now that we're fortunate to have some people who have been with us for awhile, having everyone be more widely trained makes much more sense. If the weakest link on the team can do everything the strongest link can do, then you've really got a well-oiled machine."

Terrance O'Rourke, another regional maintenance manager, said he relies heavily on job tracking forms that the operations managers fill out to track budgeted labor hours vs. actual labor hours.

"These forms let us see the performance for any week, month or year-to-date for any of the crews," O'Rourke said. "Then we can look for problems where the actual hours are significantly over or under budget. If we're over budget on a job, then I need to meet with the operations manager handling that job and examine the job set up to find out what is wrong. Or, if a job is below budget, then I

(continued on page 30)

One of the regional maintenance managers' key responsibilities is managing quality control on their properties, which is done via property walk-throughs with the customer.

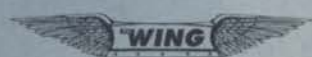
"Customer communication really depends on the property, and the schedule for walk-throughs will usually be set up at our first meeting with the customer," remarked Kirk Taigo, regional maintenance manager. "Some customers don't want walk-throughs at all and they just want to know when there is a problem, but others want to walk the property with us monthly. Either way, we're still on each property at least every other week and performing regular walk-throughs for quality control."

Brad Catanach, another regional maintenance manager, said the regional maintenance managers use tape recorders on all walk-throughs to record their thoughts. Later, a 'punchlist' of items to be addressed will be produced. One copy of this form goes to the customer and other copies are made for any other service groups within the company who the regional maintenance manager has identified tasks for.

"This way the client can see exactly what we're working on with all of our groups, and he or she can also see what potential upgrades we've identified," Catanach explained. "We even try to point out any problems we see on the property that aren't our responsibility, such as a broken light or a sign that needs to be re-painted. We want to help our customers look good for their bosses, too." — **Bob West**

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Keeping the Vision

(continued from page 28)

need to walk that property and make sure the quality is where we want it to be."

The information for these forms is gathered daily as each supervisor fills out a worksheet that tracks employee and crew hours for that day and turns that form into his operations manager, according to Talgo.

The operations manager logs the information and turns the form in to his regional maintenance manager the next day. From there, the worksheet is used by accounting for payroll purposes and to generate tracking reports.

Surprisingly, tracking this information

is a relatively new practice for managers at The Morrell Group.

"Two years ago, we wanted to know how much time we were paying our employees for while we weren't being paid by our customers," recalled Talgo, citing Atlanta's notorious highway traffic as one reason for this concern. "By doing this, we can see where our routes may be less efficient than we want them to be. Maybe we need to set up some satellite offices to cut down on this indirect time and cost of having five or six guys sitting in a truck in traffic. Now we have the information that tells us that."

The direct time, or actual billable hours for the crews, generally runs between 85 percent and 87 percent, but can be as low as 80 percent for some crews and as high as 95 or 97 percent for other crews.

"We've opened a satellite office on the grounds of one of our larger accounts, so one-third of my team has no indirect time except for 30 minutes of daily equipment maintenance and getting started each morning," pointed out Catanach. "But that location also puts my other crews 15 to 20 minutes closer to their accounts, so now my worst crews are still at 90 percent direct time."

The company tries to assign job responsibility to a regional manager based on the property's location, but the managers noted that being sensitive to the value of relationships is also important.

"We try to keep the regions pretty tight and assign new jobs to the right manager, but most of our growth has occurred in two of the four regions," noted Talgo.

"And sometimes a property manager that one of the regional managers has a good relationship with picks up a new property in another regional manager's territory," added O'Rourke. "In that case, we want to take advantage of the good relationship and keep that property manager working with the same regional manager. The property manager may even request that."

"We have one intersection where three of us are responsible for a different property on a different corner of the intersection," agreed Catanach. "Obviously, that's not ideal from a productivity standpoint, but taking care of the customer has to come first." **LL**

The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

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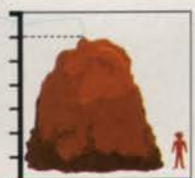
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USE READER SERVICE #90



by Bob West

Keeping the Vision The Morrell Group

While landscape construction work may not be profitable for the company right now, it gets the ball rolling for the entire operation.

The Morrell Group is built around its mowing maintenance services, and landscape installations are viewed as ways to keep providing the maintenance group with new customers. But that approach certainly doesn't mean that the landscape group isn't capable of growth, as evident by its nearly seven-fold growth since 1993 from approximately \$600,000 in annual sales to more than \$4 million in 1999.

This philosophy of utilizing the landscape group to develop "customers for life," as the company calls them, in maintenance customers is clearly well thought out, communicated throughout the organization and continues to be successful.

"Last year, we converted 95 percent of our installation jobs to maintenance contracts, and that is by design," explained Don Smith, president of the Atlanta, Ga.-based company. "A lot of companies can't believe that we really convert that many

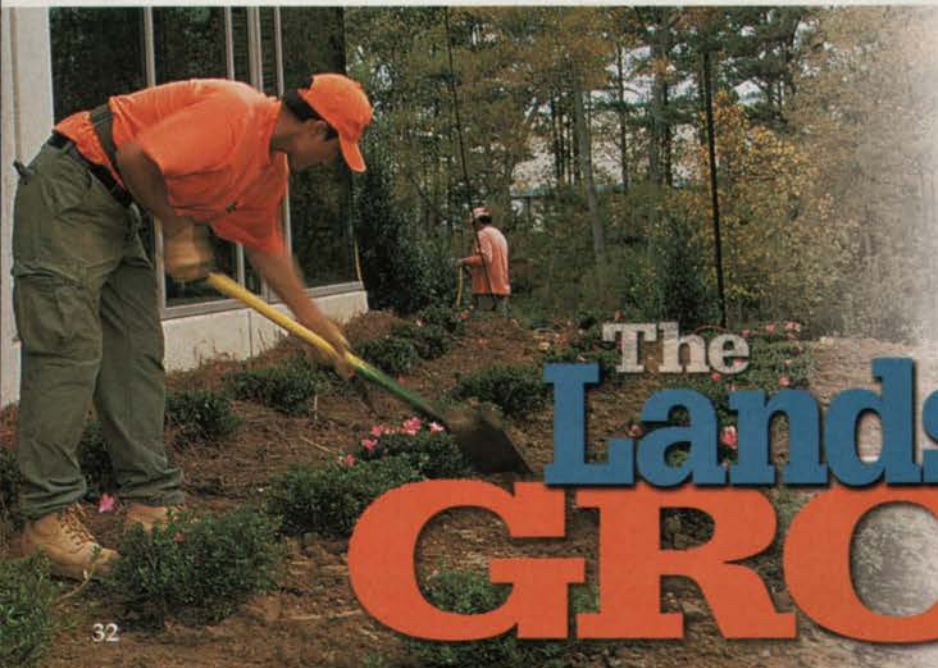
installation projects, but our construction group typically does not go out and bid projects that are just construction projects. We look for construction projects that have maintenance contracts tied to the installation or that really fit our niche of construction work and have the potential for a maintenance contract."

In fact, Smith said some landscape companies in Atlanta with both a construction and a maintenance operation have called The Morrell Group and asked the company to bid for a maintenance contract along with their own construction bid.

"And they don't even talk to their own maintenance division about submitting a bid - can you believe that?" he added.

While the construction group will likely continue to grow in size so long as the company continues to grow, Smith is happy keeping the sales from the group around 30 percent of the company's overall revenues.

"Construction knows that if they've got 10 jobs
(continued on page 36)



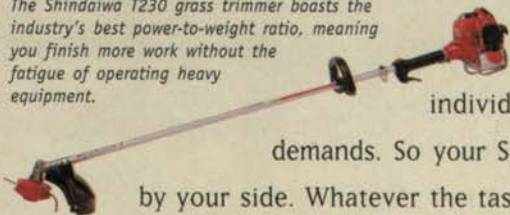
New property installations and enhancements to current maintenance customers' landscapes comprise about 25 percent of the company's revenues. Photos: Mary Buck

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Keeping the Vision

(continued from page 32)

to bid, there are a number of criteria they need to consider when determining the bidding order for those jobs," agreed George Morrell, chief executive officer. "What jobs have the most potential to create a customer for life? Those are the jobs we go after first. The job that has the highest profit potential may end up being tenth on that list to bid because our priority is creating a customer for life that every other group can then interact with. And that philosophy is what creates the high conversion ratio we have of installation jobs to maintenance jobs, and that philosophy is what creates our high customer retention rate.

"Many companies don't track their conversions or they don't think that number is important, but we think that the landscape construction group is the first line of the company," Morrell noted.

And Charles Tankersley, director of the landscape/design group, pointed out that while a lot of clients will hire the company

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"WE NEED to be a resource for the manager to help him solve his own problems instead of just solving problems for people. We need to help them identify the problem and provide them the resources they need to solve the problem themselves. This gives our managers valuable experience and confidence."

MANAGING PEOPLE

that completed a landscape installation to provide maintenance for at least the first year to protect the plants via a warranty, The Morrell Group retains about 85 percent of its maintenance clients after that first year.

"Yes, the landscaping group brought in \$4 million last year, but more importantly, we generated 36 new maintenance accounts from landscape projects last year," remarked Smith, estimating the company's average landscape job at about \$160,000. "That makes the landscape group function like an additional marketing division for the company. We figure that if we can break even in landscape work we'll still end up in good shape because of the new maintenance customers we generate."

Bart Parker, director of sales and marketing, also pointed out that a key advantage of having the landscape grow as it has is the added capabilities the company now has for satisfying clients.

"Our landscape group provides a real

(continued on page 38)



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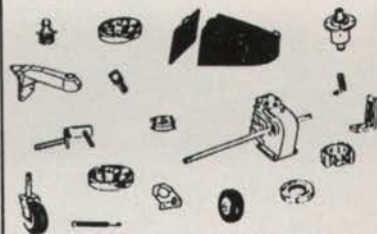


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Keeping the Vision

(continued from page 36)

important function to a lot of our maintenance clients because an important part of providing good maintenance services is improving the property as it matures and helping the property adapt over time," Parker explained. "If you have an area that gets installed and is in full sun initially, it can become a shaded area as the trees grow.

That's when you need to have some creative designers who understand the desires of the property management and design changes to the property that fit. Our landscape group really had to grow in order to support the design staff that we needed for maintenance because the revenues from just the upgrades wouldn't support this kind of staff."

"We've really looked to the landscape construction work as a way to gain accounts through the relationships that we've built over the years with key general contractors and landscape architects," added Tankersley. "If a company is building its first building in our area and we know they've hired a property management firm that we've worked with in the past, then we're really going to be competitive on that bid to land the construction project. If we get the contract, then we want to exceed our customer's expectations on the installation to get the maintenance contract. And if we get the maintenance contract we want to again exceed our customer's expectations so we can get our other groups on to the property."

While pursuing jobs for maintenance contracts is key, Tankersley and the sales personnel also keep in mind what type of projects the landscape group is best suited for.

"Our niche is the class A commercial installation in the price range of \$100,000 to \$250,000," recognized Tankersley. "The property is typically a building with a fairly nice foundation planting, some parking lot islands and some buffer plantings."

ENHANCING SALES. The mission at The Morrell Group is obviously to take care of maintenance customers and develop them into "customers for life." The company's customers are exclusively commercial in nature, which can translate into some rather large properties at times. And, sometimes, large maintenance accounts require smaller landscape work, and doing that work profitably can be a challenge for any company.

"Our landscape group is not set up to handle smaller installation jobs for our maintenance customers, so we have a group designed to handle smaller installation jobs that can generally be taken care of in one day or less," explained Morrell. "This group works in situations where response time is most critical."

These enhancement operations are handled out of the landscape group, and there are generally one or two enhancement crews handling jobs, depending on the work flow. The work was previously handled out of the maintenance group, but the volume of enhancement work eventually made the enhancement group a better fit for the landscape group. The Morrell Group expects en-

(continued on page 40)

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USE READER SERVICE #20

Keeping the Vision

(continued from page 38)

Putting together a landscape group that handles \$4 million in sales demands a department structure that works efficiently and profitably. Here's how the division is structured at The Morrell Group, Atlanta, Ga.:

Director of landscape group – oversees operations of the group and the interaction of the group with the other groups and with customers; handles budgeting, setting sales goals and quality control.

Senior project manager – responsible for all production and coordination of

labor materials, equipment and subcontractors on all job sites. Meets regularly with the landscape architect and general contractor, attends bi-weekly production coordination meetings with other contractors on the property.

Job foreman – responsible for one job at a time and is on the property any time the company is working there. Coordinates the materials and planning of the installation. Works directly with any subcontractors hired on the job. Responsible for the quality inspection of plant materials for the job.

Project coordinator – orders and coordinates the delivery of the plant materials with the senior project manager and the

foreman handling the particular job.

Estimator – makes sure the project details are delivered in full to production personnel. Sources all of the plant material for a job and provides this information to the project coordinator for ordering. Handles all of the interaction with the prospective client during the bidding process.

Landscape architect – develops plans for upgrades to maintenance accounts.

Enhancement manager – supervises the completion of any enhancement installation projects on maintenance accounts.

Crew members – include operators, lead men and crew members. (Typical installation crew is five to seven people and uses one four-door, crew cab truck.)

– Bob West

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Keeping the Vision

(continued from page 40)

enhancement work to account for about 15 percent of the landscape group's overall sales, or about \$35,000 per month.

Enhancement jobs are generally sold by the regional maintenance manager responsible for a particular property as "every manager in the company works as a salesperson when they are walking the property and looking for areas that could use upgrading," according to Tankersley, who also said that the enhancement manager only gets involved once the client has approved the project. "Enhancement jobs may take a full day or a crew may handle three or four in a day if the jobs just require planting a few shrubs."

Tankersley noted, however, that while enhancement work delivers strong profits, contractors can get themselves in trouble by losing their focus.

"Enhancement work is good margin work if you do it right," he explained. "Prices are better because the job wasn't sold in a bid situation, but you need to make sure you

don't deliver a Cadillac when the customer is only looking for a Buick.

"In bid work, you need to bid exactly what is asked for because everyone else may be making bids as well, and then you're looking for the least expensive, highest quality plant material," Tankersley continued. "Whereas with upgrades, we can use our re-wholesalers in town or specifically pick one grower for a specific plant they are noted for and not be as price sensitive."

Brad Catanach, one of the company's four regional maintenance managers, also warned against trying to sell enhancement work just to meet the enhancement budget.

"The key is to do what the property needs, which isn't necessarily always going to meet the sales budget," he pointed out.

"But on the properties where we have good relationships, we actually become part of the budgeting process for our customers, and that has given us the opportunity to submit a number of proposals to clients

giving them enhancement ideas to think about for next year," added Kirk Talgo, regional maintenance manager. "Submitting our cost projections to property managers ahead of time really helps them in their budgeting process."

"The other side of that coin is that customers oftentimes have budgeted money they need to spend at the end of the year, and that's when our enhancement work can really take off," Talgo noted.

"In that case, you look for the areas where the dollars that are available can have the most impact for the customer and the property," commented Terrance O'Rourke, regional maintenance manager.

"Obviously, our best properties are the ones where we do walk-throughs and just discuss enhancements because there aren't any problems," commented Catanach. **LL**

The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

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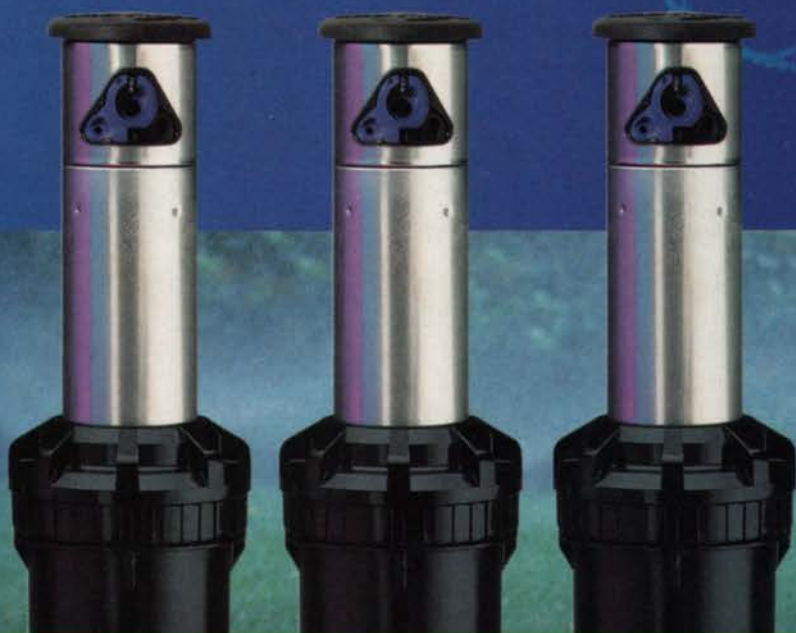
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USE READER SERVICE #68

by Bob West

Keeping the Vision The Morrell Group

Lawn care services are handled through the company's tech services group and its dedicated employees. Photo: Mary Buck

Maximizing the value and profitability of add-on services are keys to The Morrell Group's overall success.



Add-Ons ADD UP

Irrigation hasn't always been one of the most successful services for The Morrell Group, but getting the right personnel in place and taking a different approach toward servicing customers' accounts has driven the group in the right direction.

"Finding irrigation people is always the hard part because this work requires a certain mindset," according to Bert Wood, director of the irrigation group. "The best irrigation employees are technically inclined and they are able to see challenges and frustration as an opportunity."

"A lot of our competitors have stopped offering irrigation services, but I don't know how you can do that in this market," commented Don Smith, president. "The problem with relying on subcontractors is that you can't be as responsive as you need to be if there is a problem."

"So a real key for us has been our ability to retain our

irrigation employees and develop them into true landscape irrigators," continued Wood. "This retention lets us bring in inexperienced technicians when we need to expand and develop them slowly."

Oftentimes, the most challenging part of developing an irrigation employee is teaching him or her about the various irrigation systems the crew works on. A lack of familiarity with systems can also frustrate maintenance crews or groups working on a property and make caring for the property more difficult.

To deal with this issue, The Morrell Group oriented its irrigation service into what it terms a Planned Service Program.

"We saw the need for the service of irrigation systems as opposed to the installation of systems because our properties had systems that we couldn't keep working," explained George Morrell, chief executive officer. "This frustrated our customers and frustrated us. Developing

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our Planned Service Program gives our customers the opportunity to have their system serviced by irrigation technicians on a regular basis as opposed to sending someone out to fix a leak whenever there is a problem."

"In irrigation, the learning curve associated with taking on a new property is huge," agreed Don Smith, president. "If we can gather all of the necessary information about an irrigation system, that can also help us ensure that the customer doesn't want to lose us as a service provider because if you can't manage the irrigation system on a property then you're in real trouble."

"This program is designed to catch problems before anyone sees the results of the problem, which is a benefit to the landscape and to the integrity of the system because the longer problems go neglected the more long-term flow problems we could encounter in the system," added Wood.

A key part of the program is the system map that the irrigation group devises for each property that purchases the service.

"We want to perform an irrigation audit on every new property that we pick up, but in addition to measuring the actual amount of water put out by a system and measuring that against the landscape's needs, we want to gather as much information about the system as possible," explained Wood. "So we'll map out the entire property and try to locate as many zone valves and shut-off valves as possible up front to give our maintenance staff a valuable management tool."

"If they don't know the zone number of where the clock or water source is for a part of the system, the maintenance personnel are going to have a hard time figuring out what is causing a particular problem," Wood added. "These maps also help the irrigation technicians look for areas where there is potential for selling an upgrade on a system."

Wood said that thus far about 60 percent of the system maps have generated revenue in the form of system repairs or upgrades, while the other 40 percent have still benefited the maintenance crews.

While getting customers to buy off on the idea of proactive irrigation service can be a bit of a challenge at times, sufficient results

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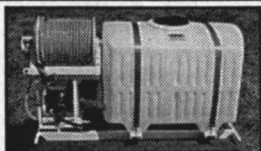


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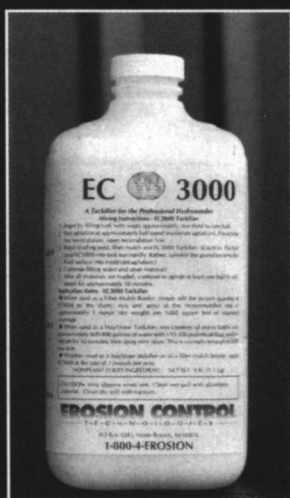
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Keeping the Vision

(continued from page 45)

are being gathered from the Planned Service Program to illustrate its value.

"In addition to helping our maintenance crews service these properties, we're seeing that the properties that sign on for the Planned Service Program generally experience fewer irrigation problems," remarked Wood.

Developing a history of water use costs for a property also helps the irrigation or maintenance group help clients manage and budget for their irrigation costs.

"We're getting to the point now where we want to be able to show the client how much money we can save them with any upgrade we propose for an irrigation system," Wood added. "A rain sensor could pay for itself in

Y

es, George Morrell went to

Clemson University, so his alma mater's primary school color is orange. But that's not the main reason why employees of The Morrell Group, Atlanta, Ga., are so easily identified in their bright orange shirts and hats and with their equally bright orange equipment trailers and truck logos.

"We try to make ourselves unique in as many ways as possible," explained Morrell, chief executive officer. "Years ago, every company in Atlanta was using green as the color for uniforms and equipment, and it occurred to me that we should distinguish ourselves in some way. So I figured 'safety orange' is the most recognizable color there is.

"We started painting our trucks orange and buying orange uniforms so people can see us coming and going," he added.

"Now, if someone is 15 stories up and they

All About Orange

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Snow Products Catalog From Central Parts Warehouse is Available

Since 1980, Central Parts Warehouse has provided the snow and ice control industry with quality replacement parts, equipment and accessories for most major

brands of snowplows and salt spreaders. New for this year are Boss and Fisher plows and replacements parts.

Central Parts Warehouse features the largest and most comprehensive catalog in the industry with more than 60 pages of equipment and illustrated parts diagrams all at discounted pricing.

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Dawn Industries Kwikadapt Insert Tees Make Irrigation Installation Faster

Online Link

Dawn Industries strives to produce new and innovative products that make irrigation installation faster, easier and cost efficient.

Dawn Industries kept this in mind while developing the all new Kwikadapt Insert Tee. The Kwikadapt Insert Tee is a one-piece design that connects all kinds of piping from Polyethylene pipe to swing/funny pipe.

Kwikadapt is designed for one-piece strength and reliability. This one-piece design eliminates problems associated with the threaded connections of the conventional



swing-ell. The barb and spike combination keeps the Kwikadapt in place even under pressure

surges.

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Dawn Industries Kwikslip Makes Irrigation Installation Easier

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At Dawn Industries, we strive to manufacture products that make irrigation installation easier.

Dawn Industries kept this in mind while developing the all new



Kwikslip fitting. The Kwikslip is a one-piece design that goes from PVC to swing/funny pipe.

Kwikslip is designed for strength and reliability. A one-piece design eliminates problems associated with the threaded connection of conventional swing ells. The barb and spike combination keeps the kwikslip in place even under pressure surges. The Tee also has a gusseted branch for added strength.

Now, all the advantages of the Dawn Industries Kwikadapt and more are available in a PVC glue fitting.

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Push the Turf Maintenance Envelope with Eastman

What floats on a cushion of air, mows in any direction and is ideal for tackling awkward and hard-to-reach areas? The new Hover Mower from Eastman Industries, Portland, Maine. Eastman Hover Mowers have impellers that generate a steady stream of air to cushion the mower, allowing it to float over any type of terrain. An innovative deck ensures a quality cut every time and eliminates scalping. Operators can adjust mowing height from 1 to 3 inches by simply changing spacers.



The new models, HM19S2 and HM16R2 are equipped with Suzuki and Robin engines, respectively, and built from the ground up to withstand the rigors of working

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Fabriscape

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GMC Sierra Has Unique Styling

Meet the all new GMC Sierra. Honest truck styling and meaningful technical in-



novation are the reasons why the 1999 GMC Sierra full-size pickup will set the segment standard into the next century. The new Sierra, with its unique GMC styling, has been rethought and redesigned from the wheels up with a focus on meeting the higher demands of the most discriminating customer. Powered by all new, more powerful, fuel-efficient engines, GMC has created a truck with more towing and hauling capabilities, more body, more strength, more passenger and cargo space and more driver and passenger amenities than ever before. For more information on the GMC Sierra and other GMC trucks, visit www.gmcforwork.com.
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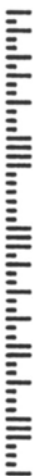
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A.M. Leonard	2	J.J. Mauget	8
Central Parts Warehouse	2	Kichler Landscape Lighting	8
Creative Sales	3	Lawn & Landscape.com	12
Dawn Industries	3,4	Meyer	9
Eastman Industries	4	Nu-Gro Technologies	9
Fabricscape	5	Oly-Ola Sales	10
Fertigator	5	Pond Supplies	10
G&K	6	Valley View	11
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New pests controlled with Micro-Injection System by J.J. Mauget

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Millions of Redgum Eucalyptus trees in California have a chance to survive defoliation caused by RLP, according to results of clinical trials conducted by Dr. Lester Young, entomologist for California State Polytechnic University in Pomona.

The data determined that Mauget's Micro-Injection system is an effective and practical method of controlling RLP and providing long residual activity. The Mauget system was evaluated since the insect is naturally protected against contact spray insecticides. The Psyllid, infesting in mass numbers, are especially voracious when feeding (sucking) on new foliage.



Mauget's closed system treatments target only insects feeding on the plant and

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Kichler® Landscape Lighting offers a complete line of uniquely styled lighting fixtures. Accent, path, deck, or pond – whatever your needs – Kichler® is your source. Constructed of durable composites, cast aluminum and solid brass, our fixtures



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Meyer Snow Plows – Designed for Commercial Use

Online Link



Each product that Meyer offers is designed for commercial use and comes with a two-year

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All Meyer Snow Plows are custom designed to fit specific vehicles and meet the vehicle manufacturers' weight and load requirements.

There are 11 sizes of steel snow plows and 10 sizes of polyethylene snow plows ranging from 6 to 10 feet. Meyer also offers an outstanding complement of seven ice control spreaders. For more information about Meyer Products on the web: www.meyerproducts.com.

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Nu-Grow Technologies –

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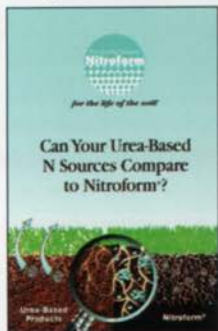
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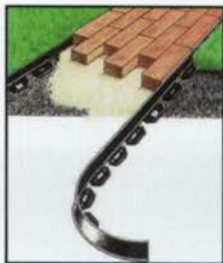
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Make Paver Installation Easier and More Profitable with BRIC-EDG from **Oly-Ola**

BRIC-EDG from Oly-Ola Sales, the original "L-shaped" paver restraint, has been used worldwide by landscape professionals since 1989. BRIC-EDG is designed to be used in any brick paver project, whether the project requires a restraint under the pavers or outside the pavers. Featuring multiple



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EDG along the outside edge of the paver. Non-bending steel anchoring stakes secure edging and prevent movement. Constructed of black vinyl, BRIC-EDG has no sharp edges, will not rust or kink, is available in both flexible and rigid sections in 2 inch and 1½ inch depths and 15 foot and 7½ foot lengths.

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Wells Cargo Offers a Complete Line of Land- scape Trailers

Wells Cargo manufactures a complete line of enclosed, steel-structured utility trailers for the green industry. More than 100 different models are available in both Ball Hitch and 5th Wheel configurations. Body lengths range from 6 to

48 feet. Body widths range from 4 to 8 feet.

The new LS Series offers a complete package of features specifically designed to meet the needs of the professional landscape and grounds maintenance contractor.

A comprehensive three-year warranty program backs every Wells Cargo trailer. Our nationwide dealership network and five regional manufacturing facilities stand ready to assist you should the need arise. Visit our web site at www.wellscargo.com.

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Workhorse Poly Body Dump Bed System Revolutionizes Trucks

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The Workhorse Load Lifter is the only industrial strength polyethylene dump body insert for pick-up trucks. A steel reinforced body and a 2-ton dump capacity make it equal to the toughest applications. And with a total system weight of only 240 pounds and simple, one-bolt non-drilling installation, it is the lightest, most versatile dump



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The Industry's Most Interactive Web Site from Lawn & Landscape

Lawn & Landscape Online, the premier informational service for



professional lawn care and landscape contractors, features much more than just the articles from the pages of *Lawn & Landscape*. Use the training guides in the FREE Virtual Training School to test yourself or your crew on chemical and equipment knowledge. Check up with us daily for industry news and issues. Network online with bulletin boards and chat rooms. Or visit some of the hot spots you're already familiar with, including the Online Marketplace and Suppliers' Directory where you can find product and supplier contact information, industry links, an online Career Center or three years of in-depth industry research in informative and popular *Lawn & Landscape* State of the Industry Reports. Check out www.lawnandlandscape.com today.

two weeks, and that's what customers look at because they're all about dollars and cents and they have to justify their costs to someone else."

Wood would like to see the irrigation group continue to grow, and managing customer's water features or pump systems are both opportunities for additional service offerings. But Wood will be ready for any growth that occurs to his current six-crew group and he will keep it under control, as evident by his organizational chart evolution that shows the positions the company should expect to add and fill during the next five years.

"We'll have to add more levels of management, and we'll probably want to sepa-

look out their window, they don't have to wonder whether or not we're on the property - if we're there, they'll see us and they'll know that's The Morrell Group because of the orange they see."

Not surprisingly, Morrell's plan for uniqueness made believers out of some of his competition, so, today, the Atlanta landscape scene tends to cover all of the colors of the rainbow.

"I think green may actually be a unique color here now," Morrell said with a laugh. "But companies should pick a company color for the right reasons. We had a competitor once who wouldn't even put his company's name and phone number on the trucks because he didn't want people at the jobs he was taking care of to know who he was, and I think that's totally wrong. If you want to grow the business and you're doing good work that you're proud of, everyone should know who you are. You should only be sneaking around if you're trying to hide something."

- Bob West

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USE READER SERVICE #127

DECEMBER 1999

47

Keeping the Vision

rate the planned service from any type of upgrades or renovations we provide in order to differentiate between the two in our customers' minds," Wood forecasted.

"But the key to irrigation management is planning, and George and Don have helped me with setting goals," he added. "If all we

did was react to problems then we would be firefighters on a daily basis. Our long-term goals for this service may be ambitious, but at least they give us something to focus on."

"The key for our managers to remember is that growth shouldn't be something you pursue just to get better," commented Smith.



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Examining its customers' properties helped The Morrell Group identify the need for adding arbor care services in its goal to functioning as a total solution provider. Photo: Mary Buck

"Managers have to ask themselves why they want their group to grow and what good will come from it being bigger?"

TECH SERVICES/SEASONAL COLOR.

The Morrell Group's chemical lawn care services, which it refers to as tech services, and seasonal color service are two additional add-on services the company offers.

Gary Tomlinson serves as the director for both groups and splits his time between the services despite the fact that their seasons can overlap each other at times.

"Seasonal color takes a lot of time during the spring installation season, and then we have the big pushes for round one and round two for tech services," Tomlinson noted. "Both programs have maintenance in the summer, and then we have fall fertilization, aeration and overseeding in the fall while we're handling seasonal color plantings."

Tomlinson spends quite a bit of time serving as a go-between for the maintenance division and his add-on groups, managing scheduling issues and making sure work order requests from the maintenance division are taken care of so The Morrell Group's customers receive a lineup of services seamlessly.

"We need to have a good relationship with the maintenance group because we support their work," he explained. "As an organization gets larger, there is a tendency for it to also become more fragmented. Our structure with me handling both groups can rein

(continued on page 52)

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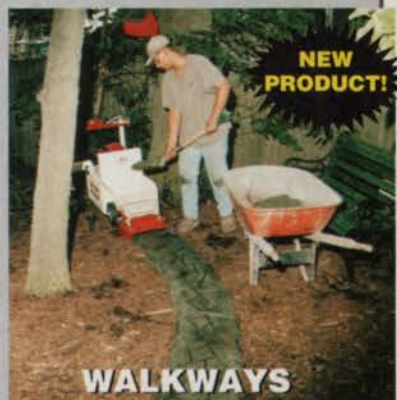


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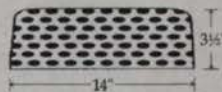
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USE READER SERVICE #36

Keeping the Vision

(continued from page 48)

things back in and stop that fragmentation."

Tomlinson also use the regional maintenance managers as his eyes on a property.

"Those guys are on properties every week, whereas I may see an account every two months or so, and that's usually only when we run into a significant disease problem," he said.

Within these two groups, Tomlinson has

two operations managers for tech services – one for trees and shrubs, and one for turf – and two operations managers for seasonal color.

"Communication between these four operation managers is crucial to make sure we're hitting all of the properties and that we're spreading out our scheduled visits in an organized fashion," Tomlinson added.

The company will cross-train tech services technicians to occasionally make applications on perennial and annual beds because these individuals are familiar with the equipment, products and procedures for making these application in addition to being more volume oriented in terms of production than seasonal color technicians are.

While tech services technicians tend to spend most of their time dealing with turf or trees and shrubs, they are also cross-trained to provide flexibility during busy times of year. However, Tomlinson said managers have to be cognizant of the different approaches to the work employed by turf technicians vs. tree and shrub technicians.

"Tree and shrub technicians tend to spend more time in the field identifying problems and looking for the problems or causes," he cautioned. "Is this stress from over watering or automobile exhaust or some man-made problem?" So there can be a challenge getting them into the production mode that is sometimes necessary for turf."

When it comes to building a successful seasonal color program, the common Morrell theme of identifying customer needs is at the top of Scott Carter's list of keys. The senior designer for the seasonal color group said the company also prides itself on finding new plant varieties to introduce to the market to give key clients an even more unique landscape.

"Most of our clients today are looking for the cutting edge new look," Carter commented. "A good seasonal color bed makes them feel like they are getting more attention for their cost so they are willing to spend the money. And that's particularly true for the property management companies who are trying to draw attention to their buildings and rent space."

In between installing new beds during Atlanta's two, six-week installation periods each year, the seasonal color employees, which are entirely separate from the maintenance employees, spend their time maintaining all of the ornamental beds on the company's maintenance accounts.

"Our responsibilities include pruning, pulling weeds, checking for insects or fungus, removing dead blooms, reshaping beds and dealing with bed repairs," Carter stated. **LL**

The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

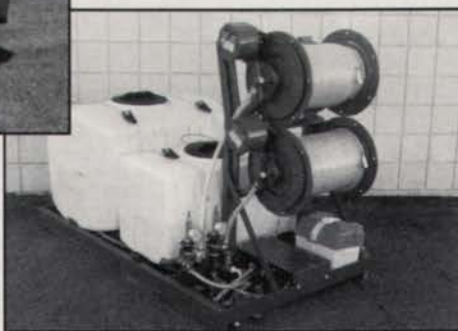


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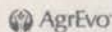
CAMPUS GROUNDS MANAGER MASTERMINDED ESPIONAGE PLOT

"Somehow he knew everything" says awed crew "it was uncanny."



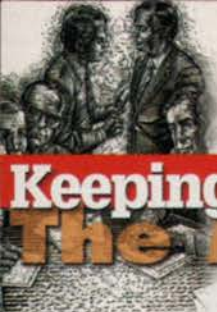
Keith Macdonald's work crews at Bridgewater State College campus swear he's a master spy, or psychic. "He knows when we've sprayed off an area with Finale® Herbicide without us even telling him," said a crew member "sometimes only 24 hours after the job's done." Keith laughs. "When it gets busy and I can't check with everyone, I simply drive around and see the results. It only takes a day or two for Finale to work. A month later, the area's still clear." But it wasn't always so easy. As assistant facilities director on the Massachusetts campus, Keith used to use the leading systemic herbicide. "It took 2 weeks before I knew I had a take," he says, "drove me crazy." Keith also likes Finale's ability to create perfectly clean edges around beds and baseball fields. "It's the no-creep feature," he says, "the one my crews apply to me."

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USE READER SERVICE #79



by Bob West

Keeping the Vision The Morrell Group

Managing personnel issues at The Morrell Group is primarily a two-person, two-language effort.

T

There really isn't any industry called "the people business," but more landscape contractors are coming to realize that if they make people the focus of their efforts, particularly as managers, then the landscaping results they desire will follow.

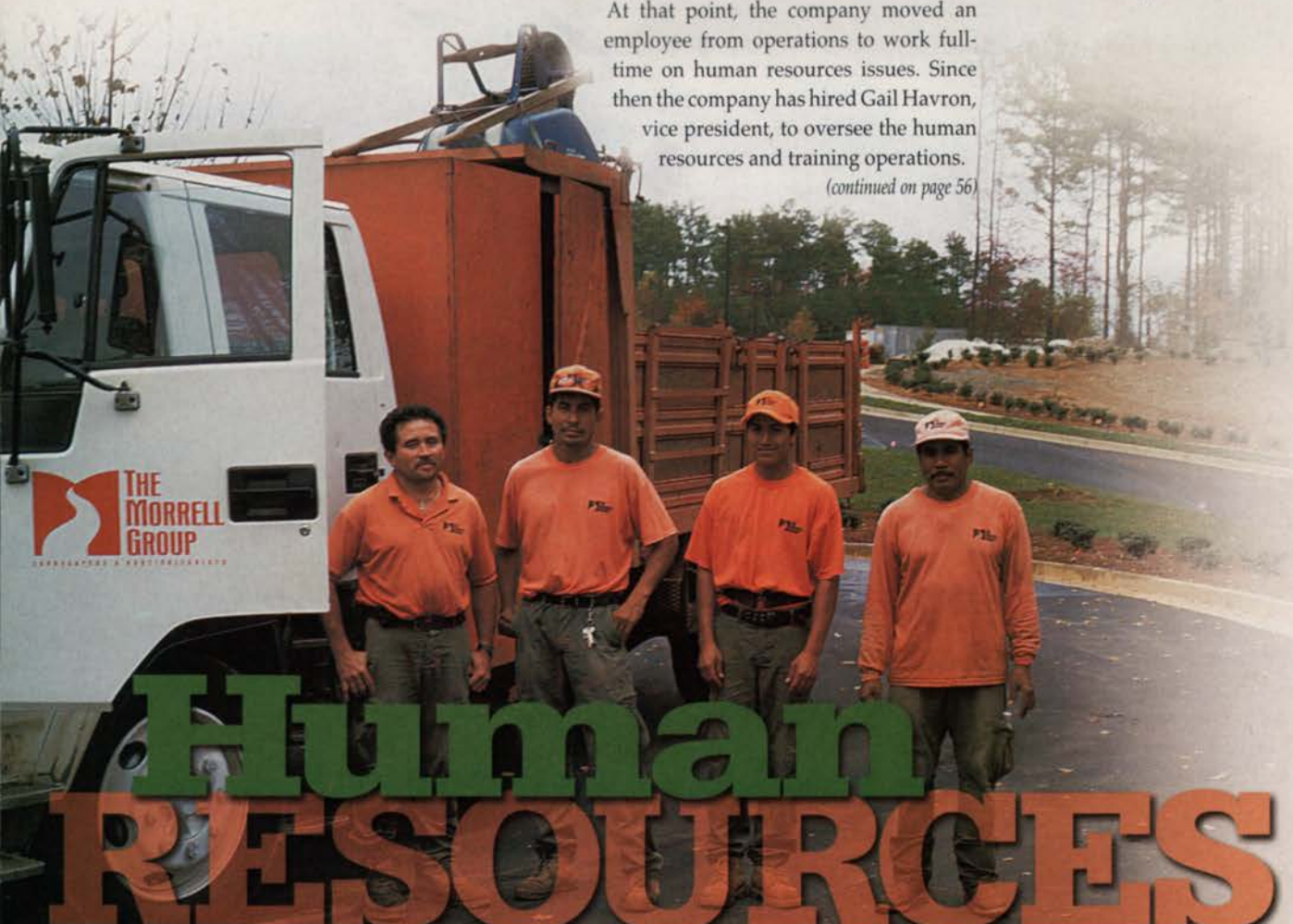
For The Morrell Group, Atlanta, Ga., this realization occurred back in 1990 when the company was doing about \$3.5 million in annual sales, according to Don Smith, president.

"That was a key point in our development, when we realized we were spending more time looking at equipment and trying to figure out what was the best mower or the best blower," Smith explained. "Instead, we should have been spending a lot of time looking at people issues and trying to improve our hiring and recruiting efforts."

At that point, the company moved an employee from operations to work full-time on human resources issues. Since then the company has hired Gail Havron, vice president, to oversee the human resources and training operations.

(continued on page 56)

*The Morrell Group
termed its initial
willingness to hire
Hispanic employees
as a 'turning point'
in the company's
development. Photo:
Mary Buck*



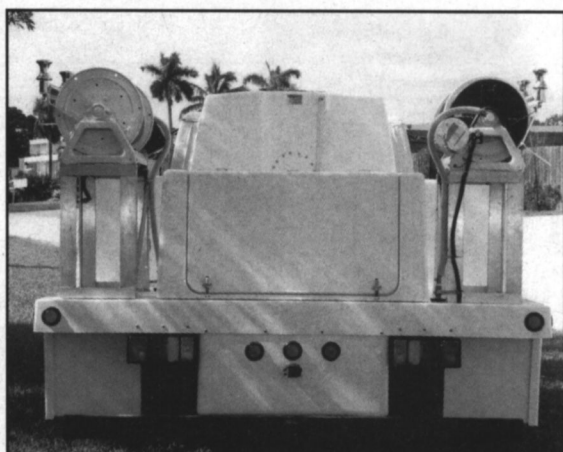
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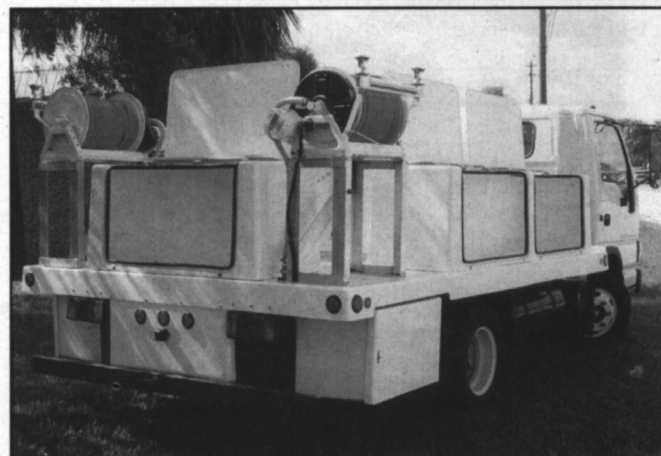
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Keeping the Vision

(continued from page 54)

"In 1993, the company was getting to the point where operations were getting more complicated and we needed to develop a handbook and a 401k program while also formalizing other personnel practices," Havron explained.

In addition to having one person dedicated to hiring all employees, Smith said the company has benefited by having a person who is only interested in hiring the right employees.

"When you're an operations person and you're responsible for hiring employees, you may hire people that you know you shouldn't hire, but you're 10 people short in the field so you just want to put people out there," Smith related. "When that hiring responsibility is placed with a human resources person and hiring people is what he or she does all day, then you're able to keep the hiring decisions away from the pressures of operations. As a result, the human resources person looks to hire the best person."

Morrell on Focus

"WE KEEP the right focus because the customer tells you what your focus is. If the customer calls up and complains, then you've got a problem and you need to fix it. Then you go and find out why you've got a complaint and fix that."

To initiate the hiring process, a manager communicates the need for an employee or employees to Havron in writing and she will start screening candidates.

"Too much time and energy is invested up-front in a new employee to only be able to keep them for a short period of time," Smith pointed out.

COVERING THE BASES.

Due to its heavy reliance on Hispanic employees, The Morrell Group took an additional step to strengthen its human resources department by hiring Luis Herrera as its training manager and an overall liaison between Spanish-speaking employees and the traditionally Anglo management group.

Herrera started with the company as a crew person in 1991 and rose through the operations ranks before taking on

the training responsibilities.

"I knew some Spanish, but we realized Luis could help all of our groups, so his role grew so he does almost all of the hiring of crew people," Havron explained, adding that 60 percent to 70 percent of The Morrell Group's workforce speaks Spanish.

(continued on page 58)



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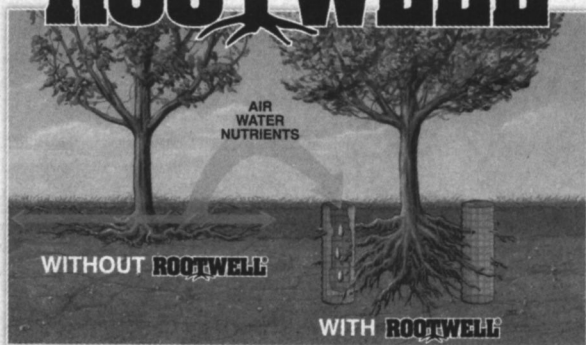
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Keeping the Vision

(continued from page 56)

"Having a bilingual person on our staff is absolutely imperative," Havron noted. "Not only is communication easier because of Luis, but he provides the cultural knowledge and insight to managers that helps them understand why some of the Spanish-speaking employees react the way they do to certain situations. Someone who is American but speaks Spanish doesn't necessarily understand why our Hispanic employees think the way they do, and that's where Luis is invaluable."

"For example, a few years ago we had a problem with a lot of our Spanish-speaking employees going into the parking lot on payday and comparing their paychecks," Havron related. "From an American point of view, your pay is supposed to be very private, so this behavior was upsetting to us. Luis was able to help us all understand that this was a cultural difference because a person's income isn't as private in Latin cultures as it is to us."

"For Latinos, having someone who has moved into the American culture and can help us understand the differences between the cultures from a Latino perspective is also helpful," Herrera pointed out. "That can help me better explain the benefits of doing certain things certain ways to the Spanish-speaking employees."

"Plus, we have little problems on a daily basis, and a manager can come to me and ask me why someone would have said what they said or did what they did, and I can explain this from a cultural perspective so that the manager learns about his employees," Herrera added.

"There are also times when employees feel more comfortable talking to Luis because they know that he came to the United States the same way they came here and he has dealt with a lot of the same experiences they are having," Havron added.

The improved communication between Spanish-speaking employees and management has also resulted in a couple of policy changes that have pleased the employees.

"In our culture, Holy Week is a big celebration because the majority of us are Catholic," remarked Herrera. "If we had to work on Holy Friday, which Anglos call Good Friday, we just wouldn't show up, and the managers didn't understand why. I was able to explain the importance of this holiday to the company, and the managers respected that."

(continued on page 60)

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Keeping the Vision

(continued from page 58)

"So for that week, we worked Sunday through Thursday, and everyone was happy," he added. "It's the little things like this change that really make a difference."

Havron also explained that the company revised its leave of absence policy to avoid punishing Spanish-speaking employees who wanted to return to their home country for an extended period of time in the winter months.

"Now, if our employees head home for 90 days or less and as long as they report back by the date they told their manager, they return to work at the same position and pay rate they were at before they went home," Havron said.

CATCHING THE TRAIN. When the company was looking for a way to encourage labor-level employees to take a more active role in their own career development and managers were growing weary of the fairly regular payday complaints of some employ-

Part of formalizing its human resources practices into an actual department included the addition of drug testing at The Morrell Group.

"We were afraid at the time that we might lose all of our people, but then we decided that if they were on drugs that we didn't want them working for us anyway," Smith recalled. "So we require a drug test for any job applicant, and we require them to pay for the test with the condition that we'll pay them back if they pass the test."

— Bob West

Just say No

ees, a training program was devised that ties directly into employees' compensation.

"We did this about two years ago, and the goal was to develop a program that told the employees exactly what was required of them to get to the next level and eliminated any potential for favoritism from managers," Havron explained. "Prior to this program,

everything was subjective and the employee would just tell his manager he needed more money. We were also vulnerable to having employees lured away by competitors offering an extra 50 cents an hour."

The company's new program lists the required skills and responsibilities for every

(continued on page 67)

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Educational Schedule-At-A-Glance

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13

- 1:00 - 4:00 PM** Registration Desk
- 2:00 - 4:00 PM** Attendee Networking Lounge
- 2:00 - 4:00 PM** Pre-Conference Workshops
- 2:00 - 4:00 PM** Managing a Multi-Cultural Workforce (*Jennifer Thomas*)
- 2:00 - 4:00 PM** All You Need to Know About Computers and the Web (*Bill Cox*)
- 5:00 - 6:30 PM** Opening Session
- 5:00 - 6:30 PM** Cactus Rolling: Taking Stress Out of the Workplace (*Dr. Stephen Douglas*)
- 6:30 - 8:00 PM** School of Management Welcome Reception

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14

- 7:00 AM** Registration Desk
- 7:00 AM** Continental Breakfast
- 7:30 - 8:45 AM** Breakfast Workshop
- 7:30 - 8:45 AM** Strategic Planning: Part I (*Jim Huston*)
- 9:00 - 10:25 AM** General Session
- 9:00 - 10:25 AM** Managing Growth Effectively (*Craig Ruppert and Chris Davitt*)
- 10:25 - 10:45 AM** Refreshment Break
- 10:45 - 12:00 noon** Concurrent Educational Sessions
- 10:45 - 12:00 noon** M1 10 Ways to Succeed at Customer Service (*Lloyd Smigel*)
- 10:45 - 12:00 noon** M2 Open Book Management (*Phil Fogarty*)
- 10:45 - 12:00 noon** M3 New Profit Opportunities (*Roger Braswell*)
- 10:45 - 12:00 noon** M4 Motivating Employees: A Different Approach (*Bill Hoopes*)
- 12:00 - 1:15 PM** Contractor Roundtable Lunch
- 1:30 - 2:45 PM** Concurrent Educational Sessions
- 1:30 - 2:45 PM** M5 Leadership Principles (*Bill Hoopes*)
- 1:30 - 2:45 PM** M6 Repeat M2 (*Phil Fogarty*)
- 1:30 - 2:45 PM** M7 Designing an Operations Blueprint (*Jack Mattingly*)
- 1:30 - 2:45 PM** M8 Repeat M3 (*Roger Braswell*)
- 2:45 - 3:05 PM** Refreshment Break
- 3:05 - 5:30 PM** General Session
- 3:05 - 5:30 PM** All You Need To Know About Estimating and Bidding (*Jerry Gaeta*)
- 5:30 - 6:30 PM** Networking Cocktail Reception

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

- 7:00 AM** Registration Desk
- 7:00 AM** Continental Breakfast
- 7:30 - 8:45 AM** Breakfast Workshop
- 7:30 - 8:45 AM** Strategic Planning: Part II (*Jim Huston*)
- 9:00 - 10:30 AM** General Session
- 9:00 - 10:30 AM** Strategies for Increasing Your Profitability (*David Minor*)
- 10:30 - 10:45 AM** Refreshment Break
- 10:45 - 12:00 noon** Concurrent Educational Sessions
- 10:45 - 12:00 noon** T1 Benchmarking Your Performance (*Judy Guido*)
- 10:45 - 12:00 noon** T2 Valuing Your Business (*Ed Wandtke*)
- 10:45 - 12:00 noon** T3 Organizing Maintenance Crews (*Tony Bass*)
- 12:00 - 1:15 PM** Contractor Roundtable Lunch
- 1:30 - 2:45 PM** Concurrent Educational Sessions
- 1:30 - 2:45 PM** T4 Stand Alone or Franchise: What To Do? (*Ed Wandtke*)
- 1:30 - 2:45 PM** T5 Maximizing Margins (*Dick Bare*)
- 1:30 - 2:45 PM** T6 Managing Equipment Smartly (*Mike Rorie*)
- 2:45 - 3:05 PM** Refreshment Break
- 3:05 - 4:20 PM** Concurrent Educational Sessions
- 3:05 - 4:20 PM** T7 Employee Incentive Programs (*Rick Upchurch & David St. John*)
- 3:05 - 4:20 PM** T8 Marketing Principles for Your Business (*Tony Bass*)
- 3:05 - 4:20 PM** T9 Repeat M7 (*Jack Mattingly*)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13

- 1:00-4:00 PM** Attendee Networking Lounge
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- 2:00 -4:00 PM** Pre-Conference Workshops

Managing A Multi-Cultural Workforce

This information-filled session will help managers develop the requisite skills necessary to effectively manage a multi-cultural workforce. After this session you'll have a better understanding of what motivates Hispanic/Latino workers, learn steps to better communication and expand your knowledge of the cultural values of Hispanic/Latino workers.

Jennifer Thomas, Spanish Training Services, Evanston, Ill.

All You Need to Know About Computers and the Web

Have questions on how to upgrade your computer system to keep pace with your rapidly growing operations? Want to know the best way to put your company on the Internet and design a web site that meets your marketing needs? Want to expand your service offerings and customer base through e-commerce? If the answer is yes then join us for this in-depth workshop. You'll take home the information you need to upgrade your company's computer systems and web site.

Bill Cox, Lawn & Landscape magazine, Cleveland, Ohio
Sponsored by www.lawnandlandscape.com

- 5:00 - 6:30 PM** Opening Keynote Session

Cactus Rolling: Taking Stress Out of the Workplace

Dr. Stephen Douglas

Stress. It is an issue everyone deals with on a daily basis and how you handle stress is important to you, your family, your employees and your company. Hear internationally recognized psychological and organizational development specialist Dr. Stephen Douglas share his unique view on how to manage stress in the workplace. This is not your typical clinical presentation with a laundry list of recommendations on stress management but instead one highlighted by humor and sharing real-life situations. Dr. Douglas will keep you laughing and learning throughout the program.

Sponsored By Kawasaki

- 6:30 - 8:00 PM** School of Management Welcome Reception
Sponsored by Aquascape Designs

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14

- 7:00 - 8:00 AM** Continental Breakfast
Sponsored by Snapper
- 7:30 - 8:45 AM** Breakfast Workshop

A Guide to Strategic Planning: Part I

Jim Huston
Smith Huston, Inc.

Successfully arriving where you want to go as an organization and how you get there is dependent upon designing and implementing the proper strategic plan. This comprehensive two-



Dr. Stephen Douglas



Jim Huston

07 To Register!

part session will put you to work with noted management consultant and author Jim Huston in developing a strategic plan for your company. Huston will help you analyze the various aspects of your operation and incorporate that information into a dynamic strategic action plan. After attending this two-part session you'll have the skills to:

- Prepare and write an effective strategic plan for your company.
- Learn how to involve your management team and employees in the planning process.
- Work with your management staff to implement your strategic plan as a vital and dynamic tool.
- Analyze your company's structure and identify strength and weakness areas.
- Organize your company structure for maximum efficiency and future growth.

■ 9:00 – 10:25 AM

Morning General Session

Managing Growth Effectively

Craig Ruppert & Chris Davitt
Ruppert Nurseries



Craig Ruppert



Chris Davitt

Your company is growing. Your revenue is rising and your account base continues to expand. You've added more employees and you've purchased new, better equipment. Sound like a perfect situation? On the surface yes, but if you dig deeper you'll discover you may have problems. You've added to your overhead significantly with additional employees, equipment and related costs, and you've changed the makeup of your company. And because of your success you have become more visible and the competition is nipping at your heels even more. How do you manage this growth process? If you want that answer then this session is for you. Hear from industry veterans Craig Ruppert and Chris Davitt who've been there and lived it. They'll share concepts on how to manage your company's growth effectively so it keeps in step with your overall plan and market conditions.

Sponsored by Toro

■ 10:45 AM – 12:00 noon

Concurrent Sessions

M1 10 Ways To Succeed at Customer Service

Bringing a group of new customers through the front door is good. Letting the same number get out the back door because your follow-up was poor or you didn't deliver what was promised in the contract is bad. And, typically, the difference between a satisfied and dissatisfied customer is a pleasant phone call or quick response to a problem. Learn 10 practical strategies that you can take home and implement in your company that will make your customer service efforts shine.

Speaker: Lloyd Smigel, **Care Management Consultants, Oceanside, Calif.**

M2 Open Book Management

There is never such a thing as too much information. Today companies of all sizes are taking an "open book" approach to management and sharing additional business related and financial information with employees. Learn how to use the "open book" style of management and make it a useful educational and motivational tool for employees.

Speaker: Phil Fogarty, **JP Horizons, Painesville, Ohio**

M3 Creating New Business Opportunities

One of the biggest challenges facing lawn and landscape contractors today is finding new markets for their services. This valuable session that will show you creative, innovative methods to unearth new business opportunities and turn previously unknown accounts into profitable, long-term customers for your company.

Speaker: Roger Braswell, **TruGreen LandCare, Memphis, Tenn.**

M4 Motivating Employees: A Different Approach

Managing and motivating employees is a challenging task for managers in the lawn and landscape contracting industry. How do you raise the level of service your employees provide customers and have them enthusiastically buy into your company goals? Learn how to share the keys to motivating employees and getting them to work as team.

Speaker: Bill Hoopes, **Scotts Lawn Service, Marysville, Ohio**

■ 12:00 noon – 1:15 PM

Contractor Roundtable Lunch

■ 1:30 – 2:45 PM

Concurrent Sessions

M5 Leadership Principles

It all starts at the top. Every company needs an effective leader to guide it on the road to success. In this informative session you'll analyze various styles of leadership that have been successfully used to drive companies to reach the next level. Identify what style is best suited to your strengths as a leader and how you can maximize your talents to be a more effective, knowledgeable and valuable manager.

Speaker: Bill Hoopes, **Scotts Lawn Service, Marysville, Ohio**

M6 Open Book Management (repeat session)

For session description see Session M2

M7 Designing an Operations Blueprint

Learn how to properly analyze your company's operational structure and spot areas where waste and duplicity commonly occur. From route scheduling and sales follow-up procedures to equipment and product inventory, keeping an eye to the vital elements of your company's day-to-day operations is essential to building a well run and profitable organization.

Speaker: Jack Mattingly, **Mattingly & Associates, Woodstock, Ga.**

M8 Creating New Business Opportunities (repeat session)

For session description see Session M3

■ 3:05 – 5:30 PM

Afternoon General Session

All You Need To Know About Bidding and Estimating

Jerry Gaeta
Vander Kooi & Associates



Jerry Gaeta

Proper estimating and bidding is at the core of every landscape contractor's business operation. If you do it properly you end up with a satisfied chain of individuals – customers, employees and suppliers. If you do it wrong the results can create problems up and down that chain and cost your company money and customers. To secure better control over the bidding and estimating process we've brought in Jerry Gaeta from Vander Kooi & Associates to share with the formula for successful bidding and estimating based on the widely used and respected "Vander Kooi System." This in-depth session is one you will not want to miss and will cover:

- Four Things A Good Pricing System Does For A Company
- Labor Costing
- Equipment Costing
- Handling The Labor Burden
- Overhead Allocation
- Generating Profit

Sponsored by Shindaiwa

■ 5:30 – 6:30 PM

Networking Cocktail Reception

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

■ **7:00 – 8:00 AM**

Continental Breakfast

Sponsored by Great Dane Power Equipment

■ **7:30 – 8:45 AM**

Breakfast Workshop

A Guide to Strategic Planning: Part II

Jim Huston

Smith Huston, Inc.

Continuation of Monday Session. For a complete session description see the Monday session listing.

■ **9:00 – 10:30 AM**

General Session

Strategies for Increasing Your Profitability

David Minor



David Minor

In today's bottom line oriented economy many businesses focus their efforts on making the balance sheet as attractive as possible. However it takes more than a sharp pencil to make your balance sheet a true representation of your company's financial standing. It requires an analysis of how you run your company on a daily basis and the willingness to be flexible when necessary and the strength to hold the line when you have to. In this informative session join one of the industry's most successful entrepreneurs, David Minor, as he shares strategies that will allow you to increase your company's profitability while maintaining high quality service. Learn how to look at key areas of your operation and position them and your company to succeed.

Sponsored by Echo

■ **10:45 AM – 12:00 noon**

Concurrent Sessions

T 1 Benchmarking Your Performance

How do you currently measure your company's performance? How do you measure your competition's performance? Securing the answers to those questions is important if you want to see your company grow. Find out the steps involved in benchmarking your company's performance and that of your competition. Learn how to interpret and use the information collected to help your company grow.

Speaker: Judy Guido, **TruGreen LandCare, Memphis, Tenn.**

T 2 Valuing Your Business

What is your business worth? That is a question every small business owner asks from time to time. Knowing that information is important not only if you are considering selling your business or acquiring another company, but also when you are applying for a loan to expand your business. Learn how to accurately determine the value of your business and put your company in the best financial position possible.

Speaker: Ed Wandtke, **Wandtke & Associates, Columbus, Ohio**

T 3 Organizing Maintenance Crews

Properly organizing your company's maintenance crews is a major component in setting up a successful operational structure. In this informative session you'll learn how to determine the size and makeup of the crew, learn tips for improved scheduling and how to maximize the labor time of your crews with an eye to the bottom line.

Speaker: Tony Bass, **Bass Custom Landscapes, Bonaire, Ga.**

■ **12:00 – 1:15 PM**

Contractor Roundtable Lunch

Sponsored by AgrEvo

■ **1:30 – 2:45 PM**

Concurrent Sessions

T 4 Stand Alone or Franchise: What to Do?

Are you trying to decide if going it on your own is worth it? Is being part of a franchise organization the better route? Hear the pros and cons of being on your own or being part of a franchise operation. See where your company would benefit most and how to go about making this important decision.

Speaker: Ed Wandtke, **Wandtke & Associates, Columbus, Ohio**

T 5 Maximizing Margins

Improving your company's balance sheet takes more than juggling the numbers at the end of the month. It takes close examination at the operational and financial details in all areas of your business. From employee salaries and benefits to equipment and product expenses, all these items impact your margins. Learn how to prioritize your expenses, identify areas where the belt can be tightened and improve your profits.

Speaker: Dick Bare, **Arbor-Nomics, Norcross, Ga.**

T 6 Managing Equipment Smartly

Equipment is the lifeblood of the landscape contractor – without the proper tools not much gets done. Managing equipment inventory and usage wisely is a key component to a company's productivity and profitability. Discover how to maximize efficient use of equipment to minimize unnecessary labor costs and related expenditures.

Speaker: Mike Rorie, **Groundmasters, Cincinnati, Ohio**

■ **3:05 – 4:20 PM**

Concurrent Sessions

T 7 Employee Incentive Programs

In today's competitive job market where unemployment is low and the demand for skilled workers high, keeping good employees is a challenge. Discover strategies for developing unique and attractive employee incentive plans that will help keep your employees onboard longer and boost profits.

Speaker: Rick Upchurch, **Nature Scapes, Lilburn, Ga.,**
& Dave St. John, **GreenSearch, Atlanta, Ga.**

T 8 Marketing Principles for Your Business

From cable television to personalized direct mail pieces, contractors are flexing their marketing muscle more readily than in years past. You'll review key points on how to "target" market your services to specific customer groups and receive a bigger bang for your marketing dollar.

Speaker: Tony Bass, **Bass Custom Landscapes, Bonaire, Ga.**

T 9 Designing an Operations Blueprint (repeat session)

For session description see session M7.

Speaker: Jack Mattingly, **Mattingly & Associates, Woodstock, Ga.**

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Hotel Information

A block of rooms has been reserved for School of Management attendees at the Dallas Marriott Quorum. Located in the heart of lively north Dallas, the Marriott is surrounded by numerous restaurants and is a free five-minute shuttle ride to the world famous Galleria Mall. Attendees should make their reservations directly with the hotel on or before **January 24, 2000** to receive the special conference room rate of \$115 per night (single/double). Please ask for the School of Management Conference rate. For reservations call the Dallas Marriott Quorum at 972/661-2800.

Discount Travel Information

School of Management has arranged for special discount airfare on American Airlines, the official airline of the School of Management. To take advantage of the discount rates, please contact the School of Management's Travel Coordinator Robin Stancik at 800/209-3218 between the hours of 8:30 AM and 6:00 PM Eastern. Her e-mail address is robinstan@aol.com.

Confirmations

All registrations postmarked by January 28, 2000 will be acknowledged by mail. Registrations received after that date should be picked up at the School of Management Registration Desk at the Dallas Marriott Quorum starting Sunday, February 13, 2000 at 1:00 p.m.

Airport Transportation

The Dallas Marriott Quorum is located off the Dallas Tollway North approximately 20 minutes from Dallas Fort Worth International Airport and 15 minutes to Dallas Love Field. Super Shuttle service is available from both airports. From Dallas Fort Worth International it is \$19 one-way per person and \$6 for each additional person. From Love Field it is \$12 one-way. Prices are subject to change without notice.

Cancellation/Substitution/Refund Policy

All cancellations must be made in writing. A full refund will be accepted if postmarked by January 28, 2000. Those received seven to 14 days before the conference are subject to a \$50 cancellation fee. No refund less than seven days before conference. Advancement payment is **required** for the golf tournament and no cancellations after February 4, 2000. *No on-site refunds.* Attendees can notify *Lawn & Landscape* at any time that another individual will attend the conference or social events in their place.

Conference Special Events

Lawn & Landscape **Tournament of Champions Golf Outing**

Sunday, February 13 ■ 8:00 AM

\$80 (Includes greens fees, cart, lunch, prizes and transportation)

Spend a morning testing your golf skills at the 2nd Annual Lawn & Landscape Tournament of Champions Golf Outing. The tournament format is a scramble with the winning team taking home special trophies. Cost for the outing is \$80 and includes greens fees, cart rental, practice balls, lunch, prizes and transportation to and from the course. **Advance registration and payment is required.** Registration deadline is February 3, 2000.

Why I Come To The School of Management...

"The School of Management Conference was extremely informative and well-organized. The speakers really knew 'their stuff' and the topics timely. My partner and I learned some fresh ideas that will certainly help our business grow."

Susan Wright
Let Go... Let Us Lawn & Garden Care
Highland, Maryland



Registration Form

February 13-15, 2000

Dallas Marriott Quorum

Dallas, Texas

(Please print or type. Form may be photocopied for additional registrants; one form per person)

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Name As It Will Appear On Badge _____

Title _____ Company _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____

E-mail Address _____

Payment Information

☐ Check Enclosed (payable to School of Management)

☐ Bill My: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express ☐ Discover

Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Billing Address _____

Name On Card _____

Signature _____

Please Note: Registrations will NOT be processed until payment information is received. All faxed and phone registrations MUST include credit card information. Check must be drawn in U.S. dollars and drawn from a U.S. Bank. There will be a \$25 fee for returned checks.

Registration Information

	Number	Total
Full Conference Registration	\$195	=
(Includes all educational sessions, conference materials, receptions, lunches, breakfasts, refreshment breaks)		
Group Conference Registration	\$165	=
(Three or more from same company)		
One-Day Registration	\$105	=
Tournament of Champions Golf Outing	\$80	=
TOTAL		

By Mail: Complete form and mail, with payment, to School of Management,
4012 Bridge Ave., Cleveland, OH 44113

By Fax: Complete form and fax, with credit card information, to 216/961-0364

By Phone: Call 800/456-0707

School of Management Registration Check List

- ☒ Completed Registration Form
- ☒ Included Method of Payment
- ☒ Made Hotel Reservation at Dallas Marriott Quorum
- ☒ Called for Discount Travel Information
- ☒ Told a Friend To Register For School of Management

For Office Use Only

Date Received _____

Registration# _____

Payment Type _____

Amount _____

I _____ G _____

(continued from page 60)


position from entry-level laborers to salaried senior supervisors. The first level on the scale is an unskilled laborer without a driver's license, and that person earns \$6.50 per hour. For an employee to advance from one level to the next, he or she has to take a specified company training class, pass a test and demonstrate the ability to perform the new skills in the field to their manager's satisfaction.

In addition, managers consider an employee's safety record and attendance when deciding whether or not they pass the test and get the raise in order to encourage employees in these areas as well.

The company's work week consists of four, 10-hour days with Fridays generally being reserved for these training classes or making up work if one of the preceding days brought rain.

"Now, our employees understand what they have to do to advance, and they feel good about advancing because they've truly earned something," Havron pointed out. "In addition, the managers aren't hearing as many complaints about money because the employees realize that if they want to make more money all they have to do is pass the class. And the company ends up with a better-trained workforce."

Havron also explained that not all of the levels of advancement in the certification program require the demonstration of a physical skill. One advancement level is contingent solely on an employee expressing his interest in assuming more responsibility to his manager.

"I think the training program has also resulted in a real decrease in turnover of our Spanish-speaking employees because now they see the job as something more than an opportunity just to earn money and they become more interested in doing a good job," added Herrera. 

The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine

(continued from page 19)

"These relationships can be powerful when you've built a reputation in the market for doing quality work and the prospective client is looking at two or three companies' bids that are only 1 percent or so apart," continued Tankersley. "That's where relationships close the deal for you."

MOVING FORWARD. Even as the rapid consolidation of landscape contractors continues around them in the Atlanta market, Morrell and Smith are confident about the company's future. Morrell refuses to put specific financial sales goals in front of the company to shoot for, however.

"We have never planned for growth," he explained. "We focus on operations and op-


continue supplying opportunities for good people," pointed out Smith. "If the company stops growing then the good people will stop growing and they will leave us."

Smith also pointed out that The Morrell Group's budgeting process is all built from the bottom up, which makes sales goals a result of the process instead of the start of the process.

"Our budgets start at the bottom," he explained. "We figure out what our costs are going to be to service the number of customers we expect to service in the coming year, then we add in our margins, and that tells us what our revenues have to be. From there, we take that number over to sales and produce the sales goals."

Morrell cautioned against growing too fast, although he said what constitutes "too fast" may be different for each company.

"The reason companies fail when they grow too fast is that they run out of capital because either they can't organize quickly enough to take advantage of the flow of money through the company or they're pricing their work too low and they can't make a profit on it," the co-founder of the Metro Atlanta Landscape and Turf Association remarked. "We only operate on our own capital, so we have to create capital in order to grow. Then there's only so much capital available, so you have to use it wisely, which provides a self-check on management."

"So instead of focusing on growth, we would rather have quality customers and make our margins and then let the market take us where it is going," Morrell concluded. 

The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.



Morrell on:

COMPETITION

"Competition here has become so intense, and we saw a lot of national landscape companies show up in Atlanta with a lot of resources, people and experience. The presence of these companies in our market has probably been our biggest challenge."

portunities instead. We always figured Atlanta would grow and create opportunities and then we would grow and create our own opportunities depending on what the market provided.

"If you're in a down market and you're growing, then I think it's likely you're giving your work away because the only way to grow in a down market is to drop your price," Morrell continued. "I think companies have to grow with their market because it's imperative to grow and be profitable at the same time."

"The one reason we do need to grow is to



WANT more INFORMATION

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by Nicole Wisniewski

Perfecting company business forms and keeping them in order can make a world of difference when it comes to tracking profit and customer satisfaction.

Desired Revenue Per day

(Cost Justification Worksheet for Walk-Behind Aerator)

REVENUE

1. Labor Cost with Benefits ____ hours per day @ \$ ____ cost per hour = \$ ____

2. Equipment Cost per Hour ____ hours per day @ \$9 cost per hour = \$ ____

3. Truck and Trailer Cost per Day* \$50

4. TOTAL DIRECT COST (TDC) (add lines 1-3) \$ ____

5. General and Administrative Overhead ** \$100

6. BREAK-EVEN POINT (BEP) (add lines 4 & 5) \$ ____

7. Desired Net Profit Margin 20% X \$ ____ BEP = \$ ____

8. Minimum Revenue Required per Day to Achieve
20% Net Profit Margin (add lines 5 & 6) \$ ____

* Equipment cost per hour is a conservative estimate (for a walk-behind aerator) provided by Smith Huston, a Certified Professional Landscape Estimating firm.

** Truck and trailer, as well as general and administrative overhead, is an average provided by Smith Huston. For a more accurate model, contractor should figure their individual costs.

Business forms can always be improved upon for clarity, consistency and better customer service.

To aid in this venture, *Lawn & Landscape* presents a collection of forms currently being used by landscape contractors successfully in the industry.

DESIRED REVENUE PER DAY.

This cost justification worksheet can help contractors figure out the cost for using an walk-behind aerator on a job so they can price their service accordingly to make a profit.

PROFIT SHARING SCORE SHEET.

This sheet gives an example of how to score employee performance for the purpose of profit sharing.

SAMPLE CONTRACT. The contract Ray Pelletier, president, Ray's Lawn & Garden, Naples, Fla., uses is a one-page document listing 11 specific conditions.

An important clause to include in a landscape maintenance contract, ac-

Credit: Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products, Racine, Wis.

On the Right TRACK

Daily Landscape Time Sheet

Date/Day _____ Weather/Temp _____
 Project Name _____ Gas Card Out _____ In _____
 Foreman _____ Lunch ½ Hour 1 Hour (circle one)

LABOR (Please attach slip)

NAME	TIME IN	WORK DESCRIPTION	TIME OUT	TOTAL HOURS
1. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

EQUIPMENT (LP equipment or rental, please attach slip)

DESCRIPTION	L/P	RENTAL	HRS USED	COST
1. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

MATERIAL (Our material from yard or nurseries/suppliers))

SOURCE	DESCRIPTION (Please attach slip)	COST
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____

SUB CONTRACTORS

LIST NAME	TIME IN	TIME OUT	DESCRIPTION OF WORK
1. _____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	_____

EXPLANATION OF DAY'S WORK

For office use only (entered in computer)

A detailed time sheet can help contractors track hours worked and the specific work accomplished on a particular job, the day's weather and equipment and material used. Credit: ALCA

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Business Management

according to Pelletier, is the 30-day clause (see No. 10 on page 72). This clause gives the customer or the contractor a chance to change or cancel the agreement for any reason provided a 30-day notice is given.

CLIENT SURVEY. Keeping track of how a contractor's customers feel about their lawn care or lawn maintenance service is crucial to customer satisfaction and retention.

HOURLY WAGE CONFIGURATIONS.

The fixed salary for a fluctuating work week pay system is often used in the lawn care industry. It provides that the employee receives a fixed salary from week to week. The salary may be prorated only during the employee's first or last week of employment. If the employee works more than 40 hours, the salary is averaged over each hour worked so that the amount of overtime the employee receives is "half time."

Profit Sharing Score Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

DESCRIPTION	SCORE
1. Meet job costing budgets: (breakeven 30 %)	_____
2. Results of client surveys: (breakeven 15 %)	_____

Review of job description, to include:

3. Paperwork: (breakeven 11%)	_____
A) Timesheets	_____
B) Employee training log	_____
C) Equipment maintenance/repair forms	_____
D) Vehicle and tool inspection forms	_____
E) Daily property inspection sheets	_____
4. Equipment and tools: (breakeven 11%)	_____
A) Accountable for condition and amount	_____
B) Cleanliness	_____
C) Proper use	_____
5. Safety: (breakeven 11%)	_____
A) Completion of tailgate talks consistently	_____
B) Limit personal injuries	_____
C) Limit vehicle accidents	_____
6. Attendance: (breakeven 11%)	_____
A) Excused absent	_____
B) Unexcused absent	_____
C) Tardiness	_____
7. Attitude: (breakeven 11%)	_____
A) Positive and enthusiastic when talking with clients	_____
B) Promotes harmony among fellow employees	_____

TOTAL SCORE _____

Credit: Duke's Landscape Management, Hackettstown, N.J., and ALCA

(continued on page 72)

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USE READER SERVICE #115

Business Management

(continued from page 70)

Sample Contract

Customer: John Doe

Phone: 123-4567 Date: 1/1/00

Billing Address:

Job Location:

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Business Management

(continued from page 72)

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Client Survey

SALES

Initial Sales Response

☐
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☐

Design Recommendation

☐
☐
☐

Pricing

☐
☐
☐

Overall Aesthetic Value of Plants/Containers

☐
☐
☐

Timeliness of Sale and Follow Ups

☐
☐
☐

INSTALLATION

Scheduling & Completion of Installation

☐
☐
☐

Appearance of Installation Team

☐
☐
☐

Cooperation & Flexibility of Installation Team

☐
☐
☐

Plant Material Fits Design Specifications

☐
☐
☐

Appearance of Plants and Containers

☐
☐
☐

Locations Left Clean

☐
☐
☐

SERVICE

Appearance of Service Technician and Equipment

☐
☐
☐

Knowledge of Service Technician

☐
☐
☐

Professionalism of Service Technician

☐
☐
☐

Appearance of Plants and Containers

☐
☐
☐

Consistent Quality of Horticultural Service

☐
☐
☐

Promptness of Response and Resolution

☐
☐
☐

Cost of Service

☐
☐
☐

ADMINISTRATIVE

Professionalism and Courtesy of Staff

☐
☐
☐

Accuracy of Billing

☐
☐
☐

Follow Through on Promises

☐
☐
☐

Prompt Resolution of Concerns

☐
☐
☐

Follow Up and Continued Contact

☐
☐
☐

Value of Service Cost

☐
☐
☐

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(continued on page 89)

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Article Index

CONVERSATION SERIES

- A Conversation with Burt Sperber (March p.146)
 A Conversation with Dick Hunter (Oct. p. 137)
 A Conversation with Dave Zerfoss (Nov. p. 164)

COVER PROFILES

- Model for Success, One Step Tree and Lawn Care (Jan. p. 34)
 Growing the Right Way, CoCal Landscape (Feb. p. 46)
 It's All About People, Cagwin & Dorward (March p. 40)
 Planning for Success, Treasure Coast Irrigation (April p. 46)
 Growing Places, Ever-Green Turf and Landscape (May p. 40)
 Educated by Experience, St. John & Associates (June p. 37)
 Dealing With It, Weingartz Supply (July p. 30)
 Attention to Detail, Arbor-Nomics Turf (Aug. p. 18)
 First Thing's First, Scian's Landscaping (Sept. p. 18)
 Keeping the Vision, The Morrell Group (Dec. p. 10, 20, 32, 44, 54)

DESIGN

- On Solid Ground (Jan. p. 118)
 Design Notebook: ProMega Corporation (Feb. p. 34)
 Hands Off! (low-maintenance landscapes) (Feb. p. 84)
 Designing for Two (low maintenance landscapes) (Feb. p. 88)
 On the Water Front (building water features) (March p.126)
 Design Notebook: Landscape Techniques (April p. 24)
 Eco-Logical Environments (water feature maintenance) (April p. 68)
 Taking Lights to New Heights (April p. 84)
 Design Notebook: Ruppert Landscape Co. (May p. 28)
 Design Notebook: McHale & McHale Landscape Design (July p. 20)
 A Simple Plan (July p. 82)
 The Right Approach (Oct. p. 130)
 Design Notebook: Northwestern Landscape Co. (Nov. p. 30)

FERTILIZER/PESTICIDE/TURF SOIL ISSUES AND RESEARCH

- White Grub Control (Jan. p. 54)
 Horticulture Forum: Planting Annuals (Feb. p. 27)
 Early-Season Weed Control (Feb. p. 60)
 Turf Treatments (Feb. p. 106)
 Environmental Forum (March p. 32)
 New Pesticide Formulations (March p.100)
 After the Weeds Arrive (June p. 51)
 Turf Seed Buyers' Guide (June S1)
 The Seed Market Scene (June S3)
 The Perfect Blend (June S8)
 Top Trends in Turf (June S11)
 Good Measure (landscape moisture) (June p. 94)
 A Material Advantage (using landscape fabrics) (June p. 110)

- A Threat to Turf (July p. 54)
 Soil Testing (Aug. p. 66)
 Choosing Turf Species (Sept. p. 30)
 The Future of Pest Management in the Landscape (Oct. p. 101)
 Fall Fertilization Strategies (Oct. p. 112)
 Herbicide/Fertilizer Combinations (Nov. p. 146)

HOW WE DO IT...

- Managing Branch Operations at Cagwin & Dorward (March p.166)
 Structuring Mowing Crews at Mike Ward Landscaping (April p. 138)
 Route Management at Groundmasters (May p. 134)
 Customer Service at Raymow (June p. 132)
 Employee Leasing at TurfPride (July p. 120)
 Building an Office at Bozzuto Landscaping (Aug. p. 92)
 Managing the H2-B Program (Sept. p. 102)
 Selling Design Work at Greenleaf Landscapes (Oct. p. 156)

INDUSTRY NEWS AND ISSUES

- In Short Supply (nursery market report) (Jan. p. 44)
 The Quest for Quality, Total Quality Management (Jan. p. 128)
 Working Smart (School of Management) (Jan. p. 138)
 Winning Profiles (Landscape Maintenance and Chemical Lawn Care Technicians of the Year) (Feb. p. 114)
 Send in the Subs (Feb. p. 120)
 Nowhere to Hide: Customer Service (Feb. p. 132)
 The Morning After (mergers and acquisitions) (Feb. p. 136)
 Consolidation: One Year Later (March p. 54)
 Computer Software Buyers' Guide (March p. 75)
 Control for the Contractor (March p.134)
 An Internet Introduction (March p.140)
 The Price Is Right (pricing mowing) (April p. 92)
 Smash Hit (School of Management has 400 attendees) (April p. 118)
 Luring Labor (April p. 120)
 Risky Business (risk communication) (May p. 100)
 When the Media Calls (May p. 109)
 Measure for Measure (School of Management) (May p. 114)
 Lawn & Landscape Looks Back at the Early '80s (June p. 116)
 The Time Is Now (July p. 38)
 Steering the Pricing Ship (July p. 70)
 Making Sense of Insurance (July p. 102)
 Deck the Halls (Aug. p. 40)
 On-site Operations (Sept. p. 53)
 Coping with Workers' Compensation (Sept. p. 79)
 Snow & Ice Control Supplement and Buyers' Guide (Sept. p. S1)
 Special Report: State of the Industry (Oct. p. S1)
 The Edge (edging and border products) (Oct. p. 120)
 White Paper (an in-depth look at the labor shortage in the landscape industry) (Oct. p. W1)
 Managing the HOA Account (Nov. p. 80)
 Surviving in the Bid Market (Nov. p. 90)

A look back at the

news and issues

covered throughout

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Article INDEX

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5	29	53	77	101	125	149	173	197	221	245
6	30	54	78	102	126	150	174	198	222	246
7	31	55	79	103	127	151	175	199	223	247
8	32	56	80	104	128	152	176	200	224	248
9	33	57	81	105	129	153	177	201	225	249
10	34	58	82	106	130	154	178	202	226	250
11	35	59	83	107	131	155	179	203	227	251
12	36	60	84	108	132	156	180	204	228	252
13	37	61	85	109	133	157	181	205	229	253
14	38	62	86	110	134	158	182	206	230	254
15	39	63	87	111	135	159	183	207	231	255
16	40	64	88	112	136	160	184	208	232	256
17	41	65	89	113	137	161	185	209	233	257
18	42	66	90	114	138	162	186	210	234	258
19	43	67	91	115	139	163	187	211	235	259
20	44	68	92	116	140	164	188	212	236	260
21	45	69	93	117	141	165	189	213	237	261
22	46	70	94	118	142	166	190	214	238	262
23	47	71	95	119	143	167	191	215	239	263
24	48	72	96	120	144	168	192	216	240	264

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5	29	53	77	101	125	149	173	197	221	245
6	30	54	78	102	126	150	174	198	222	246
7	31	55	79	103	127	151	175	199	223	247
8	32	56	80	104	128	152	176	200	224	248
9	33	57	81	105	129	153	177	201	225	249
10	34	58	82	106	130	154	178	202	226	250
11	35	59	83	107	131	155	179	203	227	251
12	36	60	84	108	132	156	180	204	228	252
13	37	61	85	109	133	157	181	205	229	253
14	38	62	86	110	134	158	182	206	230	254
15	39	63	87	111	135	159	183	207	231	255
16	40	64	88	112	136	160	184	208	232	256
17	41	65	89	113	137	161	185	209	233	257
18	42	66	90	114	138	162	186	210	234	258
19	43	67	91	115	139	163	187	211	235	259
20	44	68	92	116	140	164	188	212	236	260
21	45	69	93	117	141	165	189	213	237	261
22	46	70	94	118	142	166	190	214	238	262
23	47	71	95	119	143	167	191	215	239	263
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2000 Truck Preview	(Nov. p. 129)
A Compensation Program that Works	(Nov. p. 150)
New Product Showcase	(Nov. p. 154)
Managing a Family Business	(Nov. p. 32)
Special Report: Environmental Leadership Awards	(Nov. p. E1)

IN MINOR'S LEAGUE

Recruiting and Retaining Good Employees	(Nov. p. 25)
---	--------------

IRRIGATION

Variable Approaches	(Jan. p. 93)
Ask the Droughtbusters (How can I retain irrigation customers in bid work?)	(Feb. p. 26)
Go With the Flow	(Feb. p. 96)
Boosting Irrigation Sales	(April p. 56)
Irrigation Notebook: Improve Irrigation Earnings	(April p. 34)
Ask the Droughtbusters (How much should contractors tell customers about irrigation?)	(April p. 44)
Getting into the Zone	(May p. 88)
Proper Head Replacement	(June p. 34)
Ask the Droughtbusters (Are audits really so complicated that they require a computer?)	(July p. 21)
High and Dry	(July p. 92)
An Irrigation Check-Up	(Aug. p. 72)
The Future is Now	(Sept. p. 42)
Irrigation Notebook: Illinois Battle Continues	(Oct. p. 43)
State of the Irrigation Industry	(Oct. p. 44)
11 Common Irrigation Errors	(Oct. p. 54)
Purchasing Power (purchasing irrigation products)	(Nov. p. 135)

MOWING/POWER EQUIPMENT

The Multi-Purpose Machine (compact utility vehicles)	(Jan. p. 111)
Commercial Mowers Buyers' Guide	(Jan. p. M1)
Driving Force (riding mower update)	(Feb. p. 72)
Walk This Way (walk-behind mower update)	(March p. 106)
"Turning" Heads (zero turn mowers)	(May p. 76)
Healthy Alternative (ergonomics)	(June p. 83)
Bringing up the Rear (trailers)	(June p. 104)
A Little Peace and Quiet (engines)	(July p. 62)
A Constant Battle (mulching mowers)	(Aug. p. 50)
What Will Be Left? (hand-held power equipment)	(Aug. p. 56)
Let it Snow (preparing equipment for winter)	(Sept. p. 65)
Making Mowers Last	(Oct. p. 78)

TRADE SHOWS

It's Show Time! (The GIE and Irrigation Assoc. Shows)	(Jan. p. 140)
Leader of the Pack (School of Management review)	(July p. 97)

TREES AND ORNAMENTALS

Nursery Report: Shortage Situation	(Feb. p. 36)
Power to Prune	(Feb. p. 127)
Perennial Prudence	(March p. 36)
Insect Management in Turf and Ornamentals	(March p. 66)
Careful Choices (selecting trees and shrubs)	(March p. 116)
Recognizing Tree Decline	(April p. 28)
Beating the Odds (selecting ornamentals)	(April p. 100)
Anthraxnose Disease on Shade Trees	(April p. 108)
Plant Care and Selections	(May p. 20)



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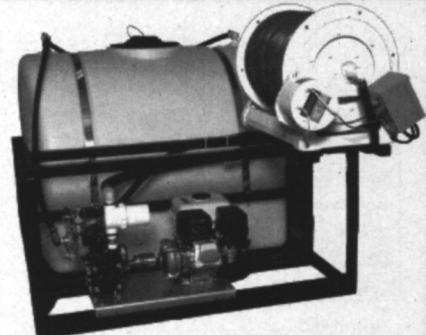
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Article Index

Preserving Historic Trees	(May p. 26)
Intelligent Installations	(May p. 54)
In Living Color	(May p. 62)
Money Can Grow on Trees	(Aug. p. 29)
Plants Must Have a Complete Meal	(Sept. p. 72)
Getting Started in Tree & Shrub Care	(Oct. p. 66)
Planning Plant Purchases	(Nov. p. 54)
Landscaping with Bulbs	(Nov. p. 66)
On the Right Track (business forms)	(Dec. p. 67)

NEWS INDEX

ACQUISITIONS/MERGERS/ DEALS

Caterpillar Buys into ASV.	(Jan. p. 6)
AgrEvo, Rhone-Poulenc Continue Merger Mania	(Jan. p. 20)
Zeneca Announces Merger Plans	(Jan. p. 20)
Ferris Prepares for Growth	(Feb. p. 6)
Yazoo/ Kees to Acquire Dig-It	(Feb. p. 10)
Two are Now One in Texas	(Feb. p. 16)
Becker-Underwood Gains Novartis Brands	(March p. 15)
OPEI, CARB Negotiate Agreement	(March p. 15)
Lebanon Acquires Pennmulch	(April p. 10)
Doesburg Acquires Thornton Landscape	(April p. 15)
Strategic Alliance Creates Biopesticides	(April p. 18)
LandCare, TruGreen-ChemLawn Deal Closes	(April p. 22)
Riverdale Sold	(April p. 22)
L&L Landscape Acquired by TruGreen-ChemLawn	(May p. 16)
Kanga, Ariens Finalize Deal	(June p. 8)
New Holland Acquires Case	(June p. 22)
Terra to Sell Distribution	(June p. 29)

TruGreen LandCare Continues Buying	(Aug. p. 8)
Seed Research, Advanta Join Forces	(Aug. p. 8)
Griffin, Nation's Ag Team Up	(Aug. p. 13)
TruGreen LandCare Announces Changes	(Oct. p. 10)
Husqvarna Acquires Yazoo-Kees Turf Business	(Nov. p. 20)
Weed Man Targets U.S. Market	(Nov. p. 20)

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Mergers and Acquisitions Focus of Seminar	(Feb. p. 25)
PLCAA Celebrates 20 Years	(April p. 8)
CLCA Releases Wage Report	(July p. 12)
Program Takes Environmental Approach	(July p. 18)
IA Wins Battle in Illinois	(July p. 18)

EQUIPMENT

Two-Stroke vs. Four-Stroke Engines	(Jan. p. 24)
Calibrating Your Sprayer	(Feb. p. 30)
Walk-Behinds Lead the Way	(March p. 8)
Payoffs in Pruning	(March p. 26)
A Balancing Act	(July p. 22)

GENERAL INDUSTRY NEWS

Big Get Better	(Jan. p. 6)
Swingle Tree's Dickson Dies	(Jan. p. 6)
Paluch Publishes Again	(Jan. p. 16)
Small Businesses Find Common Problems	(Jan. p. 16)
Weed, Disease Pressures Up	(Feb. p. 6)
Ruppert Earns Presidential Award	(Feb. p. 14)

(continued on page 84)




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Article Index

(continued from page 82)

Where Did the Grass Go?	(Feb. p. 20)
Top Franchises Grow Green	(Feb. p. 20)
Land Escapes Offers Design Alternatives	(March p. 20)
What Do You Compute?	(April p. 8)
Housing Starts Drop Again	(April p. 15)
Blower Battle Rages On	(April p. 22)
Labor Issues Take Center Stage	(April p. 30)
Where Does the Money Go?	(May p. 8)
Student Career Days Soars	(May p. 8)
Lawn & Landscape Marks 20 Years	(May p. 8)
Is the Web Site Worthwhile?	(May p. 32)
Industry Computer Survey	(May p. 32)
A Century of SNA	(June p. 12)
Economy May Slow Power Equipment Sales	(June p. 12)
Landscaping Popular in Home Improvement	(June p. 18)
Catching Up With Davey Tree	(June p. 22)
An Online Advantage	(July p. 6)
Study Shows Pest Control Trends	(July p. 10)
TruGreen-ChemLawn Announces New Name and Leadership Changes	(July p. 10)
Sod on the Rise	(July p. 18)
USDA Targets Asian Longhorned Beetle	(July p. 28)
Ag Census Shows Jump in Nursery Sales	(Aug. p. 13)
Demand Grows for Landscape Architects	(Aug. p. 13)
Pesticide Battles Heat Up	(Sept. p. 8)
New York Fines TruGreen-ChemLawn	(Sept. p. 10)
Studies Link Home Price to Landscape	(Sept. p. 15)
Widespread Fire Ant Control	(Oct. p. 6)

Firm Offers Marketing Strategies	(Oct. p. 6)
New Franchise Opportunities Abound	(Oct. p. 12)
Workers' Comp Wait Costs \$\$\$	(Nov. p. 10)
Catching Up With U.S. Lawns	(Nov. p. 10)

IN YOUR TURF

Adding Adjuvants	(Jan. p. 32)
------------------------	--------------

LEGISLATION/ POLITICS

Immigrant Labor Bill Killed in Congress	(Jan. p. 10)
EPA Moves Forward with FQPA	(March p. 8)
PLCAA Plans Legislative Day	(June p. 12)
Gov. Ventura Vetoes Rain Sensor Bill	(Aug. p. 10)
Anti-Pesticide Activity Hot Spots	(Nov. p. 10)

MANUFACTURERS/ SUPPLIERS

John Deere Opens New Facility	(Feb. p. 6)
Scotts Reorganizes Supply Side	(Feb. p. 24)
ISS Announces New Name	(March p. 10)
LESCO Acquires New Technology	(May p. 18)
Novartis T&O Names New Chief	(June p. 8)
More ABT Changes	(June p. 12)
Dow on the Defensive	(Oct. p. 20)
Terra Announces New Name	(Nov. p. 12)
AgriBioTech Reorganizes	(Nov. p. 14)

TRADE SHOWS

School of Management a Sold-Out Success	(March p. 22)
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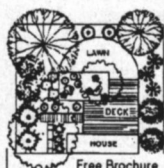
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Large irrigation contractor seeking qualified applicants for the Atlanta, GA and Charlotte, NC areas. Managerial and Technical positions available, excellent opportunity for advancement. Great benefits, insurance, performance bonuses and other incentives. Relocation expenses considered. Company is seeking to become a leader in the industry, you too could be a part if qualified. Fax resume to 770/913-0180.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

The Green Plan, Inc., a fifteen year old full service landscape, tree care and irrigation company located at the base of the Colorado Rocky Mountains is continuing to grow and expand operations.

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- Licensed Tree and Lawn Spray Technicians
- Irrigation Service Technicians
- Landscape Maintenance Foreman
- Landscape Installation Foreman
- Tree Climbers and Bucket Operators

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303/938-8137 Fax
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Renovation	Right of Way
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Spill Clean Up	

Contact one of our Green Industry Specialists for a quote at 1-800-888-2398 or by fax at 1-614-221-2203

M.F.P. INSURANCE AGENCY, INC.

(continued from page 74)

Wanted to Buy

HYDROSEEDERS & STRAWBLOWERS

We buy, trade and sell new and used hydroseeders and straw blowers **ONLINE**. Call 800/245-0551 for our catalog of hydromulching equipment and supplies, and go **ONLINE** for our latest used equipment list.

HTTP://www.ErosionControlTech.com

E-mail: Neil@ErosionControlTech.com

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

Statement required by the act of October, 23, 1962. Section 4369, title 39, United States Code, showing the ownership of Lawn & Landscape published monthly at 4012 Bridge Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44113-3399 Cuyahoga County.

The name of the publisher is: Cindy Code, 4012 Bridge Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44113-3399. The name of the editor is: Bob West, 4012 Bridge Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44113-3399.

The owners are: Richard J. W. Foster, 4012 Bridge Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44113-3399, Maureen Mertz, 4012 Bridge Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44113-3399 and Publishers Printing Press, 100 Frank E. Simon Avenue, Shepardsville, Kentucky 40165.

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

Cindy Code, Publisher

Hourly Wage Configurations

FLAT HOURLY RATE WITHOUT INCENTIVE OR BONUS SYSTEM

FORMULA: $1\frac{1}{2} \times$ the flat rate for hours over 40 + flat rate \times hours up to 40.

EXAMPLE: Employee flat rate is \$10 per hour

Employee works 50 hours.

Total pay for that week is \$550:

Regular pay: 40 hours \times \$10 = \$400

Overtime pay: 10 hours \times ($1\frac{1}{2} \times$ \$10) = \$150.

\$400 + \$150 = \$550

FLAT HOURLY RATE PLUS INCENTIVE

An employee earns \$10 per hour. He works 45 hours per week and receives \$25 for meeting job incentives. How much should he be paid for that week?

STEP 1: Determine the base compensation for the week, before including overtime:

45 hours \times \$10	=	\$450
Incentive Pay	=	\$25
Base Compensation	=	\$475

STEP 2: Determine regular hourly rate:

\$475 divided by 45 = \$10.55

STEP 3: Since employee received \$10.55 for every hour between 1 and 45 hours, only half time is owed for each hour over 40. Determine half time rate:

\$10.55 divided by 2 = \$5.27 (half time)

STEP 4: Determine total amount of half time owed:

\$5.27 (half time) \times 5 (no. of hours over 40) = \$26.38

STEP 5: Determine total earnings:

Base compensation	=	\$475
+ Total half time	=	\$26.38
Total Earnings	=	\$501.38

FIXED SALARY FOR FLUCTUATING WORK WEEK

FORMULA:

a. Salary

Hours = Regular Rate

b. Salary + (hours over 40 \times $\frac{1}{2}$ Regular Rate)

EXAMPLE:

Employee receives \$400 per week. Assume employee works 50 hours in one week. What is that employee's total compensation?

STEP 1: Figure the regular hourly rate for that week:

(\$400) divided by hours (50) = Regular Hourly Rate (\$8)

STEP 2: Since the employee received his regular hourly rate for the week, only half time is owed for hours beyond 40:

Regular Hourly Rate (\$8) divided by 2 = Half Time (\$4)

STEP 3: Total Half Time for the week:

Hours over 40 (10) \times half time (\$4) = Total Half Time (\$40)

STEP 4: To determine total earnings for the week, add salary and total half time:

Fixed Salary	\$400
Half Time	\$40
Total Earnings	\$440

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Fits Most Commercial Mowers, Utility Vehicles or Tractors



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Ad Index

ADVERTISER	PG#	RS#
AgrEvo	53	79
American Cyanamid	24-25	60
Associated Landscape Contractors of America	38	136
Aquascape Designs	27	91
B. & D.A. Weisburger	72	114
Ballard Equipment	8	150
BioPlex Organics	26	143
Biotech	28	141
Blue Bird	22	144
Brisco	70	117
Brouwer Turf	83	104
CLC Labs	42	133
Creative Curb	81	107
C&S Turfcare	52	125
Daniels Pull Plow	28	142
Design Imaging Group	8	149
Easy Lawn	83	103
Echo	16-17	58
Erosion Control	46,75	129,111
Fabriscap	75	147
Finn Corp.	48	126
Foley Enterprises	15	148
Forestry Supplies	36	139
Galbreath	56	124
GlenMac	47	127
GMC Commercial Vehicles	5	11
Gravelly	23	13
Gregson-Clark	18	146
Horticopia	83	102
Hunter Industries	21	40
John Deere	49	80
Lawn & Landscape Online	73	
Lawn & Landscape Online Marketplace	71	
Lawn & Landscape School of Management	61-66	
Lawn Power & Equipment Co.	18,90	109,96
Leon Ramrod	6	152
LESCO	50,51	36
Line-Ward	74	112
Longhorn	70	116
Marsan Turf	58	122
Neotech	74	113
New England Grows	90	98
Nitro Green	75	110
Oldham Chemical	81	108
Perma Green	45	131
Plant Health Care	31	90
Pro-Tech	45	132
Rain Bird	43	68
Real Green Computers	45	97
Recreational Leisure	36	138
Regal Chemical	9	92
Rexius Express	30	
RISE	59	84
Riverdale Chemical	37,39,41	18,20,22
Rohm & Haas	57	100
RohMid	34-35	88
Rootwell	58	120
Scag	29	51
Scotts Lawn Service	90	130
Sensible Software	7	12
Shindaiwa	33	89
Ski Landscape	58	121
Spanish Training	6	151
Sweepster	82	105
Toro Sitework Systems	2	137
Transitional Systems	60	119
Tree Tech	40	135
Triple-D	84	99
Tuflex	55	47
Turbo Tech	84	101
Turco	19	145
United Greenmark	72	115
United Elchem	82	106
Valley View	42	134
Vitamin Institute	92	94
Walker Mfg.	91	35
Weathermatic	76-77	28
Westheffer	46	128
Winner's Circle	60	
Zac Tool	58	123

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**Denotes regional advertising*



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*during normal working hours

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- BEAUTIFUL RESULTS—Walker delivers the mowed “look” for discriminating customers.
- SOLD WITH SERVICE—Walker is sold with a commitment to provide expeditious, efficient service by a network of servicing dealers.
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- HAS SUCH CREDENTIALS.



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FREE TRIAL TO SEE FOR YOURSELF

why so many thousands of garden center operators — some now third generation — know that you really cannot operate at so high a level without SUPERthrive™.

Since SUPERthrive™ has not had salesmen — and many retailers have not come to national trade shows — this is a try to reach some of you whose distributors have SUPERthrive™ for you without your knowing why, and others of you whose distributors have not yet responded to your need for SUPERthrive™.

After a half century of unchallenged \$5000,—Guaranteed best, 5 ways — it is more than time for every garden center to have SUPERthrive's™ benefits.

Ask about NEW liberal ad allowances, for fair ads featuring merit, rather than price reductions.

CHOOSE ONE FREE TRIAL. MAIL THIS

(One ounce makes 500 cups or gallons. 1/4 teaspoonful per gallon, 3 ounces per 100 gallons, (or, constantly, a drop a gallon, 1 ounce per 500 gallons.)

- ☐ FREE \$6.20 2-ounce bottle, with 16-ounce \$29.40 size purchase. (RETURN pint for full REFUND if not delighted with 2-ounce bottle effects.)
- ☐ FREE \$9.98 4-ounce bottle, with 32-ounce \$51.60 purchase. (RETURN quart for full REFUND if not happy with free 4-ounce bottle new life.)
- ☐ FREE \$1.59 1/10-ounce sample Dropac™—Send 55¢ stamped, addressed envelope.
- ☐ 128-ounce \$148.75 size, (refundable, therefore FREE only to established business or public agency, if, after using 4200 to 64,000 gallons from gallon, you wish you had not bought it.)
- ☐ DEALER resale trial, FREE bottle with each dozen: DEDUCT 40% IN CHECK FOR DOZEN(S)
 - _____ dozen 1/2-ounce \$3.30 sellers; _____ dozen 1-ounce \$4.65 sellers;
 - _____ dozen 2-ounce \$6.20 sellers; _____ dozen 2-ounce \$9.98 sellers;

Firm Name _____

Phone _____

Delivery Address for UPS _____

ENCLOSED CHECK \$ _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Your Name (Print, please) _____

Position _____

If your distributors already have SUPERthrive™ for you, buy trial **gallon** and **dozen(s)**, etc. from them. Same offers. Send copy of invoice or date and number for "baker's dozen" and other free bottles, direct. OTHERWISE,

MAIL TO

VITAMIN INSTITUTE • 12610 Saticoy St. South, North Hollywood, CA 91605, U.S.A

Phone (323) 877-5186;

(800) 441-VITA;

FAX: (818) 766-8482

USE READER SERVICE #94



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