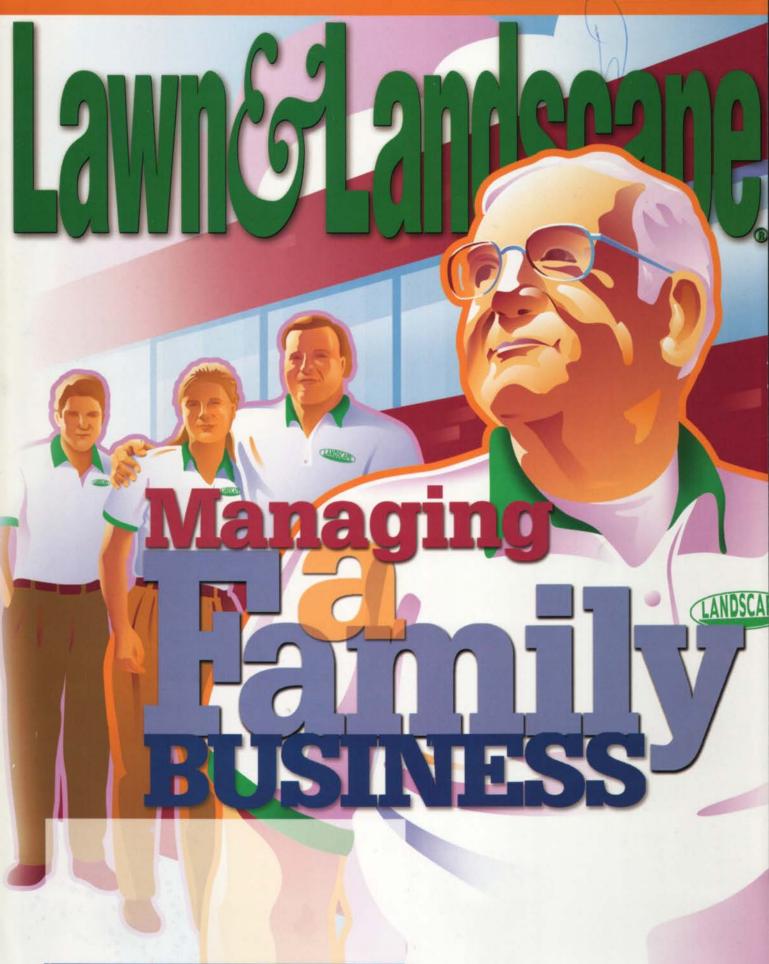
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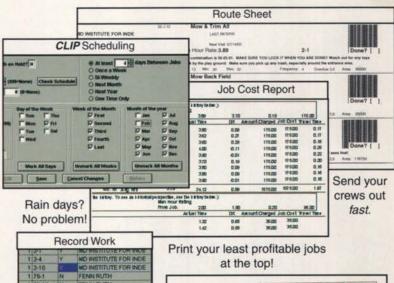
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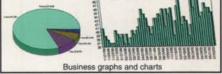
If you could lift the hood of my business and look under it, you'd see CLIP."

Bruce Holding (center), Village Lawns, Inc., Montgomery, AL





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November 1999

Cover Story **Managing a Family Business**

By planning ahead and recognizing that some quandaries are inevitable in a family business, contractors can learn to settle family disputes, gain respect from non-family employees and complete a successful transition into their company's next generation.

Planning Plant Purchases

Nursery material shortages of the past two years have placed greater importance on how contractors purchase their plants.

Lawnorlands

Landscaping with Bulbs

Customers looking for more color and variety in their landscape can be satisfied with 66 perennial and annual bulbs.

Managing the HOA Account

These accounts can be big headaches and big dollars. How can contractors minimize one to 80 maximize the other?

Surviving in the Bid Market

The bid market is a tough market to exist in, let along thrive in. One small mistake can turn an otherwise successful project into a landscape contractor's 90 nightmare.

2000 Truck Preview

Contractors have high demands for the vehicles that drive this industry.....

Purchasing Power

Keeping on top of inventory is just one way buying irrigation products becomes easier for 35 landscape contractors.

Herbicide/Fertilizer Combinations

Improved formulating technology now provides contractors with more granular herbicide 146 options.

A Compensation **Program that Works**

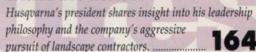
One contractor share	s the details of the compensation
plan he implemented	to further motivate
employees and hoost	profits 15

New Product Showcase

Manufacturers continue to produce new products to turn contractors' heads.

5	Y	ļ

A Conversation with Dave Zerfoss



4 NOVEMBER 1999

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LAWN & LANDSCAPE



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Environmental Leadership Awards

> Ten industry leaders are recognized for a longstanding commitment to environmental care and responsibility.....

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LAWN & LANDSCAPE

Editor's Notes Good Times: The Time for Change

"When a decision has to be made, make it. There is no totally right time for anything." - George Patton

Every once in a while it occurs to me as I write this column that the business management concepts I address or the practices I support apply to our business as well as yours. That was particularly true last month when I talked about the importance of taking advantage of the good times in a business's life as opportunities to make the changes that will ensure continued success and

delivery of the best possible product to the customers.

As you've likely noticed by now, we've made some dramatic changes to our design beginning with this issue. And I will be the first to admit that when we decided back in January - yes, this project has been in the works for nearly a year now - to do this redesign, I initially disagreed with the decision.

After all, Lawn & Landscape goes to more contractors today than ever before and we will deliver more editorial information - about 530 pages this year than our competitors deliver or than we have ever delivered. Last year we won the National Editorial Excellence Award from Folio: magazine, and now we should overhaul the entire magazine's design from front to back?

Fortunately, the other individuals on our staff got me to realize the importance of always working to grow and improve, even when you don't think you have to do so in order to succeed. After all, doing something the same way again and again over time may be comfortable for us, but I think you deserve more than that from us.

So, in your hands now (with the exception of those of you reading this on Lawn & Landscape Online), is the hard work of a gifted designer, Charlotte Turcotte. With this redesign, we have worked to make the information more accessible and easily digestable for the time-crunched readers we know we

have. Of course, we have also toiled to make the magazine as aesthetically pleasing as possible, and I am confident we have succeeded on both counts.

Additionally, we have bolstered the strength of our editorial lineup with the addition of noted industry veteran David Minor as a columnist (page 25) to field your questions each month.

Every decision we make about this magazine is done with the intent of providing you with the information you need to be a successful contractor. If you have suggestions for how we can do this better, please don't hesitate to contact me at 800/456-0707 ext. 239 or via e-mail at bwest@lawnandlandscape.com.

Boh Wit

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ON-THE-IOB

Workers' Comp Wait Costs \$\$\$

Contractors who wait more than 24 hours to report any incident that could result in a workers' compensation claim risk increasing the average cost of that claim by as much as 50 percent. Michael Lezynski, vice president, Acordia

Northeast, Morristown, N.J., explained that the average cost for a claim filed less than 10 days after the incident occurs is \$12,082, whereas the average cost of a claim filed more than 30 days

after the incident occurs is \$17,920. In addition, the likelihood of a claim leading to litigation jumps from 22 percent for claims filed within 10 days to 47 percent for claims filed after 30 days.

Lezynski also recommended contractors establish internal safety committees.

> safety incentive plans and a formal protocol for investigation of all accidents in order to control their workers' compensation claims.

The areas listed to the right have been identified as the communities where heavy anti-pesticide activity has already taken place and is likely to continue at a high level during the year 2000, according to the Responsible Industry for a Sound Envi-



ronment (RISE).

In addition, RISE has identified children's health and water guality as the top two issues that anti-pesticide activists will focus on in the coming months.

Lawn and landscape industry supporters who are interested in helping to counter proponents of pesticide bans in these communities or other areas are encouraged to contact RISE at 202/872-3860.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Catching Up With U.S. Lawns

When U.S. Lawns was first featured in Lawn & Landscape (August 1994), it was the only company franchis-

ing landscape maintenance services in the country

and it had 16 franchises in three states. Plans were to add six to 12 franchises annually from that point, but Tom Oyler, U.S. Lawns president and founder, was pulled away from the business as he managed and apany, to

ses and four company t growth now that it lies tal Industries. In additrepreneur in the truest ion taking place in the ised landscape maintenance company.

"The biggest challenge in the industry today is for the independent owner-operator to find a way to compete with these new, massive companies and be able to generate the capital necessary to grow the business," noted Oyler. "Franchising is a model running parallel to consolidation, but franchisees can outperform the big companies because

(continued on page 18)



Tom Oyler believes some independent contractors should consider franchising as the industry consolidates. Photo: U.S. Lawns

	punce any nom are publiced as ne man
	sold his other company, Oyler Bros. Con
	Environmental Industries, Calabasas, Calif.
	Today, U.S. Lawns includes 42 franchi
	stores in 14 states and is poised for significan
	beneath the mega-umbrella of Environmen
	tion, in Oyler, U.S. Lawns is directed by an en
1	sense of the word who sees the consolidat
	industry as the perfect reason for a franch
1	

the franchisees can stay closer to their customers and to their businesses."



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IN THE NEWS

Terra Announces New Name

MEMPHIS, TENN. – Cenex/Land O'Lakes Agronomy announced it will merge recently acquired Terra Professional Products and Land O'Lakes East Turf & Ornamental Products to form Resource One, a supplier of fertilizer, plant protection products, seed and services to the turf and ornamental industries.

The new venture will be headed up by Dr. Tom Perkins, vice president professional products. Perkins noted that developing a premiere distribution chain will be one of the group's first orders of business.

"Our customers will have the products and services when and where they need them," Perkins noted.

Resource One plans to distribute its brands of fertilizer, seed and plant protection products in addition to products made available by other manufacturers.

(continued on page 14)

CCIENCE of Events

NOV. 13-16 Green Industry Expo, Baltimore. Contact: 770/973-2019. NOV. 16 National Arbor Day Foundation Building With Trees, Philadelphia and New York,

Contact: 402/474-5655.

NOV. 16 Davey Tree Resource Group EcoSmart Pesticide Use Seminar, King of Prussia, Pa. Contact: 330/673-9511.

- NOV. 18 MAGIC Recertification Seminar, Kansas City, Mo. Contact: 816/561-5323
- DEC. 6-9 OTF Conference & Show, Columbus, Ohio. Contact: 740/452-4541.
- DEC. 6-9 IANJ Turfgrass Expo, Atlantic City, N.J. Contact: 973/379-1100.

DEC. 7-9 Georgia Turfgrass Association's 30th Annual Conference and Trade Show, Atlanta. Contact: 770/975-4123.

DEC. 7-9 Rocky Mountain Regional Turfgrass Association Turf Conference & Trade Show, Denver, Colo. Contact: 303/770-2220.

DEC. 15 Annual Turfgrass & Landscape Institute and Tradeshow, Buena Park, Calif. Contact: 909/627-8829.

2000

JAN. 4-5 Ontario Turfgrass Symposium Trade Show, Toronto, Ontario. Contact: 519/767-5000.
 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 Con-vention & Trade Show, Minneapolis, Minn. Contact: 651/633-4987.

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JAN. 5-7 Montana Nursery & Landscape Annual Meeting & Trade Show, Missoula, Mont. Contact: 406/721-7334. JAN. 6 NYSTA Northeast Regional Conference, Albany, N.Y. Contact: 800/873-8873

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. 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 California Landscape Contractors Association Landscape & Nursery Expo. Sacramento, Calif. Contact: 800/448-2522.

JAN. 12-13 Natural Design in the American Landscape Symposium, New London, Conn. Contact: 215/247-5777. JAN. 12-14 Illinois Landscape Contractors Association Design Seminar, Hoffman Estates, Ill. Contact: 630/472-2851.

JAN. 12-16 Sports Turf Manager Association 11th Annual Conference, St. Louis, Mo. Contact: 800/323-3875.

JAN. 15-16 Natural Design in the American Landscape

Symposium, New London, Conn. Contact: 215/247-5777.

JAN. 15-19 Oregon Landscape Contractors Association and Washington Association of Landscape Professionals, Lihue, Hawaii. Contact: 503/253-9091.

JAN. 15-20 OLCA/WALP Leadership Conference, Kauai, Hawaii. Contact: 800/505-8105.

JAN. 18-20 Midwest Turf Expo, Indianapolis, Ind. Contact: 765/494-8039.

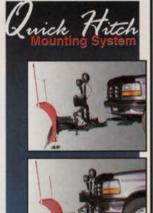
JAN. 18-20 MAGIC 2000 10th Annual Convention, Kansas City, Mo. Contact: 816/561-5323.

JAN. 19-21 Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show, Chicago, Ill. Contact: 847/526-2010.

JAN. 18-20 Mid-America Green Industry Council/Mid-America Green Industry Convention, Kansas City, Mo. Contact: 816/561-5323. JAN. 19-21 Idaho Nursery Association Horticultural Trade Show, Boise, Idaho. Contact: 800/462-4769.

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(continued from page 12)

IN THE NEWS

Agri-Bio Tech Reorganizes

SALEM, ORE. - The turf seed industry's mighty consolidator, AgrBioTech, took a major step toward making its extensive acquisitions more manageable by dividing the company into two separate business units.

The first business unit, Independent Seeds, is a compilation of 13 acquired companies, including such well-known names as Burlingham Seeds, Seed Resource and Zajac Performance Seeds. This group will serve the turf and forage sector of the industry and will be headed up by John Zajac.

"Working closely with ABT research and production, Independent Seeds will be able to improve customer access to new products, streamline ordering procedures and more efficiently deliver products and services targeted to wholesale markets," noted Jerry (continued on page 16)

Clarence Davids, Sr. announced his retirement from Clarence Davids & Co. His son, Bill, remains president of the company. Jeff Carowitz was promoted to vice president of marketing at Hunter Industries.

Exmark Manufacturing Co. appointed Jeffrey Hallgren as director of sales and marketing.

Bill Rhoda joined the Century Rain Aid sales team serving the service grower operations throughout western Michigan.

Toro Irrigation announced the following promotions: Steve Snow to director of sales and marketing, golf; Dirk Lenie to director of sales and marketing, Toro Res/Com; Mike Ochoa to senior marketing manager, Irritrol® Systems; Brad White to national sales specification manager, Toro/Irritrol Systems; and Greg Parker to product manager.





(Top)Davids, Sr., (Bottom) Carowitz

Ralph Quamme joined Thomas Equipment as national sales manager. LESCO appointed R. Breck Denny as vice president and chief financial officer. Robert Doletzky was promoted to vice president of international sales and

marketing at Sweepster.

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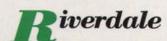


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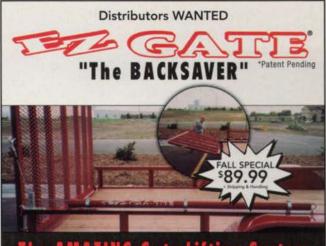
Steve Leisuring Vice President of Operations Greenlon, Inc., Cincinnati, Ohio

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Hil I'm Marty Grunder, founder and president of Grunder Landscaping Co. in Dayton, Ohio. Grunder Landscaping Co. is a national award-winning firm I started with a \$25.00 lawn mower bought at a garage sale. This year our sales will eclipse \$2 million with no slowdown in sight. In the past four



years, we have helped hundreds of small landscaping, lawn maintenance, lawn care and tree care companies (just like yours) jump-start their businesses using the exact blueprint I used to create our successful landscaping firm. And we'd like to help you too!

To receive my free report "How to Re-Invent Your Lawn-Garden/Landscaping Business with Million Dollar Marketing, Management & Motivation Secrets," simply write "Report" on your letterhead and fax it 24 hours a day to **937-847-8067** or you may call **937-847-9944** and leave your name and address and we'll send the report out immediately. Chances are you have either seen one of my ads before, read about our company in a magazine or seen one of my seminars and despite all that you remain skeptical. That's normal but realize it will cost you nothing to get this report and seek the truth yourself. So call or fax us now while it is fresh in your mind.

Market Trends

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Gowan Cor	npany – <u>w</u>	ww.gowa	nco.com	
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Middleton I	Lawn Care	- <u>www.m</u>	iddletonp	est.com
And and a second second second				

As the Internet penetrates deeper into the lawn and landscape industry, Lawn & Landscape magazine will share new web sites with readers. To announce a new web site, e-mail bwest@ hwnardinckapecom

(continued from page 14)

Peterson, forage business manager for Independent Seeds.

The second business unit will focus on the retail and professional markets.

ABT also announced it would post a one-time, fourth-quarter loss between \$35 million and \$39 million due largely to restructuring costs, some of which have been mentioned above.



Bill Speelman, 36-year employee of The Toro Co., was honored by the American Society of Irrigation Consultants with the presentation of the Roy Williams

Award. The award is the society's highest honor presented in recognition of substantial and significant contributions to the irrigation industry.

The American Society of Landscape Archi-

tects is providing solutions to urban design problems with its just-published issue of the Landscape Architecture Technical Information Series on ways to improve the survival of city trees. The publication is available for free to ASLA members at www.asla.org. Non-members may purchase the book for \$49.95 by calling 202/216-2362.

The **California Landscape Contractors As**sociation gave Bill Locklin, originator of the Nightscaping 12-volt outdoor lighting system, the 1999 Meridian Award for substantial beautification of the environment. The Meridian Award is the top honor presented to landscape professionals by the Orange County/Long Beach Chapter of the CLCA as part of its 41st annual Beautification Awards.

correction

American Landscape Co., Canoga Park, Calif., has not been acquired by TruGreen LandCare, as reported in the October issue. Myra Potts was mistakenly identified as Angela Ramos in the September People section. "For years, we had the same problem every spring—how to effectively control weeds while it was still cool outside. We usually had to reapply products to get the desired control. That is until we discovered Cool Power[®]. Cool Power eliminates the weeds the first time around—saving us time and money."

Denny Pennington Owner, Pennington Lawns Des Moines, Iowa

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Catching Up With U.S. Lawns (continued from page 10)

While landscape companies grow into multi-million dollar organizations, encumbering systems and bureaucratic policy can bog them down, Oyler explained. "That is why many of the owners of these companies are selling. They had become dinosaurs and they knew it," he said.

Franchises, on the other hand, retain the entrepreneurial spirit and the ability to constantly reengineer their businesses as the market demands.

U.S. Lawns enables Oyler to implement the practices he learned since opening his own landscape company, Oyler Bros. Company, in 1973 that grew to be one of the largest and most respected in Florida before being sold to Environmental Industries in 1990.

"For example, we don't want franchisees to take jobs that require more than 15 minutes of drive time getting to or from the job," Oyler noted. "One of the lessons I learned trying to operate branches all over Florida with Oyler Brothers is that the route business is best served by the owner-operator because of the attention this person can give the customer. Plus, in the future, we don't think the customer will be willing to pay for this driving time."

Oyler envisions three phases franchises grow through: a start-up phase; a growth phase and a maintenance phase.

"The start-up phase is when the franchise focuses on getting the operations side of things set up and doesn't focus on premium accounts," Oyler explained. "The growth phase begins once the operations issues have been dealt with and we're ready to go after premium accounts. This is the phase most independent owner-operators remain in.

"But the maintenance phase is the key to the franchises' success because this is when we get margin aggressive and pursue the ideal customer," he continued, adding that the franchise will still grow the business during this phase. "This phase should yield a higher return on the business while less time is invested in the work."

Typically, U.S. Lawns franchises avoid primary markets where competition is more intense and they avoid larger contracts (more than \$5,000 monthly) that are more competitive work and more damaging to lose.

Oyler's plans for the future include expanding to 200-300 franchises by 2004 with plans to sell 36 to 40 in the next 12 months.

Obviously, there are no guarantees with any business, but Oyler currently has four franchisees that own multiple franchises and he's looking to further develop this model of multiple unit operators with combined sales exceeding \$2 million.

Oyler also explained that franchise fee is \$29,000 with annual royalties between 3 percent and 4 percent, depending on the franchise's annual sales volume. – *Bob West*

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Breaking News Weed Man Targets U.S. Market

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO – The biggest name in Canadian lawn care is joining forces with some big names in the U.S. lawn care industry with the goal of building the second-largest lawn care company in the

United States within the next five years.

The Weed Man, a 30-year franchisor of lawn care services with 135 operations grossing approximately \$50 million annually throughout Canada, shared its new plans for expansion into the U.S. market in an exclusive interview with *Lawn & Landscape*.

"Our goal is to open up 100 territories servicing about 70 cities through-

out the U.S. within five years," related Roger Mongeon, president of Turf Management and Turf Operations, the two holding companies that own master franchise rights to the United States for Weed Man.

"Our biggest problem with entering the U.S. market until now has been the lack of key people, but now everything has come together bringing the necessary people with the expertise in the U.S. market," explained Dez Rice, Weed Man president.

One of the key people joining the Weed Man team is Terry Kurth, a former employee of The Scotts Co. and a long-time franchisee in the Barefoot Grass organization before it was purchased by TruGreen-ChemLawn in early 1997.

Kurth will serve Weed Man in developing master franchisors, which are individuals who own the territory rights to a number of territories in a geographic region and who then sell the various franchise rights to the individuals who will run the operation in the area. The master franchisors will then retain a percentage of the royalties paid by each of the franchises they sell, set up and support.

Kurth and other Weed Man representatives pointed to the presence of these master franchisors as a key strategic difference setting Weed Man apart from other U.S. lawn care franchise systems such as Leisure Lawn, Lawn Doctor and All-Green.

"With the labor situation as bad as it is, a lot of contractors are tired of beating their head against the wall and now they want an opportunity to leverage their experience," Mongeon noted.

"I've talked to a lot of lawn care operators who have thought about expanding their businesses but they don't know if they've got the necessary support to do so," Kurth explained. "Franchising with Weed Man means these contractors have an immediate infrastructure to grow from and computer software to manage their business with and all of the other benefits of being part of this group."

Kurth added that the first master franchisor agreement should be finalized with a prominent industry veteran in the upper Midwest by November, and he sees a great deal of potential for Weed Man across the country.

"There are a lot of landscape contractors who are re-examining the way they handle their chemical lawn care work either because they've sub-contracted the (continued on page 22)

ACQUISITIONS

Husqvarna Acquires Yazoo/Kees Turf Business

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Husqvarna Forest & Garden became more than a hand-held power equipment manufacturer on Oct. 4 when it finalized the acquisition of the commercial turf care assets of

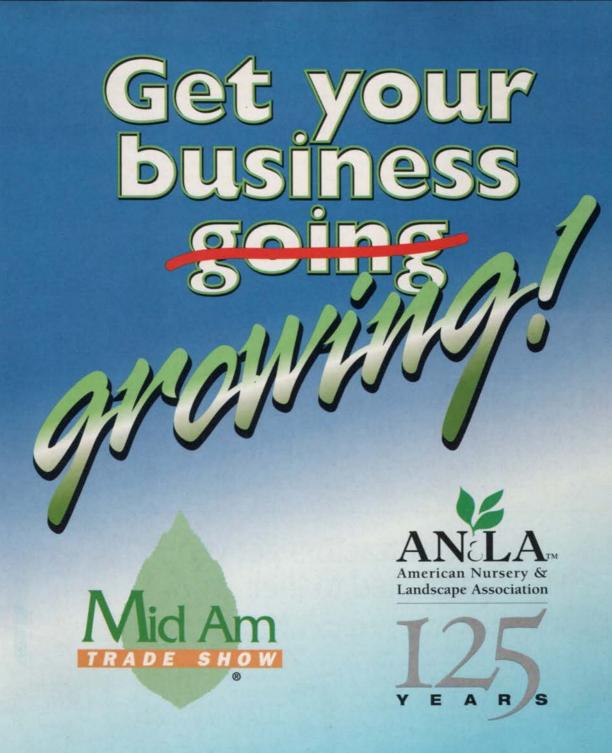
Yazoo Power Equipment, Jackson, Miss.

"The green industry is in a powerful growth phase and we intend to be the leading source for all outdoor power equipment needs," noted Dave Zerfoss, Husqvarna president. "This acquisition creates a complete line of offerings, making Husqvarna a total source for all lawn and garden and commercial needs – everything from professional trimmers to commercial mowers."

The deal provides Husqvarna with its much sought-after presence in the commercial mowing industry via all Yazoo/Kees-(continued on page 22)



Michael Kernaghan, vice president of Weed Man International, will be part of the team bringing Weed Man lawn care franchises south from Canada into the United States. Photo: Weed Man



Y2K Partners: Teamed for Success

The Mid-Am Trade Show, where horticultural professionals can find their every need, congratulates the American Nursery & Landscape Association on its 125th anniversary. Mid-Am is proud to partner with ANLA and be the principal benefactor of the ANLA Gala to be held Thursday, January 20, 2000. Call ANLA at 202/789-2900 or Mid-Am at 847/526-2010 for details on how you can participate.

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Breaking News

Weed Man (continued from page 20) work to TruGreen-ChemLawn and they don't want to do that anymore since TruGreen-ChemLawn has gotten into landscape work, or these contractors have realized how strong the margins are in lawn care," Kurth added. "The problem for these contractors is that they may not be familiar with the pesticides lawn care companies use or they don't know the proper way to tank mix these products, so that's where buying a franchise and obtaining all of the support from the corporate office and master franchisor can help."

Currently, Weed Man's U.S. presence is primarily represented by corporately owned offices in Seattle, Wash.; Denver, Colo.; and Minneapolis, Minn. These locations have served as testing grounds for the last one to three years.

"We've been concentrating on getting our licensing paperwork taken care of for the U.S. markets and looking for any differences between the U.S. and Canadian markets," explained Mongeon, noting that Weed Man found few variations between lawn care businesses north and south of the border. "We feel very well prepared to start offering these franchises now," he added.

Weed Man has historically focused on selling franchises in smaller markets in Canada – populations of 50,000 to 150,000 – and although the group has plans to target larger markets as well in the U.S., Mongeon and Rice explained that their expertise in small markets will be an asset in the future.

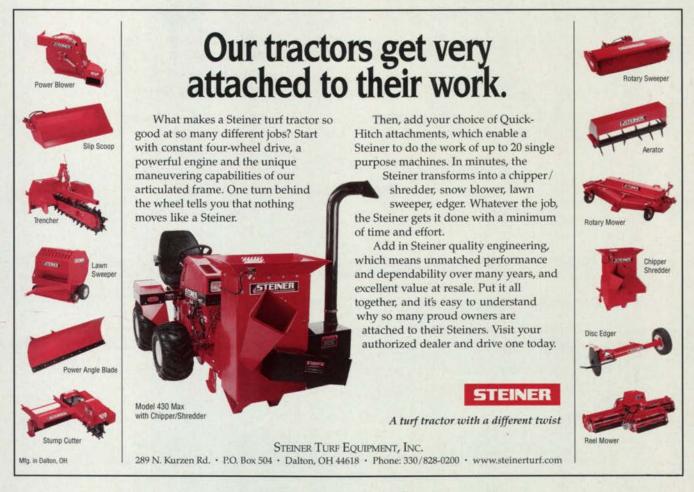
"Selling a master franchisor a large territory to develop through selling to individuals in the smaller, more local markets will generate quite a bit of interest because right now TruGreen-ChemLawn is just dominating in some of these markets," Mongeon explained.

"And we've learned how to make operators successful in the low population areas because Canada doesn'thave the same population density that the U.S. has," Rice added. "While we will definitely sell franchises in bigger cities in the U.S., the sheer size of the U.S. means our potential there is phenomenal." – Bob West Husqvarna (continued from page 20) branded products, turf care dealers and dis-

branded products, turr care dealers and distributors, and the company's Beatrice, Neb., manufacturing facility. Specifically, Husqvarna will now have its own line of six commercial riding and zero-turn mowers, four gear-drive walk-behind mowers and two hydrostatic-drive walk-behind mowers.

Yazoo/Keees will provide manufacturing, customer service and distribution services to Husqvarna for the next 12 months as the Yazoo/Kees operations are integrated into Husqvarna's operations. The mowers will be initially marketed via a dual-brand strategy under the Husqvarna and Yazoo/ Kees names until June 30, 2000, at which time decisions about branding and distribution will be made by Husqvarna.

Tom Lutes, chief executive officer for Yazoo/Kees, said Yazoo/Kees will continue to own and operate its non-turf care business that it has developed over the last few years and proceeds from this sale will be used by Yazoo/Kees to pay down debt and finance additional growth. – *Bob West*



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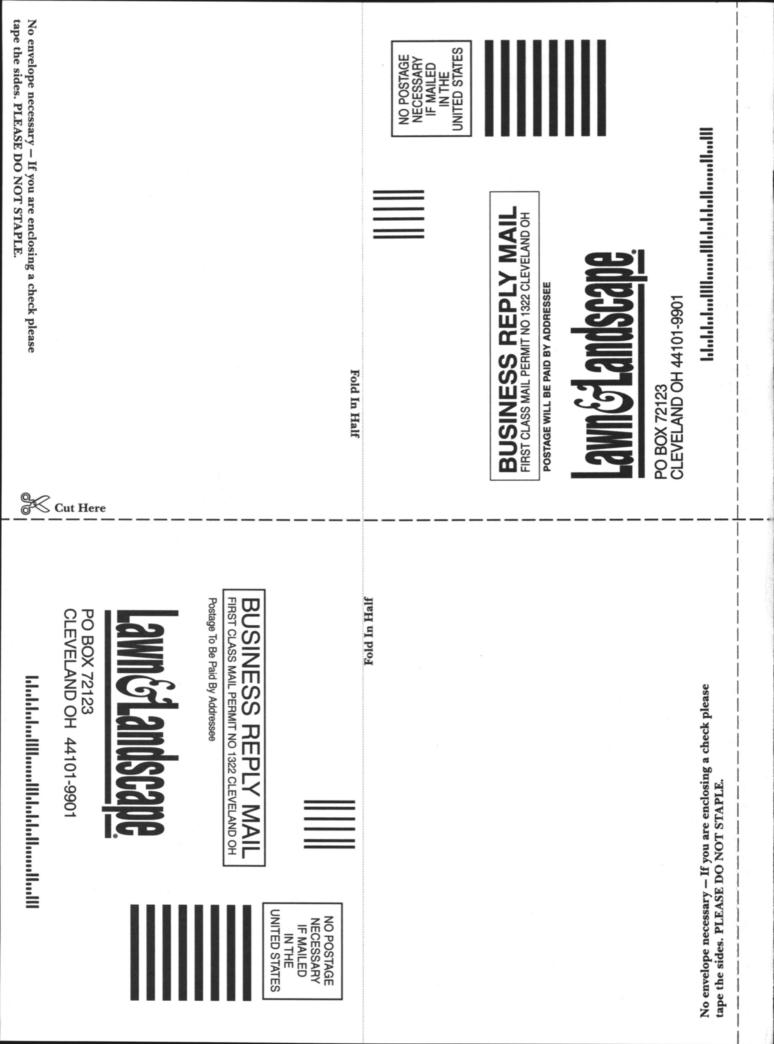
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In Minor's League

QUESTION: Recruiting and retaining good employees continues to be a struggle for my company. Can you give me some good ideas on how I might be able to address this problem?

ANSWER: It seems appropriate that the first question that I am asked as we debut this column for *Lawn & Landscape* involves the prevailing "I can't get good help" problem. I, too, have struggled for the better part of my 20-plus years in the landscape business with this question.

Often times I can recall thinking if I could just solve this problem the sky would be the limit insofar as growth and profits were concerned. The reality is, this is a problem right now, it was 20 years ago, and it will be 20 years from now. How you deal with personnel issues both intellectually as well as emotionally could mean the difference between success and failure.

I suspect the No. 1 reason why people fail and/or get out of this business is because of personnel problems. I found that if I overcame the negative aspects of this puzzle and focused

Having a **reputa**tion as an employer who cares about your staff will help your **recruitment efforts.** s of this puzzle and focused on the reality that everyone else was dealing with the same problem, I was better off in the long run.

The truth of the matter is that if labor wasn't such a challenge this business would be a great deal easier, which would mean far more competition, lower prices and, conceivably, less profits. Focusing on the fact

that this is the "nature of the beast" and putting a positive spin on an incredibly challenging aspect of this business is important for managers and owners. Then you can think intellectually about how you can out recruit and out retain your competition. You do not have to have the best employees and retention rates of all the businesses in your market. You just need to be better than the competition in your industry.

Of course, there is not enough space in this column to discuss everything that can be done to address this challenge. You could write a book, in fact many have, on strategies to hire and retain good people. There are both industryspecific strategies and generic strategies to consider when attacking this problem.

First the generic – I think people want to work for a company that genuinely cares about its employees. While money and benefits are important to employees, studies have shown that the No. 1 key to job satisfaction is the feeling of being appreciated. Do not underestimate the power of praise and recognition. Appreciating your employees will be the most cost-effective strategy you employ to retain them. Write notes to your staff thanking them for their work, praise them publicly at every opportunity and give awards and recognition to those who excel.

Having a reputation in your community as an employer who cares about your staff will greatly help your recruitment efforts. Friends of employees will beat a path to your door, good folks already on your payroll will turn down opportunities elsewhere, and the end result will be a happy team and satisfied customers. If you can create an organization where these things are being done, then you have tackled the challenge of employee retention.

Another thing that employees want from their companies is to be a part of the decision-making process. This ranks right behind appreciation on the job satisfaction scale and, remember, job satisfaction is what keeps employees happy. Involve your people down to the lowest level on decisions that may affect your company. Ask for their input and follow through on that which is given to you. Employees will naturally feel good about themselves and their company when they know their opinion counts.

Involve your staff as much as possible when it comes to the financial aspects of the business. Many companies have had great success with

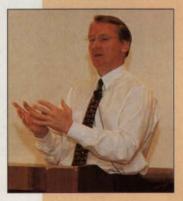
the open book concept of management where all of the company's numbers are shared. Others have achieved the same results by sharing a more concise view of the financial picture. Regardless, keep employees informed and ask them for ways you can improve. You will get everyone working together for the good of the team. "Your company" then becomes "their company," and you will keep your staff motivated and happy.

Another good way to involve your staff is by having annual strategic planning (continued on page 28)

Editor's

One of the most popular speakers at the 1999 Lawn & Landscape School of Management was David Minor, founder and former president of Minor's Landscape Services, a \$15million company in Austin, Texas, that Minor sold to TruGreen-ChemLawn in 1998. David will share his thoughts and suggestions for managing a lawn and landscape business with readers via this monthly column.

Readers who have specific questions they would like to ask David can do so by e-mailing them to bwest@lawnandlandscape.com or faxing them to Lawn & Landscape at 216/961-0364.



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In Minor's League

(continued from page 25)

meetings by department. Lay out the typical strategic planning model in which you evaluate each department's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and then let your staff come up with solutions to problems. Schedule follow-up meetings and have all staff implement specific action strategies. This type of exercise fosters employee loyalty and teamwork that is difficult to measure in terms of satisfied employees, but the benefits are very real.

Now that we have covered the more generic ways to enhance retention and help recruitment, let's discuss a few specific ideas.

Finding basic entry level laborers, field foremen and technical field employees seems to be the biggest staffing hurdle companies face. Getting folks in the door is obviously an important step in the staffing equation. Many companies have had great success with paying referral bonuses to their existing employees to bring others on board. There are various types of ways to structure these arrangements and many are very successful. I would strongly suggest structuring the payouts based on the new employee staying on for a minimum amount of time. Flyers sent in areas where your labor force resides

or even direct mail to a certain demographic profile has also worked. For example, you may want to send a direct mail letter that details employment opportunities in your company to all licensed irrigators or chemical applicators in your state. Many companies have had considerable success with the government's H2B program. H2B is a program that allows you to legally hire immigrant

labor for a specified time frame at a very reasonable wage. There are no subcontractors that provide this service; or if your company is big enough you can hire an attorney to help you do this yourself.

For recruiting management staff, there are a myriad of avenues to investigate, in-

cluding onsite college and junior college recruitment and industry field days like the Associated Landscape Contractors of America Student Career Days. Promoting and train-

Another thing that employees want from **their companies** is being part of the **decisionmaking process.**

ing from within – even if the individual lacks a formal education – is also very useful. The key here is employee training.

Again, however, rather than focusing solely on specific ways to recruit more employees, think more about retention and create a culture that fosters a positive per-

ception of your company.

Understand that the problem of employee recruitment and retention will not go away and how you deal with it could mean the difference between success and failure.

David Minor can be reached at 817/740-9792.

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<u>Design Notebook</u>

he Benaroya Hall, home of the world-renowned Seattle Symphony, is the site of the Garden of Remembrance. Located in the heart of downtown Seattle on the entire block bounded by Second and Third avenues, the memorial garden, constructed by Northwestern Landscape Co., Puyallup, Wash., honors more than 8,000 Washington State veterans who lost their lives defending the nation's freedom.

DESIGN CHALLENGES. Construction of the garden was especially complex. The entire garden was built on top of a garage deck with a train tunnel running underneath a portion of it. Planting the garden required boom trucks, but steep slopes made it difficult and dangerous for them to operate.

Other project challenges included a very tight and congested downtown worksite and working around multiple trades, raised planters and underground cavities – some as deep at 10 feet.

DESIGN SOLUTIONS. Congested worksites meant we had to work early hours, move materials with wheelbarrows, close down street lanes, cover sidewalks and paver areas with tarps and plywood and work on normally inaccessible areas.

Large underground cavities were needed for future root growth on large trees. Soil was lowered into 10 foot deep cavities with an extended forklift, then hand-shoveled up to 12 feet underground and handcompacted to fill voids before planting.

Shoring on steep San Francisco-like slopes was necessary to install plant material. Blocking was A 40-foottall, 14-inch caliper, 5-ton red oak was installed moments before the dedication ceremony. The Benaroya Hall Garden of Remembrance (inset). Photos: Northwestern Landscape Co.



PROJECT: Benaroya Hall Garden of Remembrance LANDSCAPE CO.: Northwestern Landscape Co. DESIGNER: Murase & Associates SIZE OF PROPERTY: ½ acre MAN-HOURS TO CONSTRUCT: 2,659 hours

Design

PLANTS INSTALLED: A 40-foot red oak and more than 2,000 different plants, including azaleas, ferns, vine maple, dogwood, Oregon grape, Magnolia, snow berry and other native species.

> done by stacking large railroad tie timbers on the low side of the slope. Soil was placed on top of the timbers so tractors and cranes could drive on a level surface to prevent accidents during installation.

> A 40 foot tall red oak with an 8-inch root ball weighing more than 5 tons was planted using more than 60 cubic yards of topsoil in its planting cavity. Large bolts and rods were placed through the root ball to create a pivot to set the large tree. The tree, which had a 13-inch diameter trunk, was lifted with a crane and turned in the proper planting position. The planting of the tree was scheduled for installation moments before an Independence Day celebra-

tion and the veterans dedication at the Garden of Remembrance. During the dedication, veterans placed medals of honor, dog tags and even a Purple Heart in the oak tree's planting cavity. A crew of eight people was ready to set the tree during the city planting ceremony. All underground staking was set in place prior to planting. When the tree was placed in the ground it was able to

be unhooked from the crane within minutes due to the detailed coordination.

THE RESULT. The garden is now a welcome and comfortable natural setting to visit and enjoy. Large specimen shrubs, tightly spaced groundcover and specimen trees instantly created the feel and look of a beautifully established planting.

Northwestern Landscape Co. received the Associated Landscape Contractors of America Exterior Judges Award for outstanding work on the Benaroya Hall Garden of Remembrance project this past year. – Lisa Gonner and Geoffrey Bartels

The authors are in sales and marketing at Northwestern Landscape Co., Puyallup, Wash.



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Cover Story

by Nicole Wisniewski



Buel and Becky Messer admit that when they started Messer Landscape with their two sons, Mike and Chuck, who were 10 and 13 at the time, they didn't give a lot of

thought to problems that would occur along the way.

"The business was such a small entity when it started out that I wasn't planning for the things that could go wrong in the future," explained Buel, still president of the 19-year-old, Staunton, Va.-based company.

While Messer said conquering business ups and downs were healthy for the company and the family, he doesn't deny that there were many disputes along the way involving sibling rivalry, being a boss and a father at the same time and dealing with non-family employees who felt they were treated unfairly because they weren't Messers.

While Messer, 61, feels he has handled these challenges well, he knows they will continue to be formidable tasks for the family, especially now that he and his wife have announced plans to retire.

Family businesses are similar to other businesses as they are hardly exempt from their need for profit, customer satisfaction, quality service and motivation of the individuals – family or not – who comprise the organization, pointed out Ira Bryck, director of the University of Massachusetts Family Business Center, Amherst, Mass.

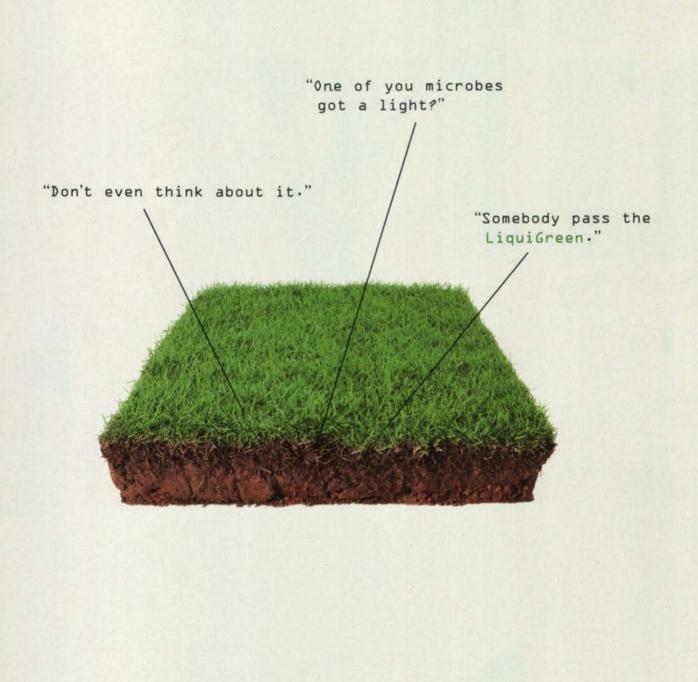
However, as much as they are the same as other companies, family businesses are different in one important way: "The obvious characteristic of lifetime family membership," Bryck explained. "When a family business fails, it wreaks havoc on the family like the death of a loved one, replete with mourning and dislocation. When a non-family business folds, there is unemployment, but the employees get on with their lives."

And the statistics to support family business failure are not good. According to Bryck, two-thirds of all family businesses fail to make the jump to the second generation and 90 percent fail into the third, which proves that even the most successful family business empires can sink like stones when the relatives who manage them cannot learn to work together.

IN THE BEGINNING. When businesses begin as a family entity, Bryck said the task of examining the personalities of the people who are going to be working together and whether open and direct communication (continued on page 36)

By planning ahead and recognizing inevitable quandaries, contractors can learn to settle family disputes and complete a successful transition into their company's next generation.

LANDSCA





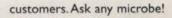
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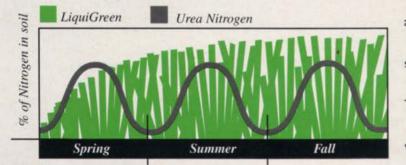
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is possible between them is often overlooked.

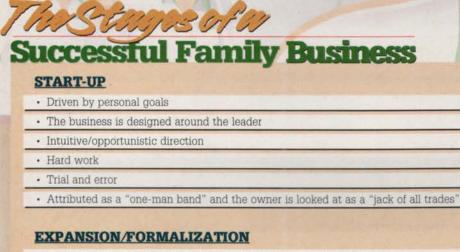
Bill Davids, president, Clarence Davids & Co., Matteson, Ill., started working alongside his father, Clarence, when he was 12 years old. To succeed as a father and son in a working relationship, Bill said he had to share the same business vision with his dad and keep the communication lines between them open.

"We aren't the most successful family out there in terms of working at our relationship," Davids said. "We've had our own share of problems. But my older brother had the most difficulties working with dad to the point where he left the business and the family. We only talk now on an as-needed basis. He and my father just had philosophical differences. The separation has been very hard to handle."

To avoid the pitfalls of an unmanageable relationship, Bryck suggested families look at their potential ability for 'dynamic tension' first before going into business together. The term, according to Bryck, was used by music historians to discuss the partnership of John and Lennon Paul McCartney. "Dynamic tension between them

was the factor, aside from musical skill, that empowered their success as a team," Bryck explained.

"In the early, struggling days of a business, the owners can take a huge cut in pay - a tradeoff for running their own company," Bryck continued. "One partner feels like going to the bank for capital and the other neither a borrower nor a lender be. Or one partner is comfortable with delegation and the other is the chief cook and bottle



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Drew, Dean and **David Snodgrass** (left to right) manage a thirdgeneration company. Photo: Dennis' 7 Dees

washer type. Certain relationships won't work out. Hopefully, relatives, particularly in-laws, can accept each other's differences as long as their business values are the same."

In the case of Jon and Vicky Cundiff, whose relationship was based on learning to work together even when they met as cheerleaders for Northwest Missouri State University, managing Turf's Up, Lee's Summit, Mo., is more hectic now than it was when they got started in 1987.

"Our separate business responsibilities were clear cut when we started our business," explained Vicky, secretary / treasurer / vice president of the company. "I'm the liveinside-the-box financial person and Jon is the live-outside-the-box, on-the-go visionary. And since we worked out of our home, we were always communicating. Things got more complicated once we started growing."

Jon said that growing meant adding employees and, essentially, turning tasks over to people who are going to make mistakes.

"We are transitioning from working in our business to working on our business," Jon stated. "If we don't relinquish some of our duties to employees we trust, then the business stops growing."

While some family members can run a business successfully because they worked together in the past, others think their working relationship thrives despite the fact that they weren't close when they were younger.

Gilbert Hermes is six years younger than his brother, Dalton, who is president of Hermes Landscaping and Hermes Nursery, Lenexa, Kan. Dalton bought the company from his father two years ago after working there for about 11 years. Gilbert started working for the company three years ago.

"There was a 20-year period when I didn't see my brother much because college and work took us in different directions," Dalton explained. "One day he came to me asking whether we had any positions available and (continued on page 38)

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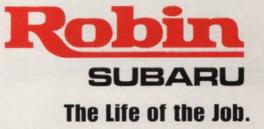
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(continued from page 36)

we did. He started here as a production supervisor and now he is vice president of Hermes Nursery, but it was a challenge bringing him into the company because we were estranged for almost 20 years.

"Now," Hermes continued, "as we become business partners, we are also growing





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Gilbert (left) and Dalton (right) Hermes have become closer as brothers since becoming co-workers after a 20-year period of little contact with each other. Photo: Hermes Landscaping

closer together as brothers."

Sometimes, looking at the personalities of company owners and how they best work together means altering someone's duties to prevent foreseeable family collisions.

Bobbi Anderson, who handles marketing and public relations at Anderson Lawn Care, Leesburg, Ind., is an admitted micromanager.

"And because of this personality trait," Anderson explained, "instead of saying 'Can we have a discussion?' when there's a problem, I'm going to say 'I've got a problem with this and I want to know why it was done that way.' It's hard for me as a mom to be like I am and be the controller in the company. I would get into conflicts with my sons all the time."

Bobbi recognized the potential difficulties that her personality could cause and stepped back, letting her husband, Steve, take over as president, her son Todd, 25, as treasurer and her son, Scott, 23, as vice president, of the 12-year-old company.

"Steve can work with their very different dependable perfectionist vs. gutsy/visionary, 'I can do no wrong because I'm the oldest' mentalities," Bobbi explained. "Steve is so much better than I am at sitting down with the two boys when there is a problem and making the discussion happen.

But, Bobbi pointed out, personality differences have to be addressed in not only business relations, but in family relations as well, particularly when a couple is running a family business together.

"Trying to get along as husband and wife and business partners for us has not been great," Bobbi said. "Business-wise, I'm an emotional perfectionist. These characteristics completely clash with Steve's more easy going personality. By redefining our roles and recognizing our differences, I think we are better at making sure business issues don't affect our marriage too much."

The Cundiffs said that once in awhile their time together is sacrificed when there aren't enough hours in the day to handle (continued on page 40)

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(continued from page 38)

business and family issues.

"There are times when Jon will come to me and say 'Hey, how about we go on a date Saturday night?"" related Vicky Cundiff. "And then I'll explain how I need to take our twins to see their grandma and run some errands. Before we know it, there's no time left for us. When our marriage becomes the sacrifice, I find that no matter what the case – whether one of us is feeling neglected or needs a hug – we have to get it out in the open and talk about it. We separate work from family by making sure we know when we're talking as husband and wife and when

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we're talking as business partners and preventing the wrong one from happening in the wrong place."

These issues are common, according to Barry Graff, organizational consultant, RSM McGlandrey, Minneapolis, Minn., because management quandaries tend to affect business partners differently based on their family relations.

"Husband and wife usually go into running a business naively," claimed Graff. "They assume because they are married they can run a business successfully, and that's not always the case. The health of the relationship depends on what stage the marriage is in and how it will affect an evolving business.

"Siblings, on the other hand, have more of a history together," Graff continued. "To succeed, they have to define their roles clearly."

The Messer brothers have always been competitive, from the time they were in school sports together to playing golf, hunting and fishing as adults, noted Buel Messer. "They are always trying to outproduce each other, but they never try to sabotage each other," Messer said. "I learned early on that if they weren't competing for the same thing, they began setting their own goals and helping each other achieve them – competing on a level that was positive for the company."

David Snodgrass, president, Dennis' Seven Dees Landscaping, Portland, Ore. – now in its third generation of ownership – said sibling competition from childhood is natural and if brought into the workplace can have a negative impact on a business.

While sibling competition can be reduced by separating business roles, Snodgrass said the real challenge comes when managing siblings is added to the mix. As president, David has authority over his siblings, Drew and Dean, who own the business with him.

"There is a natural challenge to authority when one sibling manages another," Snodgrass said. "Our partnership works because we respect each other as owners and we make corporate decisions jointly."

SETTING BOUNDARIES. All families are dysfunctional. "You just have to be lucky enough that your family has enough good will, generosity, social skills and conflict resolution skills to understand the values of sacrifice and hard work," Bryck said.

(continued on page 44)

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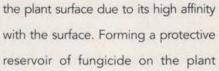
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(continued from page 40)

FAMILY

BUSINESS

CONSTRUCTIVE OVERLAP

hen family members work together in or share ownership of a business, the business cannot function independent of the family and vice-versa, according to Barry Graff, an organizational consultant who specializes in family business consulting, RSM McGladrey, Minneapolis, Minn.

"And this mutual dependency is, in fact, one of the major reasons for families to be in business together," Graff explained. "Success becomes a double success – growth of the business engenders family pride. Familiarity breeds trust, and family members can spend time together."

However, the overlap of the family and the business can be a source of tension and stress as Graff pointed out: "How do you tell your son or daughter, sibling or spouse they are not doing a good job? When a father and son clash over a business decision is the problem based on different views of their market, differences in management styles that are generation based, a good old-fashioned father-son struggle for power and control or a mutual seeking of recognition and acceptance?"

While some overlap is inevitable and can be positive for the family, excessive overlap can lead to vulnerability of the business to family and personal entanglements, vulnerability of personal relationships to business issues and a lack of security

> and excess stress in the business or the family.

"A few examples of family vs. business issues are: Transition in management and leadership of company (business) vs. aging and death of older generation (family): Choosing a competent successor (business) vs. feeling accepted and recognized by parents, especially father (family);

OWNERSHIP

P dividing ownership equitably, including recognizing each individual's contribution to the business

(business) vs. feeling equally loved by parents (family) and assigning the key roles to non-family members (business) vs. defining family loyalty (family)," Graff said.

Ownership comes into play when there are different people who run the day-to-day management of the business (business circle) and people who own the business (ownership circle). "If you're confused on which is which, you probably have too much overlap," Graff pointed out.

While excessive overlap between the family system, the business system and the ownership system can lead to disaster, constructive overlap among them can lead to fulfilling family relationships and successful business operations, Graff said.

Graff suggested families draw their own circles to see how much the circles overlap in a family-owned business.

"If you draw one circle for all of the systems, you have too much overlap," Graff stated, adding that a home circle should be added for businesses operating out of the home.

"Many landscape companies have homes that are operating near or as a part of the family business," Graff said. "This can add to the stress of overlap because customers are knocking on the door and calling after hours expecting something from you while family members are saying there's no peace at home."

Graff's advice for correcting excessive overlap: "The first step is conversation and communication. Everybody operating in the business and the family needs some privacy and independence and by talking out excessive overlap problems this can be achieved." – *Nicole Wisniewski*

BUSINESS FAMILY

EXCESSIVE OVERLAP

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(continued from page 44)

The solution to family squabbles can be as simple as rearranging the way relatives speak to each other, Bryck explained.

"If a father says something to his son and the son feels belittled at work, there is a problem in that father's means of communication," Bryck said. "When people discuss their feelings about particular issues at work, they need to take responsibility for their statements. For example, instead of screaming 'You idiot!' you need to say 'I feel disrespected when you go above my head.' And if a family member is trying to tell you they have a problem with you, make them take responsibility for the statement by rewording it in an I-you fashion."

Because this form of communication can be difficult for relatives to adapt to at work, sometimes getting along in a family business means getting outside opinions.

The Messers operate with the help of a board of advisers, which is made up of people who have the proper financial and business expertise to assist in company decisions.

Adding a group of consultants, such as a board of advisers, is an excellent way to bring additional expertise into company planning and help relatives work together, particularly parents and their children, Bryck recommended.



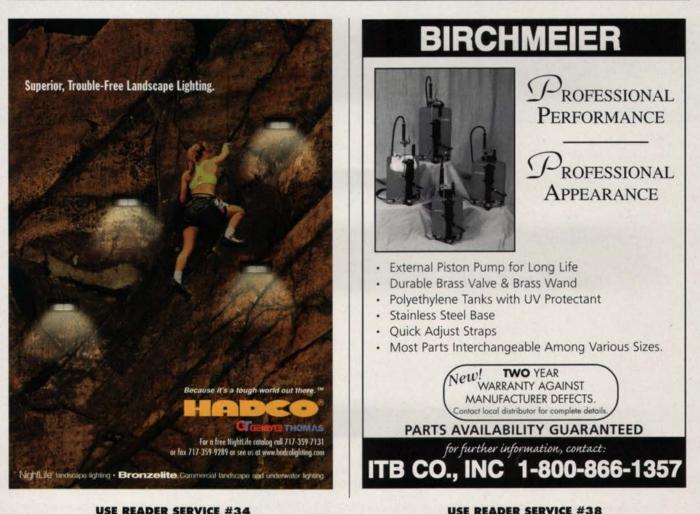
"A group of outside consultants will tend to hear opposing viewpoints from father and son more fairly and be able to say whether the son is competent in running the business even though the father thinks otherwise," Bryck continued. "Sometimes families need outside voices to tell them where the potential icebergs are in their companies. And there are icebergs ahead in every family business. By discussing them, a family can steer their boat or slow it down in time."

Jon and Vicky Cundiff have gone from college sweethearts to full-time business partners. Photo: Kevin Anderson

ADDING KIDS TO THE BUSINESS.

When Dalton Hermes started out in his father's business, dad was in the middle of a divorce and wasn't very involved in the company. While this proved a great experience for Dalton because he learned the workings of the company inside and out at a young age, it was tough for him emotionally.

"When I finally bought the company from my father, the problem wasn't that dad couldn't let go, it was that dad didn't mind (continued on page 48)



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(continued from page 46)

letting go," Hermes remarked. "I used to wish dad was there a little more often than he was when I was learning the business but I had to get over that expectation and realize he was at a different stage in his life."

Adding children to the family business generally adds competent, trustworthy employees, yet at the same time the addition brings along another emotional level.

"There are so many parents out there that think of their child working in the business as paying them their allowance," Bryck said. "There are also many fathers who feel they can run their family as a business and operate as a totalitarian kind of boss. That isn't fair to the children involved. Parents need to



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treat the business like a business and the family like a family. There are some things parents do as bosses that would be considered harassment if they weren't parents."

Working children into the family business can build a work ethic in them as long as it's done in a supportive, teaching way, according to Graff, and as long as parents are understanding when the day comes that their child chooses to follow another career path.

"There was a time in this country when kids had to stay on the family farm," Graff noted. "Now, it's recommended that kids go away to college or to work elsewhere for five years before coming back into the family business so they are sure of what they want."

Hermes and Anderson both believe that having a family business can give children an opportunity to develop a work ethic at a young age. While they don't pressure their children into working for their companies, they do make sure their children know the opportunity is there. Last summer, Hermes told his daughters that they had to work in the company three out of 12 weeks of their summer vacation to learn how to work and save money. After some grumbling, the children went to work – one week in office, one week in the nursery and one week in horticulture.

"And I paid them as if they were working at a regular job," Hermes said. "I wanted them to understand the relationship between hard work and reward. It turned out to be a very positive experience."

The whole purpose of Anderson Lawn Care was so that Bobbi and Steve's nine children would have a means of developing a work ethic and later have some assistance in attending college.

"But we didn't want our children thinking that they inherit a part of this business just because their last name is Anderson," Steve said. "If they want to start earning money for a car or to go out with their friends, the business is there, and if we have a position for them then they can come on board."

There are many pitfalls parents can run into when incorporating children into the business. Parents should never overpay or underpay their children, Bryck said, and children should never be told that they have to follow in the footsteps of their parents.

"Sure, when I look down the road it would be nice to have my kids take over the business (continued on page 50)

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(continued from page 48)

just as I'm ready to retire," said Stephen Hillenmeyer, 41, president, Hillenmeyer Nurseries, Lexington, Ky., whose oldest child is 15 years old and whose business is 158 years old. "But I want them to follow their own choice of career path. I don't want them to think that I expect them to be in the business or that this business is an easy way out."

SUCCESSION PLANNING. It takes a com-

pany like Hillenmeyer Nurseries, which has survived 158 years into its fifth generation, to know how to successfully bring about a change in ownership, even when statistics say that only 1 percent of family businesses make it that far. Yet Stephen Hillenmeyer noted that succession planning in a family business is not an easy task.

When Stephen, Chris and their brother, Louis III, bought out their uncle, Robert, after their father, Louis, Jr., died, it was a smooth transition for the family.

"When my uncle retired, he didn't have to," Hillenmeyer explained. "But he knew it was time to let us spread our wings in the family business."

Davids had a similar situation when his father decided it was time to retire and sell the business, yet the process took over 10 years of planning.

"Time is needed just to come up with the kind of money it takes to achieve the payments in a buy-sell," Davids said. "Everything in a succession planning process also needs to be done legally and needs to be done in writing. There were times during a meeting when looking back to the previous meeting's written documentation saved us an argument."

Hermes said the negotiations between he and his father, John, were emotionally draining for them both, even though Dalton was ready to take over the business and John was ready to retire.

"Self-made people fight and scrap to make it," Hermes said. "These traits were part of my father's character. He drove a hard bargain. We had an accountant and an attorney to help us through the process and to keep the communication open, but just the fact that it was a father negotiating with his son made it more difficult for us. I think it goes back to the fact that I was always taught to honor my father and mother and that's tough to let go of in a business negotiation." Although father-to-son transitions are difficult, Chris Kujawa has a different view. Chris is in the thick of succession planning with his father, Ron, who has begun to scale back his duties at Kujawa Enterprises, Cudahy, Wis. Chris said that although his father will eventually retire, he doesn't expect Ron to ever completely remove himself from the business' operations.

"When you sell the company to someone within the family, you don't really leave it – you just sign off on it," Chris said. "I don't anticipate that Ron will really ever leave the company. He'll probably always have an office here and come and go as he pleases. And I would rather have it that way – he's the best business consultant I could have."

While father-to-son transitions can be difficult, they are also expected. Chris and Stephen Hillenmeyer faced a challenge when they bought out their brother, Louis, due to opposing business views. The decision was one of the harder transitions to occur at Hillenmeyer Nurseries. "What happens if you don't get along or you change your minds about the business vision?" Hillenmeyer asked, mentioning that discussing succession before bringing in costly attorneys and accountants could save the business money. "This question may come up, and that's why family business owners should plan while everyone is in agreement with the company vision because when relatives do not agree on company policies is not the time to speak peacefully. Think about the company five to 10 to 20 years down the road and plan for the best and the worst just in case."

When one family business owner is succeeding another, the transition is always more difficult than when a family is selling their company to an outsider, claimed Buel Messer.

Messer Landscape's main office is located in Staunton, Va., but the company also operates two other locations in Richmond and Norfolk. The Messers' two sons each run one of the company's three offices, leaving the main Staunton office without potential fu-

few years after Anderson Lawn Care, Leesburg, Ind., successfully took off, Steve Anderson's daughter, Jodi, left to start her own business and took the residential accounts from the 95-percent commercial business of Anderson Lawn Care with her. Even though the companies and family members operate independent of each other, they have an open relationship in which they share strategies and even purchase lawn care products together.

"We are in no way competitive," Steve explained. "We work together. We even feed each other customer references."

David Snodgrass, president of Dennis' Seven Dees Landscaping, Portland, Ore. and his brothers, Dean and Drew, who own the business with him, are in a similar situation. The three Dees compete with their brother Drake, president of Drake's Seven Dees, also located in Portland, Ore. While the companies do not compete head-to-head, they operate similar businesses located in the same city.

"We do not share business strategies at all – we operate independently of each other," David said. "But being brothers and competitors doesn't bother us."

Friendly competition between relatives can be healthy, claimed Ira Bryck, director of the University of Massachusetts Family Business Center, Amherst, Mass.

"Family members just have to make sure that when they say they are operating under friendly competition that they really mean it," Bryck advised. "There is no Eleventh Commandment saying relatives have to work together. So talking about the competition is a good idea because if there are any underlying psychological issues there, they will become evident. It would be a shame to think that relatives are using business competition to play out family dysfunctions." – **Nicole Wisniewski**



ture ownership once Buel retires, so outside acquisition is a likely possibility.

Before a consolidator comes knocking on the door of a family business asking questions, Bryck said families need to discuss and

choose their place in the consolidation game.

"The worst thing to do would be to leave the topic untouched so that when the consolidator peaks in the door, he sees a family in disarray," Bryck said. "Whether or not you see consolidation as a demon or a saint, one question needs to be placed on the table: 'What are we going to do if we are approached by a consolidator?' If you want to keep the business in the family, then your goal should be to grow your business to fight off consolidators or offer better customer service as a way to compete. If your family wants out of the business, consolidation could be a nice way of cashing out – or maybe the family



Chris Kujawa (right) doesn't expect his parents to ever completely remove themselves from the business. Photo: John Roberts

decides to grow the business to become even more attractive to consolidators. There are many options out there."

Buel said while he is happy a portion of the business will remain in the family, he has learned that negotiating a business sale with family members is complex.

"Family members tend to expect more," Buel said. "They expect a better deal because they feel they've earned it. They think some things are rightfully theirs because of the family tie. To a large extent, my children will end up with everything I own anyway, but while I'm around they are going to earn it."

Buel, having been through just about all a

father, husband and company president could go through while running a family business, said now that he looks back, there are a few things he would have done differently in terms of being a father and a boss simultaneously.

"Hindsight is always better, but I definitely would have been firmer in the beginning with my sons," Buel said. "I would have had straighter rules and wouldn't have bent the ones I did have as much. The closeness makes being a boss hard."

The author is Assistant Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on managing non-family employees in a family business or on how to reach the consultants interviewed in this article...

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Purchasing Plants

by Bob West

the past two years have placed greater importance on how

Nursery material shortages during

contractors purchase their plants.

Visit almost any nursery show or plant material supplier these days and you're likely to hear the same story – plant availability is down from previous years and quality material is of premium value.

But a landscape contractor without quality plant material is like an artist without paint, so contractors do what is necessary to guarantee the availability of the material they need to do their work. In a 1999 survey of *Lawn & Landscape* readers, better than 77 percent of respondents indicated they purchased plant materials in 1999, and respondents also predicted they will spend in excess of \$104,000 on plant material purchases in 2000. (Surprisingly, respondents in the Northeast and West predicted they will spend approximately twice as much as respondents in the Midwest and nearly four times as much as respondents located in the South.)

With the challenges of finding quality material still confronting so many contractors (and expected by many nursery growers to continue through most of next year), the process contractors use to find and acquire plants becomes even more important.

RELATIONSHIPS RULE. Not surprisingly, contractors spoke at length about the importance of developing and maintaining quality relationships with plant suppliers and keeping the number of primary plant suppliers a company deals with to a minimum. "We work with a few, specific vendors who know

> what type of company we are and understand our plant material needs," noted Bruce Allentuck, president, Allentuck Landscaping, Gaithersburg, Md. "As a matter of fact, we work with one wholesaler even though it is not the (continued from page 56)

Developing relationships with reliable suppliers and properly timing plant purchases are issues for contractors to focus on when purchasing nursery stock. Photo: Reading Body Works

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"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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Purchasing Plants

(continued from page 54)

closest one to our office, but our relationship works real well because we're both committed to helping the other one succeed.

"We'll also use a local wholesale yard occasionally for emergency needs," Allentuck continued. "The quality is generally pretty good, but the prices are higher."

"We deal primarily with suppliers that are located within 90 minutes of our office," commented Booth Hemingway, president/ owner, Piscataqua Landscaping Co., Eliot, Maine. "The quality, variety and size of the materials these growers stock is what matters to me, so I only want to deal with growers that I know will have a wide range of plants from generic rhododendrons, maples and oaks up to 7-inch caliper specimens and other unique plants that I know will work in our area."

Hemingway noted that he even used to buy perennials wholesale and then pot the plants to guarantee always having an adequate supply, but that will change next year because



Some plant growers will store nursery materials in their own holding area for a period of time for contractors who aren't ready to use the plants immediately after purchasing them. Photo: L&L staff

his suppliers have proven they are able to keep up with the plant demand.

Some contractors admitted that the lure of cheaper prices has drawn them out of a successful relationship with a plant supplier, only to end up making the contractor look bad to a client or making the installation process more difficult. "We had a primary supplier we dealt with, and then we started thinking we could use another supplier that offered lower prices," recalled Chris DeWitt, president, Signature Lawn and Landscape, Easley, S.C. "We ended up going back to our primary supplier because we got burned by the other (continued on page 58)

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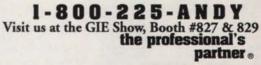
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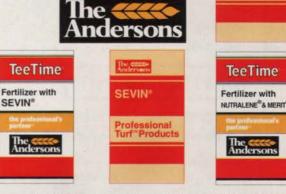
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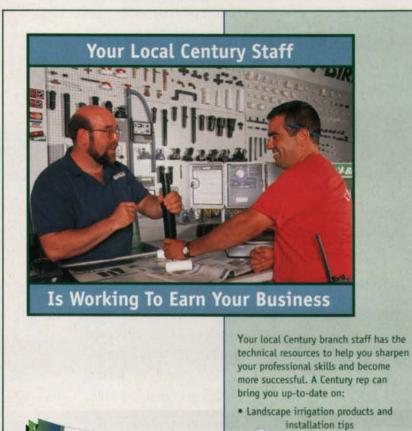
(continued from page 56)

company, and now we'll only use other suppliers when there is a significant price savings. Otherwise, you just can't run the risk of selling a job with 17 3-gallon hydrangeas only to get to the nursery or have the plants delivered and they are the wrong size."

Mike McClellan, project manager for Blue Spruce Landscape, San Jose, Calif., explained that sending a list of his plant needs for a job out to two primary growers generally fills about 65 percent of those needs.

"Filling out the rest of the order requires checking through our plant purchasing history to see who we've bought specific materials from in the past," McClellan related.

(continued on page 60)



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hris DeWitt, president, Signature Lawn and Landscape, Easley, S.C., is like every other landscape contractor in that he wants commitments from customers. DeWitt probably differs from many contractors, however, in that he is willing to gamble that these commitments will not cost him any money.

"When we get a request for a quote from a potential customer, we'll send a plant list to our suppliers for the materials on the job," explained DeWitt. "Then we take the best prices off those quotes and use them for our proposal.

"To encourage clients to move faster, we'll guarantee the price of the job we've proposed to them if they'll commit to doing the job and give us a 50 percent deposit even if the job isn't going to begin for two weeks," he noted.

"Otherwise, if the client doesn't commit to doing the job until three months after we've submitted the proposal, we'll have the plants priced again through the same process, and we may be quoted totally different prices," DeWitt pointed out. "That's why we include a disclaimer in all of our proposals that states that our proposed price to the client is based on the current prices quoted to us by suppliers and we reserve the right to alter our proposed price to the client if any significant changes occur in the prices quoted us by our suppliers.

"Typically, the clients will provide the deposit to lock in the plant prices, but we still don't usually buy the plants until we get closer to installing the job because we don't expect the prices to change that much and we don't have much room for plant storage," DeWitt concluded. – **Bob West**

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Purchasing Plants

(continued from page 58)

"A lot of design/build companies seem focused on getting in and out of the job as soon as possible so they look to buy plants that are always stocked in a nursery," added McClellan. "That really limits the plant palate available to them, so they end up with a lot of jobs that look the same and they're rarely able to 'Wow' their customers."

THE TRICK OF TIMING. Deciding whom to purchase plant material from is one challenge, but once that dilemma is solved contractors still have to decide when to purchase the plants, and different contractors have different philosophies here.

"We haven't gotten into having the suppliers deliver the plants directly to the job yet, although I don't have a good reason why," DeWitt commented. "We're just more comfortable having the plant material on our property and knowing that we've got the right plants before we show up on the job. We've ended up with the wrong materials too many times because of a grower's mistakes."

There certainly are benefits to developing a nursery holding area, and having confidence that you have the right plant materials is one of them. Contractors with holding yards also enjoy greater flexibility in that they have a number of plants available to them immediately if an unexpected need or situation arises on a job.

But the added challenges of finding space to keep a holding yard, keeping the plants irrigated and fertilized, and paying maintenance personnel to prune these plants or inspect them for insect infestations as necessary is enough to convince many contractors that holding yards aren't worth the hassle.

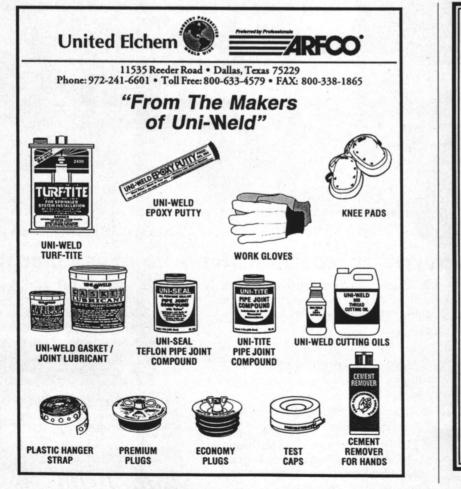
"We've tried to really cut down on the amount of material we keep in our yard," acknowledged McClellan, adding that using employees to care for these plants would boost some crews' indirect time and delay them from getting started each morning. "Keeping the plants looking good requires a lot of effort, so we go for just-in-time delivery to our yard so we don't actually have to maintain the plants or we have them dropped off at the job site."

"We moved to our current site – an indoor warehouse – from a retail nursery that we could stock and pull plant materials from," related Allentuck. "This move required some changing on our part, but we've become more efficient as a result and more aware that we have to have a specific use for a plant before we buy it. We used to take plant availability for granted, which led to more waste."

"We start buying plants as soon as we have a signed contract for a job," asserted Hemingway. "We use the customer's deposit money to offset our plant costs."

Hemingway said he prefers to tag all plant material himself because of his familiarity with the specific use for each plant and his sensitivity to a client's expectations, but (continued on page 62)

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<u>Purchasing Plants</u>

(continued from page 60)

time constraints necessitate that he fax some orders to suppliers and trust them to tag quality material for him.

"Our key suppliers will generally hold tagged material for us for 30 days before they

A landscape contractor **without quality plant material** is like an **artist without paint.**

start charging us to keep the plants in their yard," Hemingway added.

McClellan also pointed out the importance of having experienced personnel in the field to take receipt of the plant deliveries that go directly to a job so that contractors aren't accepting plants that aren't healthy or aren't what was ordered.

"We make sure our people in the field can discern whether or not we'll take a plant before it even comes off the truck," he remarked. "If a supplier sends us inferior material, we'll reject it and never let it off the truck so that job is done properly and so that supplier knows to only send us quality plant material."

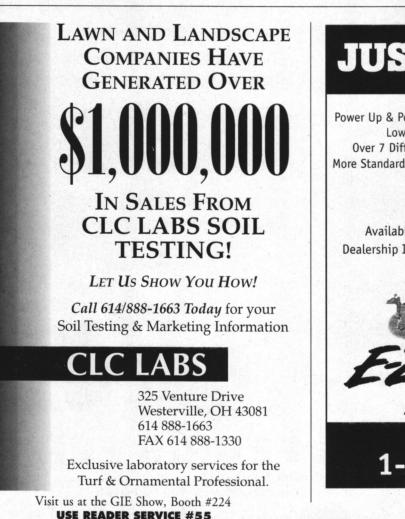
> McClellan said suppliers are generally receptive to replacing rejected plant materials in an order at no cost, although some suppliers have certain restrictions about when they'll take plant materials back.

"Normally, a supplier is looking for a long-term partnership with us as well, so they understand the importance of supplying exactly what we need," he said. "But we are seeing some nurseries becoming sensitive to infestations like fire ants so they have policies against plant material returning to their yard from a job site, which makes it even more imperative that your employees on the site pay attention before the materials are even unloaded from the delivery truck." The exception to the 'No Holding Yard' rule seems to be when unique varieties or the most commonly used varieties are considered.

"Having some basic materials on our property is reassuring in case an unexpected need arises," observed Hemingway, who added that limited availability of some of his personal favorites has led him to acquire them whenever they were available because he knows he would use them soon. "We keep about an 8,000-square-foot holding yard packed with some basic plants all summer. I wish we had the time to track when they came into the holding yard so we could make sure the older varieties were going out to jobs first, but that's not possible right now."

"Sometimes we'll come across a plant that we know we'll need more of in the future, so we may buy it and hold it for a month or two," agreed McClellan.

The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.



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Modern styles of flower bulb plantings are natural in appearance with a balanced grouping of plant materials.

Flower bulbs lend themselves to different styles of planting, providing a different ambience in accord with the setting. For instance, Narcissus that look so stately in a formal bed will do just as well and look exactly right planted in a rough grass verge.

Botanical tulip varieties generally are the most successful in naturalized plantings. They perennialize best and their short stems are not as affected by stiff winds as the taller, hybrid tulips. Bulbs used in rural and urban parks and gardens together form a binding and decorative element in wooded public gardens, green belts, grassy and central areas, walking paths, along ponds and lakes, among rose beds and in the plant pots of shopping centers.

BULBS IN CONTAINERS. Tubs, boxes and pots... flower bulbs thrive in containers. Whether portable containers or permanent vessels with a removable inner receptacle, the key advantage to this planting style is mobility.

Containers can soften and humanize the often inhospitable environment around hospitals, homes for the elderly, office buildings and factories.

Containers may be placed where they are needed at any given time, re-arranged as required, and replaced with summer-flowering bulbs once the spring display passes its peak.

Of course, plants and bulbs in pots and tubs are more vulnerable to frost damage than those in the ground. So, protect them with a generous layer of mulch, such as pine branches, rotting leaves or peat dust.

(continued from page 68)

66

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Annual and Perennial Bulbs

(continued from page 66)

If winter conditions in your area are particularly severe:

• Shelter the containers through the winter, putting them in place once the temperature becomes more moderate, or

 Grow the potted bulbs in a greenhouse and place them out when spring comes.

To produce satisfying results in the spring:

• Choose a container with drainage holes in the bottom.

 Add a drainage layer of fired clay pebbles or crockery.

 For mixed plantings, use a normal potting compost.

Plant bulbs among perennial plants and small shrubs, or install a quiet creeper at the feet of a single bulb type. Botanical varieties – e.g. *T. greigii, T. fosteriana* and *T. kaufman-niana* – with their shorter stems do best in containers.

BULBS IN LAWNS. Early-flowering "specialty" bulbs may be naturalized in grass (continued on page 72) atu

aturalized plantings offer a wide selection of color choices. Consider the following approaches when planning a site:

ANALOGOUS PLANTING – This scheme uses successive shades around the color wheel, e.g. from red through orange to yellow and cream. Or consider blue with different shades of purple, merging through into lilac.

PASTEL PLANTING – In this scheme, all of the flowers chosen are in harmony, blooming in the pastel shades, e.g. light yellow, salmon or cream.

MULTI-COLORED PLANTING - Here, a wide variety of plants and

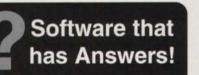
flowers of various colors and shapes are intermingled for a riotous effect.

CONTRASTING SCHEMES – From opposite ends of the color spectrum, flowers are chosen to make bold statements, e.g. red with yellow or purple with orange. – *Carol Sutton*

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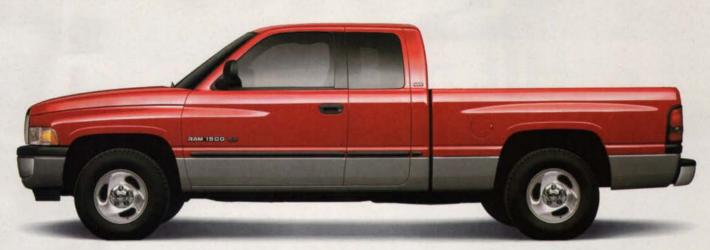
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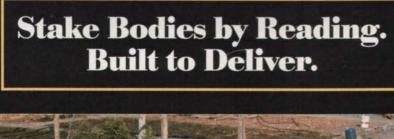
Annual and Perennial Bulbs

(continued from page 68)

where they are easily managed. Many have flowered and are fading by the time the first serious cutting of the season is necessary. This particularly applies to the early crocus and squills, such as *Scilla tubergeniana*.

If bulbs are naturalized sparingly in grass, they will produce a semblance of a wild flower meadow. One type of bulb that prospers in damp soil is *Fritillaria meleagris*, the Snake's head fritillary.

Little bulbs that do well in naturalized settings include the grape hyacinths – *Muscari armeniacum*, *M. latifolium*, etc. – which spread freely from seed, and *Anemone blanda*





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'White Splendour.'

The most highly recommended grass mixture is one in which fescues are dominant. They are the most practical for this purpose because their root systems do not interfere significantly with the bulbs' development.

Maintenance of such a combination can be simplified with the following steps:

• Best bets are those that flower early in the season, e.g. small-flowering Narcissus, Crocus chrysanthus, Galanthus, Chionodoxa, Puschkinia and Ornithogalum nutans.

Use just one type in large numbers to create a "carpet of flowers."

• Plant bulbs over approximately onethird of the grassy area.

 Mow around the bulbs, creating a contrast between the mown and unmown grass (surrounding the bulbs) and adding an extra dimension to the entire landscape's design.

• Do not till or hoe the naturalized planting area; fertilizers are not necessary.

• Do not mow until foliage has completely died off (six weeks) to ensure repeat blooming in the coming years.

The foliage sends nutrients into the bulb for conversion into food and embryo flowers for the next season's display.

• Choose a well-drained site. Excess rain must drain off quickly or the bulbs will rot.

In addition to naturalizing in grass, flower bulbs also may be scattered among trees and shrubs where the soil is bare. *Scilla siberica*, *Chionodoxa* and *Puschkinia libanotica* all are excellent in this role.

Further, there are flower bulbs that will perennialize under all light conditions. Some that prefer full sun are *Alliums* and *Narcissi*.

TYPES TO CHOOSE. Many spring-flowering bulbs will perennialize, i.e. bloom for many years, making them suitable for naturalized plantings. To make perennialized plantings as successful as possible, plant the bulbs twice as deep as usual.

As noted above, the ones most commonly used for this purpose undoubtedly are *Narcissus*, i.e. daffodils, and many of the "specialty" bulbs, e.g. *Crocus*, *Eranthis*, etc.

Massed drifts of daffodils create a lovely sight and of those particularly recommended for perennializing are many from the *Cyclamineus* group, such as 'February Gold,' 'Jack Snipe,' 'Jenny,' 'Jumblie,' 'Little Witch,' (continued on page 74)

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USE READER SERVICE #66

<u>Annual and Perennial Bulbs</u>

(continued from page 72)

'Peeping Tom,' 'Tête-à-Tête' and 'Jetfire.'

To the surprise of many people, some tulips, such as the *Fosteriana* group, are well suited to this purpose. In addition, those from the *Kaufmanniana* group are useful in these settings because they bloom early.

From among the *Tulipa greigii* group, cultivars 'Oriental Beauty' and 'Red Riding Hood' are good choices for plantings that are intended to sustain their appearance for many years with only minimal maintenance. Also, the *Greigiis* foliage is more decorative than the others, i.e. mottled or striped.

The botanical tulips also perform well in naturalized settings. Some of the best are *Tulipa eichleri*, *T. kolpakowskiana*, *T. praestans*



STUDIES HAVE SHOWN that certain varieties of *Narcissus* will flower beautifully for years when planted among roses, as do certain tulips. Among the former are 'Golden Harvest,' 'Carlton,' 'Mount Hood,' 'Ice Follies' and 'Geranium.'

'Fusilier,' T. pulchella, T. sylvestris, T. tarda, T. turkestanica and T. urumiensis.

The little *Tulipa sylvestris*, for example, looks elegant and natural – the very antithesis of the ornamental hybrids – such as the Triumph varieties. These tulips are very hardy. In addition, they suffer little wind damage thanks to their short stems.

PLANTING AMONG TREES. Falling autumn leaves not only mark the end of summer, they also enrich the earth as they decay. In addition, the soil in a tree border generally is slightly moist and light conditions on the ground vary.

Keep these factors in mind when choosing plants for such an area. Also, remember that perennials, in particular, must be strong enough to compete with the tree roots.

Here are some other points to consider when planting among trees:

 Tulips and narcissus are best located where they get sufficient light in late spring.

The flower bulbs Allium ursinum, Anemone nemorosa, Convallaria (Lily-of-the-valley), Corydalis solida, Endymion and Erythronium all provide excellent results under trees and among shrubs.

• Great ground cover choices for a shady border include: Omphalodes verna, Lamiastrum galeobdolon 'Floretinum' and Epimedium x perralchicum 'Frohnleiten.'

(continued on page 76)



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Annual and Perennial Bulbs

(continued from page 74)

There are many perennials to accompany these combinations; e.g. *Campanula trachelium*, *Alchemilla mollis* and *Bergenia* 'Morgenröte.'

• Perennials, such as *Aquilegia*, *Hosta*, *Rodgersia* and *Astilbe*, will push out weeds while providing a nice summer display.

COMBINATIONS FOR BENEFITS. When mixing a variety of plant materials, there are a few keys to consider. For instance, to increase the period in which a planting of trees, shrubs and perennials is attractive, plant a selection of bulbs that bloom sequentially all in one location.

This is called a "layered" planting, in which the latest-blooming bulbs are placed on the bottom. These bulbs are covered with soil and a second layer of early-blooming bulbs is added, such as *Crocus, Galanthus* (Snowdrops), *Chionodoxa* (Glory-of-thesnow) and *Scilla* (Squills). The little bulbs bloom first in the spring, followed by the Design Tips

• For a long-lasting effect, place botanical tulips among perennials, such as Michaelmas daisies, *Bergenia cordifolia, Hosta* and border trees.

• For a stunning landscape, combine the lightlyscented *N. triandrus* cultivar 'Hawera' in a foliage and flower carpet of *Tiarella cordifolia* (Foamflower).

• Try the creamy white Narcissus 'Jenny,' together with trumpets 'Carlton,' 'Golden Harvest' and 'February Gold,' and 'Actaea,' the Poeticus narcissus. – *Carol Sutton*

larger, later-blooming types that were planted first.

Sequential blooming can also be achieved with different types of plants, such as an opening cushion of *Geranium* (Cranesbill) with the white-flowering Narcissus triandus 'Thalia.'

Alternatively, combine two plants that flower simultaneously, such as *Helleborus orientalis* (Christmas rose) and *Puschkinia libanotica* (striped squill).

Bring about a subtle contrast of shades of green by interplanting *Polygonatum multiflorum* (Solomon's seal) with *Hosta* and a few ferns in a shady corner. An added bonus: the growing foliage of the perennials camouflages the dying leaves of the bulbs.

The author is president of CJS Communications, Vancouver, B.C.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For information on specific bulb performance, check out this article and other November issue articles on our web site – www.lawnandlandscape.com.



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USE READER SERVICE #72

by Dave Clancy

Working with multi-family accounts, such as condominium associations, can be a lucrative business. However, it can also be unlike any other type of business the landscape professional serves. In fact, maintaining the account might require as much care as maintaining the property.

The homeowners' association account, or HOA, is constantly changing. Families move in and out. Association board members change, as do property managers. For the landscape contractor this means the need to stay in tune with all of the changes in the community is paramount.

Saying that, there is not only opportunity for landscape contractors to make a profit in the HOA environment, but to make that segment an integral part of their businesses. It just takes some effort and organization.

For Mike Scian, president, Scian's Landscaping, West Berlin, N.J., working on multi-family accounts provides an opportunity to increase business. Oftentimes, he said, one management company oversees several condominium communities, and providing first-class service at one site can provide inroads into others.

"We will do everything we can to make sure the management firm is happy with our work," Scian said. "By doing that, we also get invited to bid on its other properties, and that has become quite lucrative for us."

(continued on page 82)

Maintaining the account can be just as time consuming and challenging as maintaining the property on a homeowners' association account. Photos: Excel Industries (above) and Toro (below)

These accounts can be

big headaches and big

dollars. How can

contractors minimize

one to maximize

the other?



80

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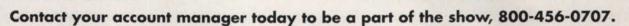


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(continued from page 80)

Scian said that about half of his company's work comes from multi-family projects or condominium associations. "The condo communities are typically bigger jobs than the corporate offices and the sales are greater if you can build a relationship with a management firm.

"You try and develop the relationship to earn respect and loyalty," Scian advised. "Personally, I try and maintain business relationships with the upper management at property management firms so they, in turn, will talk to their assistant property managers, and suggest to them that they try us out."

At Scian's, field foremen are also encouraged to develop relationships with on-site property managers to further foster the relationship between the two companies. "This is just one more step we use to provide the personal attention many of these accounts require," Scian added.

But some contractors don't see the prop-

erty manager as the key person on an account. "The board of directors, who we call the end-users, are more important," said Bill Trimmer, president, Professional Grounds, Springfield, Va. "The problem, however, is that most of our dealing is with the property managers. So we have to make sure we communicate with the board of directors to ensure communication doesn't break down between the board and the property manager.

"We feel that even though we get a lot of direction from the property manager, the owners and the board of directors are the ones that sign the check and they are the ones that make the decisions on hiring and firing," Trimmer said.

But that doesn't mean Trimmer neglects the property manager. "We have to work very closely with both the board and the property manager. We have to make sure all

The key to managing this work is **communication with customers.** If you tell them you will deliver X, Y and Z, you had better deliver X, Y and Z. **There are 500 people** who are, in essence, **your bosses.**

> communication channels are open. You must do a good job communicating or you won't be working in that community very long."

> Trimmer said Professional Grounds uses a variety of methods to communicate with customers, whether they be board members, property managers or residents. "We go to annual and monthly association meetings whenever possible," he said.





USE READER SERVICE #73

Trimmer said he also writes articles for association newsletters, and, in some instances, Professional Grounds sponsors the publications. "At the very least, we read the newsletters regularly to get a feel for what is going on in the community," he said.

"Going to the meetings is important because it gives us the opportunity to ask where any potential problems might lie," Trimmer said. "And the newsletters allow us to let the residents know what we are doing and why we are doing it.

"We will write about maintenance, both from our standpoint and to offer homeowners advice on how they can maintain their individual yards," he continued. "Since we don't service the individual properties, we can direct them on what should be done."

Trimmer estimated that 85 percent of his company's work is on multi-family accounts. "We started out doing multi-family work 25 years ago and grew it from there, so we have a pretty good handle on what works in the industry," he said.

But not all landscape contractors are as convinced as Trimmer is about the allure of the market. Glen McKinnon, CEO of Land Maintenance, St. Louis, Mo., said his company got out of the HOA business in the mid-1980s due to the revolving doors at property managers' offices.

"Management companies keep changing property managers," he lamented. "We would develop a relationship with a manager, get him or her to understand our ways and really start to make headway into the account. Then he or she would quit or get replaced and we would have to start all over again. So we just got out of the business altogether."

In addition to attempting to educate new property managers, McKinnon said a major stumbling block to his company's success in the HOA business was the desire of many property managers to bring in contractors from previous projects. "They all have favorites they like working with, and more often than not we found ourselves out of a project whenever a new property manager took over," McKinnon said.

And that may be the single biggest obstacle to success in the HOA market, even for seasoned professionals who rely on relationships to help them expand their business. "Sure there are countless properties I can name where we picked up the business because a property manager we had a relationship with left one property and went to another," said Tom Freeman, district manager, OneSource Landscape and Golf Services, Orlando, Fla.

"However," he added, "I can recall more properties where as soon as a new property manager was brought in we were given a notice of termination and they brought in a company they had worked with before. So it

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BILL TRIMMER places such a premium on communication at HOA accounts that his employees regularly attend association meetings and he writes articles or often has his company sponsor association newsletters.

is a double-edged sword.

"This industry has always been one based on relationships," he continued. "People will work with who they are comfortable with. So when the property manager moves on we have to pursue the new piece of business at the same time protecting the property we already have."

"We will approach the new property manager, explain what we are doing and try and keep the business," he said. "Unfortunately, often before we even get to meet the property manager there is a certified letter canceling the contract sitting in our mailbox.

"A new property manager's goal is to come in and make an impression. The easiest way a property manager can do that is to review the contracts and get rid of the ones he perceives as being too expensive," said Freeman. "By saving money he makes himself look good to the board."

However, as often as property managers change, the residential boards change at least as often. New board members, along with their agendas, are elected regularly. With those new elections comes the need for the landscape contractor to develop a communications pipeline to the new board.

"As the board of directors changes, you have to be aware of what their agenda will be almost immediately," said Scian. "And the difficult thing is each member has his or her own idea as to what needs to be done, and those ideas are changing constantly.

"That is where the property manager can help us out," he continued. "The property manager will act as a liaison, helping you communicate to each of the board members.

With condos, you are dealing with a variety of people with many ideas of what should be done and their own expectations. But they don't always know what has been contracted to be done.

"And, if they don't know what is in the contract, many new board members will not know what items were proposed and, subsequently, turned down," he added. "So between our record keeping, and our ability to work with the property manager, we can ensure the board has a better understanding of our role and our responsibilities."

And, Scian added, that even more than a property manager, documentation is the most important factor in dealing with HOAs.

"Documentation can be the one factor that can keep a contract from getting into trouble when it doesn't deserve to be in trouble," he said. "With proper documentation, a property manager can go with the contractor to the board and say, 'Remember when ABC contractor recommended you do that and you didn't? Now you have a bigger problem because of it.

"If that property management firm is making sure that the board understands that they denied these services six months ago or the previous board voted them down, helping the contractor keep the account when things don't always go right will go a long way," Scian said. "We know, from prior experience, just how important the management firm is."

For Freeman, operating in Florida offers a new challenge in dealing with HOAs. "Many of the board members are retired professionals, with more time on their hands than in other areas of the country," he said. "And many view these board seats as an opportunity to wield some power in their communities. They have their own beliefs and are not afraid to voice them.

"And many, just like property managers, have their own set of contractors and comfort levels," he added.

Freeman said he rarely deals with the association boards, usually limiting his exposure to the board president or the property manager. "Dealing with one person rather than the individual voices of the board is much easier," he said.

"When you work for a 300-unit property, in essence you have 300 bosses," said John (continued on page 88) TURN WHILE AERATING? NO PROBLEM

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"There is money to be made in this segment, but it has to be managed properly," Trimmer added.

The author is a freelance writer based in Gahanna, Ohio.

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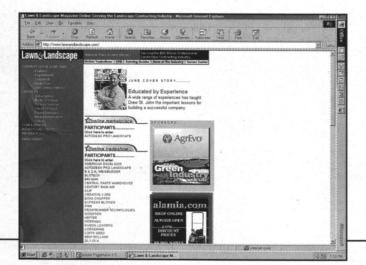
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The Bid Market

by Dave Clancy

The bid market is a tough market to thrive in. One small mistake can turn a successful project into a landscape nightmare.

The bid business carries risks that are not inherent with negotiated business. For one, competition forces everyone involved in bidding the project to double, triple and even quadruple check their numbers. After all, an error can make your bid too high, turning the potential project into someone else's work. Or worse, a bid that is too low can cost your company money. And in this era of tightening purse strings, a loss on one project can be difficult to overcome on others.

And that is why fewer and fewer companies are getting involved in the bid market. "We do less than 10 percent bid work," said Steven Blair, president, Landscape Creations, Memphis, Tenn. "We try to coordinate, negotiate and then provide the best service possible, which is not conceivable if we are continually the low bidder."

Blair, who gets most of his projects through referrals, said that bidding was more important to his company years ago than it is today. "We have been in business for 20 years, and we have developed a roster of clients that we have worked with on a regular basis. They know our quality and keep coming back, so we have not had the need to go out and bid on jobs," he said.

"We prefer to negotiate our projects," agreed Dave Hadden, president, Hadden Landscape, Plano, Texas. "We will use the bid process to get new clients. But after we work with them over a period of time, we try and get into a negotiation scenario.

SURVIVING



Bid work is a tricky game – an error can put your bid too high, risking the loss of the project, and a bid that is too low can cost your company money.

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The Bid Market

"When you go with the low bid, you go with an unknown," he continued. "The client doesn't know what corners will be cut in order for that contractor to make his money on that particular project."

Hadden said when his company bids on a project, it will determine the project costs and provide a figure at which the company will make money. "We never worry about what others are doing when they bid," he said. "If there are contractors that come in and bid too low, we will let them have the account. Chances are they didn't take everything into consideration and there will be some adjustments in their work down the road.

"We do, however, like to get a handle on what everyone else is bidding just to see if we are in line with them," he added. "If we are way out of line on many projects, we will reevaluate our bidding process for mistakes.

"But it makes no sense to us to adjust our figures to get the job only to lose money on it in the long run," he said.

Hadden said his company has received calls several years after the fact from clients who rejected his initial bids. "They wanted us to come in and fix what the original contractor could not afford to do," he said.

Only in special circumstances will Hadden adjust his numbers on a project. "For instance, if we already have three or four accounts in an industrial park, I might adjust my numbers on an additional property there simply because I want to keep the competition out," he said. "And I can afford to do that because I have an advantage with travel time – I am already on site or close to it. But I never bid a project at a loss."

Hadden said some of his competitors have bid high-profile projects with numbers he couldn't justify. "Some firms here have bid some projects just for name recognition," he said. "But for me, I would rather make money on a project nobody sees than have a lot of headaches trying to do a high-profile job and hope to break even." For Rick Doesburg, president, Thornton Landscape, Cincinnati, Ohio, the risks of bidding a project were just not worth the rewards. "Several years ago, we started bidding our projects higher and higher until we didn't get the bids anymore and had to stop doing bid work. We felt there was no money to be made because everything was so tight and there were too many headaches."

However, even though Thornton cut its business in half, Doesburg claimed the company increased profits two-fold. "We got by on providing quality service at an appropriate price and it has worked for us," he said.

Even contractors who are conscientious of quality and price considerations must be wary of another variable: miscalculation. "Once you bid the job and are successful, you are locked in for the term of that contract," Hadden said. "If you mess up your estimates, you are in trouble."

Even with experience and research, the bid still comes down to an inexact science.

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simple

The Bid Market

"We were looking at a bid project the other day and had three of us out at the site trying to get a good estimate," Hadden said. "And sure enough we produced three different estimates from within our own company."

In a case such as that, each estimate is reviewed to see which variables caused the discrepancies, Hadden said. And the bid is adjusted accordingly.

If three people at the same company come up with different numbers, it is easy to see how different companies come up with different estimates for the exact same service. Pay rates, employee productivity, equipment efficiency, insurance rates, etc. will play into a company's overhead, which is passed along to the client. And add to that, the innate nature of humans to miscalculate.

"If you make a mistake," said Patrick Elliott, manager, Site Planning Development, Charlevoix, Mich., "you are stuck with those numbers."

And Hadden said it is a doubly worri-

etting on the list of companies invited to bid on a project is as simple as, ugh, the cold call. And, like the cold call, it might take a long time, and a lot of rejections to get the business. "We just call project managers and find out when their projects are going out for bid," said Dave Hadden, president, Hadden Landscape, Plano, Texas. "If the project was just bid, we find out how long the contract is for, and put that name in our tickler file for the next go around."

That process might take several years to germinate, but it can be effective as well. "If you call on a lot of project managers, you can generate a lot of leads, and in the long run, get several projects," said Hadden. "Like anything else, it just takes some effort."

For Patrick Elliott, manager, Site Planning Development, Charlevoix, Mich., reading the newspaper gives him an instant lead file. "We see projects being written up all the time up here. So we just do a bit of investigating to try and find out what office we need to pursue to be invited to the project." – **Dave Clancy**

Getting On the List

some proposition when he underbids the existing contractor on a job. "The incumbent always has good, hard data on the project-or at least he should have," he said. "If we come in low enough to take that business away, I always wonder what he knows about the project that pushed his numbers upward. It can be scary. Then we always try and find out how low we were. If it is a big difference, we will go back and look at our numbers one more time."

Likewise, when one of Hadden's existing accounts is up for bid, he relies on his statis-(continued on page 96)



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The Bid Market

(continued from page 92)

tics to give him an advantage when submitting his bid. "Any incumbent who has the information and does not use it is crazy," he said. "When we have an account, we track man hours, equipment efficiency and every variable possible to get an adequate picture of where that bid should be. The second contract is an ideal time to correct any mistakes you made on the initial bid."

"When you are successful on a bid, the first question to ask is 'Where did we make our mistake?'" Doesburg said. "I know there are exceptions to every rule, but I firmly believe the second lowest bid is usually the best bid. That bid is less likely to have the cut corners that a very low ball bid might have.

"And, I think owners are absolutely crazy to take very low bids," he continued. "When something comes in too low there has to be something missing. And, usually, you won't find that out until after the contract is signed and half implemented."

Doesburg said his company recently bid on a project by submitting a design plan as well. "The client had a hard time finding designers to design the job. So several contractors got together and convinced the client to do a design/build bid on the project.

"Each company designed its own project and we were being judged not only on budget but on our creativity as well," he said.

The danger of the bid market, contractors agree, is the lessening effect it has on service. "If you are giving customers the lowest price consistently, you cannot be providing them with first-class service," Blair said. "In the long run, this will affect your business because you will not be known as a service provider. No matter how well intentioned you are at the front end, you will have to cut service if you Ш pursue the bid market."

The author is a freelance writer based in Gahanna, Ohio.

COMPETITION

Little Boys any contractors lament the competition they face from large companies in their markets. Not when you are bidding. With bid work, competition often comes from small companies, often one- or two-man shops with less overhead than the established landscape contractor.

"It is hard to compete with contractors who operate out of their trucks because we have so much more overhead than they do," said Patrick Elliott, manager, Site Planning Development, Charlevoix, Mich. "We have workmen's compensation, unemployment, benefits, etc. It is difficult to compete with someone who doesn't pay that."

But Elliott said he uses his company's track record as leverage when bidding accounts. "We have been in business 28 years, and we believe we do the best work in Northern Michigan. You cannot do shoddy work and be in business 28 years. I think that sets us apart." - Dave Clancy

Agreve Agreve Movember 1999

of a New Millennium

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Environmental Leadership Awards

Environmental ENCIPC

These two simple words convey a powerful concept for all of the lawn and landscape industry – manufacturers, distributors and contractors – to be sensitive to.

Various groups and individuals have driven the evolution of the environment into an emotionally political issue. Groups and initiatives across the country threaten to change how lawn and landscape contractors go about their work.

Despite lawn care's increased political prominence, many contractors neglect to give the notion of environmental stewardship the thought that it deserves. Certainly, however, there are contractors all over the country who not only spend time thinking about what it means to operate in an industry that comes into such close contact with the environment but who ensure that their company exhibits the necessary daily concern for the environment.

In order to recognize the contractors who are true environmental stewards, AgrEvo Environmental Health is pleased to sponsor this inaugural Environmental Leadership Supplement to Lawn & Landscape magazine.

Profiled in the following pages are 10 individuals and organizations whose ongoing business management practices have indicated a thorough commitment to respecting and caring for the



environment around us in a manner that bolsters the image of our entire industry. These are members of our industry who come from a variety of backgrounds and work in a variety of capacities to provide their customers with effective lawn and landscape services. These are also members of society who work in a range of areas and provide the environment with the care it requires for a healthy existence.

We at AgrEvo Environmental Health salute these true environmental stewards and encourage all industry personnel to remember that our work begins and ends with the environment around us.

Sincerely,

Michael McDermott

Michael McDermott Business Group Director AgrEvo Environmental Health Montvale, N.J.

On the Threshold of a New Millennium

Commitment to Learning

News about a unique Industry Roundtable from AgrEvo and Lawn & Landscape.

AgrEvo on the Web A wealth of online product and

technical information.

6

2000 Nominations

Follow a few, simple steps to nominate a deserving contractor or organization for the Year 2000 Environmental Leadership Awards.

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DAVE HANSON Environmental Care, Calabasas, Calif
TIM DOPPEL 10 Atwood Lawn Care, Sterling Heights, Mich. 10
NORMAN GOLDENBERG TruGreen-ChemLawn, Memphis, Tenn
TOM TOLKACZ Swingle Tree & Landscape Care, Denver, Colo.
PHIL FOGARTY Crowley's Vegetation Management, Cleveland, Ohio
MICHAEL KERNAGHAN The Weed Man, Mississauga, Ontario 20
LAURIE BROCCOLO Broccolo Tree & Lawn Care, Rochester, N.Y
CHRIS SENSKE Senske Tree & Lawn Care, Kennewick, Wash
THE DAVEY TREE INSTITUTE The Davey Tree Expert Co., Kent, Ohio
MARK SCHLOSSBERG Pro-Lawn-Plus, Baltimore, Md. 30

A commitment to the lawn and landscape industry requires more than just effective products, as AgrEvo has

shown.

In the

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The professional lawn and landscape industry certainly includes a tremendous number of environmental leaders in addition to those honored in these pages. Identifying the inaugural class of Environmental Leadership Award winners was not a simple process. Representatives from AgrEvo Environmental Health, *Lawn & Landscape* magazine, and the industry-at-large weighed the merits of scores of contractors before narrowing the list down to 10 honorees.

The following individuals were selected to receive this honor based on the commitment displayed by them and their organizations to not only operating in an environmentally safe fashion but for also viewing themselves as care takers of the environment and assuming a responsibility to nurture and better the environment around them.

LAURIE BROCCOLO, Broccolo Tree & Lawn Care, Rochester, N.Y.

TIM DOPPEL, Atwood Lawn Care, Sterling Heights, Mich.

DAVE HANSON, Environmental Care, Calabasas, Calif.

THE DAVEY TREE INSTITUTE, Kent, Ohio

CI

PHIL FOGARTY, Crowley's Vegetation Management, Cleveland, Ohio

NORMAN GOLDENBERG, TruGreen-ChemLawn, Memphis, Tenn.

MICHAEL KERNAGHAN, The Weed Man, Mississauga, Ontario

MARK SCHLOSSBERG, Pro-Lawn-Plus, Baltimore, Md.

CHRIS SENSKE, Senske Tree & Lawn Care, Kennewick, Wash.

TOM TOLKACZ, Swingle Tree & Landscape Care, Denver, Colo.

Commitment Jo Learning

This fall AgrEvo Environmental Health displayed its commitment to learning about the issues that are most important to lawn and landscape contractors by hosting 20 contractors from all over the country at a twoday roundtable event focused on the use of pesticides.



Issues covered at the roundtable included contractors' thoughts about various formulations of pesticide products, what factors are most important when buying a pesticide, the potential longterm impact of the Food Quality Protection Act on contractors' businesses and what turf and ornamental problems aren't being sufficiently addressed by products currently on the market.

While much of the information gathered at this event will go to supporting AgrEvo's efforts to produce pesticide products of value to contractors and help the company service contractors' business needs, much of this information will also be shared with the industry via upcoming articles in *Lawn & Landscape* magazine.

There are very few industries that put their member professionals into as much contact with the environment as the professional lawn and landscape industry does.

On a daily basis, more than 70,000 lawn and landscape companies and

hundreds of thousands of employees set out to care for, nurture and develop the environment around them. These companies will provide a variety of services from the design of an office courtyard to the installation of a community park to the application of products to a homeowner's front yard.

In fact, lawn and landscape professionals not only come into contact with the environment every day they go to work, but they are often the people most responsible for caring for the trees, shrubs and turf and keeping it healthy and alive for the rest of society to enjoy.

In recent years, however, environmentalists have repeatedly targeted the lawn and landscape industry and labeled it a source of environmental

MUUM

problems. Lawn care professionals have been told they are poisoning waterways and killing fish. Landscape contractors have been accused of driving harmful particulate matter into the air for people to inhale.

Unfortunately, regardless of the tremendous hours industry professionals spend training and certifying their employees and communicating the truth about lawn care products to their customers, some individuals will always accuse companies that apply pesticides of destroying the environment around us.

Oftentimes, these accusations and claims come from individuals or organizations that don't understand or care to learn the truth about this industry's commitment to be benefactors of the environment.

For example, how many industry critics realize that to bring just one new product to market a pesticide manufacturer will examAs the digital revolution continues, AgrEvo continues to take advantage of new technology in order to better serve its customers.

Lawn and landscape customers, in particular, benefit from this initiative through AgrEvo's dedicated industry web site, located at http://www.agrevo-green.com.

Visitors to the site will find information about all AgrEvo products, including rates and application information, Material Safety Data Sheets and specimen labels. Contractors can also take advantage of the "Where to Find It" portion of the web site to locate a nearby supplier of AgrEvo products.

ine 15,000 to 40,000 potential new products each year at a cost of as much as \$100 million dollars in annual research? And how many groups calling for the ban of pesticide products realize that the registration process each new pesticide must pass through can take as long as 10 years from start to finish before that product can be used?

Nonetheless, professional lawn and landscape contractors have made great strides in

> improving the reputation of the industry by professionalizing their business practices, educating their employees and constantly placing the environment at the forefront of their concerns.

> Today's contractors understand phrases such as Integrated Pest Management, targeted applications and pest monitoring, and the professional contractors in the market have made these phrases more than just words by integrating these concepts into their businesses.

> The days of making excessive applications that load the soil with more product than is necessary are over, and each and every member of this industry must take it upon him or herself to spread this message to their community on a regular basis.

Lawn and landscape contractors are friends of the environment and deserved to be recognized as such.

Do you know of a person, company or other organization within the lawn and landscape industry that deserves recognition for a commitment to preserving and bettering the environment? If so, nominate them for the 2000 Environmental Leadership Awards, to be announced in *Lawn & Landscape* magazine's November 2000 issue.

Nominations should include the nominee's name, company, address, phone number, career highlights, current responsibilities and a description of less than 500 words why this nominee should be recognized for environmental stewardship.

Nominations can be sent to:

Bob West, Editor

ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AWARDS

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companies rely on other services to generate the

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from



What percent of companies in different parts of the country offer chemical lawn care services?

Northeas	t 5	0.6%					
Midwest	4	9.6%					
South	5	5.4%					
West	4	1.3%					
	0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%

he lawn and landscape industry is growing – there is no doubt about that.

In a 1999 survey conducted by Research USA on behalf of *Lawn & Landscape* magazine, 69.3 percent of respondents said their 1999 sales will exceed their 1998 sales

with an average increase pushing 20 percent next year.

Chemical lawn care and tree and shrub care should account for about 18.2 percent of the industry's revenues as well. While this industry still remains an industry dominated by landscape construction and mowing services, more contractors are recognizing the benefits of offering weed, disease and insect control to their customers in order to capitalize on the high profit margins associated with this work.

To illustrate this point, a 1995 survey conducted by Research USA on behalf of *Lawn & Landscape* magazine found that just 11.4 percent of the industry's revenues came from chemical lawn care or tree and shrub care that year, compared to this year's 18.2.

While contractors offering these services are fairly evenly distributed across the country, the western region of the United States (41.3 percent of respondents in these states offer lawn care) tended to have slightly fewer lawn care providers than the northeastern (50.6 percent) or midwestern (49.6 percent) parts of the country, while the southern states appear to have the most competition (55.4 percent). The survey also seemed to indicate, however, that the dedicated lawn care and tree and shrub care companies are most Source: Research USA

Lawn care companies also continue to focus primarily on the single-family, residential customer, as lawn care respondents to the survey said 72.6 percent of their revenues come from these customers, compared to 16.7 percent from commercial accounts and 7.9 percent from multi-family, residential accounts.

The average lawn care company is responsible for treating 534 acres each year, broken out as follows:

- 409 acres of single-family property
- 81 acres of commercial property
- 29 acres of multi-family property
 15 acres of other property Bob West

The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

Dave Hanson has used various industry experiences to develop an appreciation for how well the industry cares for the environment.

> here are a broad range of experiences, and then there are the professional stops on Dave Hanson's impressive resume. Hanson's introduction to the green industry occurred "at the end of a garden hose," as he put it, working his way through high school and college at a nursery in the San Francisco area. After graduating from the University of California-Davis with a degree in environmental horticulture, Hanson went to work for the UC-Davis Cooperative

Early on in

framed his

perspective on

promoting the

plants. Photo:

Environmental

Care

healthy growth of

Hanson's career he

Extension Service, spending six years working on ornamental bed weed control, low energy use turfgrasses and water use efficiencies.

"My work focused on looking at situations where we could increase the sustainability of the landscape while increasing the inputs and outputs from the environment," he explained.

The operations side of the industry soon beckoned, however, and Hanson found himself in the employment of ChemLawn helping the company open up a number of new locations throughout the western region of the country.

LEADERSHIP WINNERS

"I came into contact with a lot of wonderful people throughout the U.S. during my time with ChemLawn, and these people and these experiences really helped frame my perspective on plant health care and promoting the healthy growth of plants through proper cultural practices," Hanson noted.

Hanson then spent some time with a local contractor in the San Jose market before joining Environmental Care, Inc. in 1989. Today, he remains with ECI as the senior vice president of western operations – a position from which he can influence the way coworkers approach the environment.

"I see environmental responsibility as our No. 1 responsibility in this industry," Hanson affirmed. "A lot of people shoot arrows at this industry, saying we overuse this product and pollute that resource, but I think our industry is just now going through the same sort of renaissance a other industries have gone through.

"Look at the automobile industry," Hanson continued. "The first cars used a lot of fuel and polluted the air, but those manufacturers continue to improve their products. The same is true of our industry. The first irrigation systems were designed to do nothing but put down a lot of water. Now, we talk about the efficient use of natural resources when we irrigate."

Hanson said a key to the industry's increased environmental sensitivity has been a greater awareness of its impact on natural systems.

"We need to realize that we're not afforded a limitless supply of resources and that everything we do is part of a larger system," Hanson pointed out. "We need to understand how to utilize our landscape management practices in a fashion that produces the greatest result with the least amount of disruption to the environment."

Hanson noted that he can't trace this appreciation of the environment back to any one particular incident or influence in his life. "I have always had a passion for horticulture, and that passion is something I share with most of the management here at ECI," he added. "We love making the landscape beautiful.

"I would call myself an urban environmentalist, I guess," he continued. "I believe in recreating a beautiful side of the urban environment, and I think there is a great benefit to that beauty for our own well being. That benefit is what **COMPANY:** Environmental Care, Inc. LOCATION OF HEADQUARTERS: Calabasas, Calif. CAREER **HIGHLIGHTS:** Senior vice president of western operations at ECI, member of the board of directors president for PLCAA and the **Evergreen** Foundation HE SAID: "Anyone who wants to advance within their organization has to work on learning, and people can't just sit around and do nothing and expect to learn."

draws people to go for walks in the park and work in their garden."

And while this member of the board of directors for the Professional Lawn Care Association of America and the Evergreen Foundation is quick to claim that the industry doesn't receive enough positive publicity for the good work it does for the environment, he also sees the need for continued improvement.

"Clearly, we need to continue to innovate as an industry," Hanson asserted. "We have more knowledge than we did 10 years ago, and we need to make greater use of practices that have been demonstrated to be environmentally friendly. We need to continue to expand amongst ourselves the use of these practices.

"There are leading edge companies, and there are companies that are still doing things they way they did them 10 years ago," he continued. "Only one or two people need to screw up to make the entire industry look bad."

After experiencing the industry from myriad vantage points, Hanson seems to have found a place to stay at ECI, although there's a good chance his pursuit for knowledge may lead him into new responsibilities within the organization.

"Anyone who wants to advance within their organization has to work on learning, and people can't just sit around and do nothing and expect to learn these days," he explained. "That's what makes this industry so exciting." – *Bob West*

The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape manazine.

Hanson said he has always had a passion for the environment and enjoys making the landscape look beautiful. Photo: Environmental Care

After redirecting his career path from golf turf maintenance to lawn care, Tim Doppel found his way to success.

im Doppel was a junior in high school the day he realized he wanted to pursue a lawn care career.

Spending his summer employed at a local par 3 golf course, the president of Atwood Lawn Care, Sterling, Mich., said while working one perfect sunny day he stopped to look out over the rolling green hills of the course and realized he was responsible for its impressive appearance.

> "I enjoyed being able to see the tangible results of my work," Doppel said, who continued working at the golf course for six years throughout high school and into college.

Tim Doppel has a passion for lawn maintenance and caring for the environment. Photo: Atwood Lawn Care Although he gained some valuable golf turf maintenance experience and liked the work, Doppel really didn't care for the golf environment. His time spent there was well worth it, however, because it gave him the chance to build a relationship with the course handyman who operated a lawn care company on the side. Doppel's career then started to pave its own path when he realized his passion was for lawn maintenance, not golf course maintenance.

Moving On Up. Although Michigan State University's program was geared more toward golf course maintenance, Doppel substituted courses in golf green design for business courses in accounting and marketing. Since he graduated in 1982, MSU has tailored their course work for students pursuing careers in other turf areas, such as lawn care and landscaping, Doppel said.

After redirecting his career goals in 1980, Doppel also planned to network at the Michigan Turfgrass Conference that year to get to know some people in the lawn care industry. He met Tom Bruny, president of Atwood Lawn Care, and was offered a weekend job as a service technician addressing customer questions.

By 1984, Doppel became president of Atwood Lawn Care after Bruny decided to sell it and retire to South Carolina.

Since then, the keys to his company's growth include keeping his employees happy by giving them a fair environment to work in, providing them with the training they need to do the job and having confidence in them, Doppel pointed out. Atwood Lawn Care has continued an over 10 percent growth rate over the past several years, reaching a high point at 24 percent growth from 1997 to 1998 with \$1.1 million in revenues.

The Caring Approach. Atwood Lawn Care offers two methods of treating the lawn: a low input three-to-four time application of organicbased fertilizer to spot treat weeds and a traditional five-time application approach using pesticides. Doppel prefers recommending the lowinput application first.

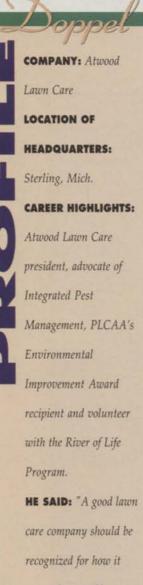
"I don't believe we should do what's more than absolutely necessary to the lawn to achieve results," he explained, pointing out that his future plans include moving his customers in the direction of a more Integrated Pest Management approach to lawn care.

The first problem with his plans, according to Doppel, is that customers are focusing on perfect lawn guarantees that were made by lawn care companies in the late 1970s and early 1980s – and are sometimes still made by companies today.

"In the past, lawn care companies made unrealistic claims, guaranteeing pest-free, weed-free lawns," Doppel stated. "Realistically, we can't prevent weeds, but we'll take care of them when they become a problem. A good lawn care company should be recognized for how it responds to problems, not how it prevents them."

Customers, Doppel said, also don't believe contractors are knowledgeable about the services they provide.

"Our customers don't understand he concept of paying for an inspection, especially if we find nothing wrong with their yard," Doppel said. "Right now, we're paid for what we bring to the yard, not for what we know. The industry won't



responds to problems, not

how it prevents them."

mature until we're paid for our knowledge."

In the meantime, Doppel focuses on educating lawn care technicians and customers on proper lawn care. In 1996, he won the Professional Lawn Care Association's Environmental Improvement Award as a result of a training book he wrote geared toward the industry professional on reducing yard waste through healthy lawn care practices through the Metropolitan Detroit Landscaping Association. Doppel also gives four to five presentations each year to customers about taking care of their lawns. His goal isn't focused on educating the lazy gardener.

"I want to help the person who's doing too much," Doppel explained. "If you sit on the porch and look out at your trees and shrubs and lawn and they look green and healthy, then that's good. Too many of my customers spend too much time on their hands and knees looking for problems in their lawns. They put way too much fertilizer down and they cut their grass to short. All this effort when they should be entertaining the lessis-more philosophy."

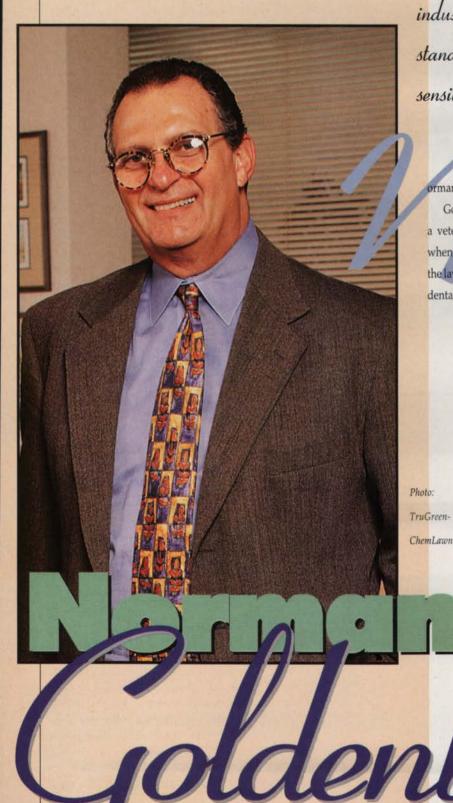
Sometimes, Doppel remarked, he thinks his biggest challenge being an environmental steward is that his customers have a misunderstanding of what he does, and what his community goals involve as president of Atwood Lawn Care and a member of the local community.

"They think that because I apply pesticides, I am a bad person," Doppel commented, mentioning that in his spare time he works with the River of Life Program through the ArchDiocese of Detroit to clean up the Clinton River, which drains into Lake St. Claire. "I don't think they know – or want to know – what I'm really about. Working in the green industry, I have an opportunity to make an impact on the way a small part of our world looks, and I take that responsibility seriously."

Doppel's family also has had an impact on his career goals. Doppel and his wife, Alice, have three children: David, 15; Matt, 13; and Chris, 9.

"My children are still young enough to want to be like dad," Doppel enthused. "So, by continuously staying focused on my goal to take care of the environment, which is a gift to those of us living in it, I'm teaching my children to be aware of it as well." – Nicole Wisniewski

The author is Assistant Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.



Backed by 38 years in the lawn care industry, Norman Goldenberg takes a stand on environmental activism and sensitivity.

orman Goldenberg could have been a dentist.

Goldenberg, vice president of Terminix International and a veteran of TruGreen-ChemLawn, Memphis, Tenn., said when he was young, he wanted to be a dentist. Thankfully for the lawn care industry, Goldenberg's parents couldn't afford dental school, so he pursued business and science.

> Now, after 38 years in the lawn care industry, Goldenberg has not only had a successful career, but has also witnessed the importance of environmental sensitivity change over time.

> "Early on, customers wanted their properties free of pests, and they weren't really concerned how that performance took place," Goldenberg explained. "Now, the pendulum has swung in the other direction. Customers of today want the same protection and care for their properties, but they are more aware of the standards of concern that must be prevalent."

> A Career Path. After majoring in entomology at the University of Florida, Goldenberg was employed by Orkin Exterminating Co. for seven years.

> After being the president of the pest and lawn care operations at another multiservice company, Goldenberg went into business for himself operating Alert Lear Pest Control Co. and Armour Exterminating Co. in Miami and West Palm Beach, respectively, for 14 years. He sold his busi

nesses to Waste Management in 1987 and became involved with TruGreen, which was a Waste Management company until it was bought in 1990 by ServiceMaster, which already owned Terminix International. Goldenberg became vice president of government and regulatory affairs for Terminix and TruGreen-ChemLawn.

Goldenberg recognized there are added environmental responsibilities assumed of him and his company for being a leader in the industry. TruGreen-ChemLawn maintains an Environmental Stewardship Program, which includes direction on preventing and handling environmental concerns, such as spills, pesticide retention facilities and storage of products within the office confines. The company initiated nationwide posting of lawns in 1987 despite industry objections at the time, began installing recycling fill systems in the early 1970s, has a thorough and detailed product approval process and funded significant research on worker exposure, dislodgeable residues, pesticide runoff and biomonitoring.

"Like any global and market leader, we are perceived to stand out more than the ordinary licensed lawn care operator," Goldenberg remarked. "When issues come to the forefront, TruGreen-ChemLawn is expected to adhere to or reach standards of performance and environmental stewardship that may be overlooked in other firms. What we do as a company takes on a large measure of representation of the industry not only by our customers, but by the media, regulators and legislators.

"Ultimately, environmental stewardship protects our employees, their families and the communities in which they work and live," Goldenberg pointed out. "Environmental stewardship means we must provide the training and skills to develop people at all levels in our enterprises. It requires that we utilize the very best equipment that can be provided for the use of pesticide applications when and where required. It also requires that we respect the concerns of our customers, neighbors and environment as we conduct our services on a daily basis."

Environmental Activism. While claims of acute injury and cancer from pesticides have not been proven, according to Goldenberg, Integrated Pest Management and the Food Quality Protection Act risk cup both focus on what is now called

denber **COMPANY:** TruGreen-ChemLawn LOCATION OF HEADQUARTERS: Memphis, Tenn. CAREER **HIGHLIGHTS:** Worked for lawn care and pest control companies before starting his own companies, which were sold to Waste Management. Rose to vice president at TruGreen-ChemLawn and Terminix International. HE SAID: "If we don't play an active [legislative] role then we have no cause to complain."

the 'precautionary principle,' which is leading to the cancellation of residential uses of pesticides.

"The lawn care use of pesticides is a vulnerable target to the argument of the risk-benefit equation," Goldenberg said. "Food use of pesticides can be more readily justified on the basis of economics and an abundant and varied food supply. The lawn care industry is more fragmented than agriculture and has little political clout. Lawn care use of pesticides is highly visible and takes pesticides to the property line and sometimes over the property line of chemophobic people."

One of the biggest challenges associated with working so closely with the environment, according to Goldenberg, is listening to customers' concerns, communicating with them and educating them even before listening to what regulators, competitors, suppliers and trade associations have to say.

"The vigil of what we do and how we do it will be forever more bearing on the performance of all lawn care companies. The greatest challenge is defining the 'environment.' Lead exposure to children is an environmental issue, yet it is impossible to remove lead from the environment. The concept of 'The Dose Makes the Poison' must be continually reinforced."

The industry as a whole, Goldenberg recommended, can be better environmental stewards by:

 Doing a better job of controlling off-target applications, especially with granular products

 Training employees on environmental sensitivity

Avoiding shortcuts to push production of revenue

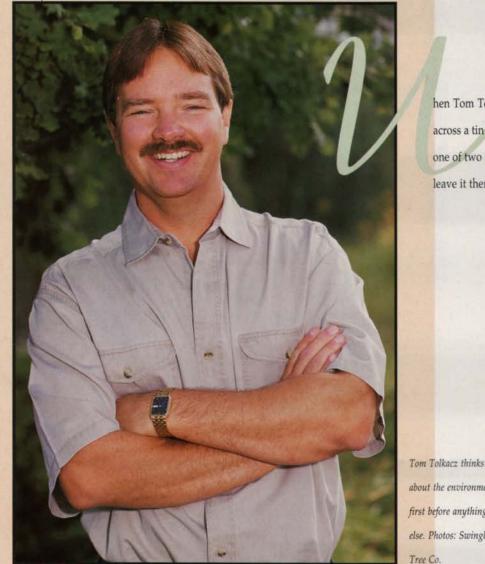
 Investing in well-designed and maintained equipment

 Communicating to prospects and customers openly and honestly

"We must all be environmental activists when it comes to running our businesses and controlling our destiny to the greatest extent possible," Goldenberg encouraged. "I have always been active in the political structure as a volunteer during the time that I have been in the industry. If we don't play an active role then we have no cause to complain when issues are resolved to our detriment without our input." – Nicole Wisniewski

The author is Assistant Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

Tom Tolkacz makes a conscious effort to be a true environmental steward at work and at home.



hen Tom Tolkacz walks down a hiking trail and comes across a tin can thrown carelessly on the path, he can do one of two things: pick up the can and throw it away or leave it there.

> "I'm the type of person who picks it up," Tolkacz, president of Swingle Tree Co., Denver, Colo., admitted. "I can't help it."

> Everybody has the opportunity to make choices, especially when it comes to running a tree and lawn care business. When Tolkacz makes business decisions he said it's his job to think about the environment first.

> "I'm here because I love what I do - caring for trees and turf," Tolkacz pointed out. "As a company, I make choices because I believe they are right. I can use product X or Y. One is more persistent in the environment and the other is less persistent. If I choose the one that's less persistent in the environment but doesn't have as much control, then I don't get the results that I always need with customers. But I have to balance my decision process to include environmental concerns."

This love for the environment and his work is what Tolkacz said has kept him thriving in the landscape and lawn care industry for over 20 lkacz years.

about the environment first before anything else. Photos: Swingle Tree Co.

Time Well Spent. Growing up in S. Milwaukee, Wis., Tolkacz spent many summers at Lake Michigan hunting, fishing and camping. It's a pastime he hasn't let go of.

Being a true outdoorsman, it was natural for Tolkacz to want to work outside as well. In high school, Tolkacz worked with Junior Project Services, a government program where students can work with the city forestry and county park departments doing maintenance work. After high school, Tolkacz went to the University of Madison-Wisconsin to pursue a career in business. By his sophomore year, Tolkacz realized that he had to follow his affinity toward agriculture, horticulture and forestry and changed his major.

While in college, Tolkacz took on four different internships, giving him a broad perspective of the green industry. He did some of the initial research on necrotic ring spot disease and some research concerning pesticide effectiveness on ornamental trees and shrubs. Tolkacz also interned at a golf course, at a state park as a forest ranger, and then traveled to Colorado to do another golf course internship. Tolkacz graduated from the University of Madison-Wisconsin with a degree in turf and grounds management and forestry.

During the mid-1980s – what Tolkacz called the tail end of the booming rapid growth of the lawn care industry – Tolkacz worked at the Barefoot Grass Corp., Denver, Colo., for four seasons. He joined Swingle Tree Co. in 1987 as an assistant manager in the lawn department, and then moved to operations manager in 1991, vice president in 1993 and, finally, president last year after longtime owner David Dickson passed away.

"The exciting thing about working with Dave was the culture that he instilled in the company," Tolkacz said, mentioning the fact that he hopes to continue that culture at Swingle Tree. "It was a culture of complete honesty with the employees and the customers.

Implementing this kind of culture is a commitment. To keep his employees focused, Tolkacz makes sure they're reminded daily of company values.

"After our morning meetings, we shout out a saying that we live and breathe by around here: 'Safety, Quality, Production,'" he enthused. "It keeps our people focused and gets their blood flowing. It's more than a mission statement – you **COMPANY:** Swingle Tree Company LOCATION OF HEADQUARTERS: Denver, Co. CAREER **HIGHLIGHTS:** Did some of the initial research on necrotic ring spot disease, part of the Clean Air Colorado Campaign, his company cut its water usage by 40 percent in six years. HE SAID: "There is a risk associated with everything we do. By using the materials properly, we can reduce that risk."

Under the

leadership of

Tolkacz,

Swingle

Tree cut its

water usage

by reducing

the amount

used in tree

spraying

applications.

have to live it and breathe it. If you don't follow our values, you don't last long here."

Swingle Tree also cut its water usage by 40 percent in the last six years by monitoring the amount used in tree spraying applications, Tolkacz said. By selecting a trunk or soil injection pesticide product to use instead of a liquid pesticide, he claimed they reduced airborne pest spray. When his employees do spray pesticides, they use 99 percent water, Tolkacz assured, and they do less broadcast spraying to reduce water usage.

"There is a risk associated with everything we do," he said. "But if we use the materials properly, we can reduce that risk and help the environment. Recently, we started using a blower to clean the sidewalk after applying granular fertilizer and our customers liked the idea, forcing our competition to do it too."

As a part of the Clean Air Colorado Campaign, Tolkacz said 25 percent of his company's vehicles are on alternative fuel. Swingle Tree also donates its mulch chips from tree pruning to the community and its customers for use.

Continued Success. The future of Swingle Tree, according to Tolkacz, is the "era of the employee."

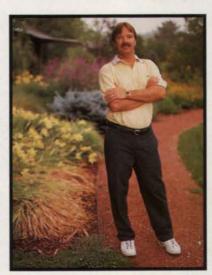
"Our leaders don't have as much contact any more with customers so our field level employees have the opportunity to shape who we are and what is in store for our future," Tolkacz asserted. "So, we'll focus on training our employees to take on new responsibilities."

Although it's easy to lose site of the environ-

ment, Tolkacz said he has confidence that won't occur at Swingle Tree.

"Being an environmental steward in this industry means having a professional image," he said. "We work hard at it, but sometimes it's easy to lose site of your goal. But the fact that we want to continue being a recognized leader in the industry helps to keep us focused." – Nicole Wisniewski

The author is Assistant Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.





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For Phil Fogarty, being an environmental steward means being active in the

community.

hen Phil Fogarty was a young boy, he was allergic to grass. "So my allergies made taking care of my mother's lawn my least favorite thing to do," pointed out Fogarty, who is now president of the same company his mother hired in 1981 to service her lawn after young Fogarty had done everything he possibly could to ruin it – Crowley's Vegetation Control, Cleveland, Ohio.

> Afterwards, Fogarty and his mother developed a friendship with the owner of Crowley's. Because of this relationship, when Tom Crowley needed someone to join the company and learn the business years later while he worked on developing a piece of new lawn care equipment, Fogarty was his man. Once Crowley received the patent for the equipment, he sold the company to Fogarty.

> "A few years after I started there, Tom got the patent and I bought the company on a long-term buyout in the fall of 1985," Fogarty noted. "I bought a couple of smaller companies in the area, so I purchased four companies all together and tripled the size of the business."

> Soon after Fogarty bought the business, he lost one of his favorite female customers – but it wasn't due to competition. Fogarty and this woman got married. "I always say it's a really unique way to lose a good customer," he said.

> *Environmental Energy.* "Being an environmental steward means you have to think outside of the box," Fogarty stressed. "I've always fulfilled the role for my customers as the community turf doctor. When they have any kind of problem,

Phil Fogarty co-hosts a Saturday morning call-in radio show to educate people on how to be better environmental stewards. Photo: L&L Staff

I try to diagnose it and find out how I can treat the symptoms in order to make the property easier to maintain."

Because of the environmentally oriented approach he takes to lawn care, Fogarty takes issue with the "environmentalist" individuals who often accuse lawn care professionals of ignoring the environment.

"Now, we have to work harder at proving we have good practices and good products, and that we provide a real value to our customers and the world in general," Fogarty maintained, adding that fighting emotional environmentalists with sound science is difficult, so emotion has to be fought with emotion.

"We are the people out here every day doing something to promote the environment," Fogarty reasoned. "Promoting the environment is a challenge that makes us stronger."

Project Importance. Fogarty doesn't just talk the talk about the significance of the environment – he walks the walk. Because of his dedication to bettering the environment and the society, he believes that children, especially those who live in urban environments, should learn about the environment. As a result, he teaches at the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority in Cleveland to educate children to care for the environment around their homes.

"We have to create an environment around children that makes them feel good," Fogarty explained. "If the lawns, shrubs and trees around these kids are maintained, then I think that is going to raise their level of esteem in themselves and their homes."

In addition, Fogarty appears at a host of student career days where he teaches junior high and elementary school students about the opportunities they have to take care of the environment. He also co-hosts a Saturday morning callin radio show to educate people on how to be better gardeners and environmental stewards.

"We know we have to be entertaining to keep people listening," Fogarty noted. "We try to keep the format as light as possible so if we reach people who aren't that interested in lawn and garden topics, we can get them to listen in, too. They are the ones who need it most."

Fogarty has also volunteered at the Professional Lawn Care Association of America's Re-



newal and Remembrance Project at Arlington National Cemetery for the past four years, where he assists other contractors renovating the turf in the ares. As soon as he saw how well the event was received, he decided to participate annually because he feels the project is an example of some of the great things the lawn care industry is doing to improve the environment.

"Every participant comes away from Arlington with a tremendous sense of pride in our industry, our environment and our country," Fogarty noted. "The event is a great experience and puts forth a great image of this industry."

Organizational Opportunity. Amidst all of this activity, does Fogarty actually have time to run a business? Amazingly, the answer is yes.

When recommending a new program to a client, Fogarty offers them an individualized evaluation. He explained that it is important from a sales standpoint to make customers feel unique.

"Customers are much more sophisticated now," Fogarty said. "These customers now require that details be managed much better now than ever before."

Handling these now sophisticated customers requires great customer service skills. "When I receive a customer complaint, I look at it as a phenomenal opportunity to strengthen my relationship with that client," Fogarty noted. "It's a great way to re-sell yourself as the right company to be dealing with."

Fogarty said a successful business with a good work atmosphere needs three essential qualities: a good customer experience, a good employee

> experience and good business practices.

"I feel like somehow I got into this industry by accident," Fogarty enthused. "I just tripped into this as I was struggling to find my niche. The lawn and landscape industry has been a tremen-

dous one for so many people in leadership positions. Lawn care demands a lot, and my success has come from conquering these challenges." – Angie Dyer

The author contributed this article to Lawn & Landscape magazine.

Deing an environmental steward means you have to think outside of the

box." - Phil Togarty.

challenge that makes us

stronger."

Michael Kernaghan believes that care for the environment starts with every industry individual.

> nce you agree to get into the lawn care industry, you have to be an ambassador to the environment," stressed Michael Kernaghan, vice president of Turf Management Systems/ Weed Man International, Mississauga, Ontario.

> > After a love of golf got Kernaghan started in the lawn care industry, he became a true steward of the environment It's not everyday that one hears of a lawn care company that has adopted peregrine eggs in Canada. Kernaghan, along with The Weed Man, has donated money to ensure the preservation of these endangered falcons.

> > Programs like this one make Kernaghan standout among lawn care professionals as someone who not only cares about this industry but also about the environment.

> > On the Green. With an interest in golfing, Kernaghan's early jobs included caddying and working in the pro shop at a golf course. "Eventually, I went outside and starting working on the actual course," Kernaghan explained. "I enjoyed the hands-on working with trees and turf."

> > > Believing that this was his calling, Kernaghan attended a community college and began to take courses in golf course construction and design. Michael soon realized

an.

Michael Kernaghan, along with Weed Man, donates money to the preservation of endangered falcons. Photo: Weed Man

ernaar

that this wasn't exactly what he wanted to do with his life.

So while the popular classes related to golf courses, Kernaghan enrolled at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada and began taking horticultural business classes. From there, he became interested in lawn care.

"During my college days, I would appear as a regular guest on a talk-radio show about lawn care," Kernaghan mentioned. "People would call in and I would answer their questions."

This radio show and Kernaghan's expertise on lawn care at a fairly young age, caught the attention of The Weed Man. Before he even knew what happened, Kernaghan was offered a job.

"So, 14 years ago, when I finished college, I started as a technical representative at The Weed Man," Kernaghan commented. "I learned a lot about the business and franchising. I was able to build on my technical knowledge when I started. I don't do too much of the hands-on work anymore, but I do still influence the agronomic policies in the franchises."

Today, Kernaghan's work at The Weed Man is becoming a family affair. His wife, Alison, works in the accounting department at a different Weed Man location. They have two children together, Shannon and Evan.

Environmental Understanding. While Kernaghan considers himself lucky for having his family, the lawn care industry should consider itself lucky for having leaders like Kernaghan who are environmentally conscious.

"I think the environment is priority No. 1," Kernaghan stressed. "You have to be true to vourself and the environment. We have to be enthusiastic about our products and we have to have the ability to make a difference."

Kernaghan believes that this attitude should permeate the entire industry. He said that each person - not just a company - has a responsibility to the environment.

This responsibility can be a double-edged sword, Kernaghan added, when the company is the largest in Canada, because it makes the organization more susceptible to attention. The Weed Man, according to Kernaghan, is always expected to be an ambassador to the environment.

"We never compromise the environment, our products or our price," Kernaghan remarked.

COMPANY: Weed Man LOCATION OF **HEADQUARTERS:** Mississauga, Ontario

Kernaghan

CAREER

HIGHLIGHTS: In college, he appeared frequently as a radio show guest answering questions about lawn care, donates money to the preservation of endangered falcons, vice president of Turf Management Systems at Weed Man. HE SAID: "I say TGIT for thank goodness it's today. You have to approach each day as a new opportunity."

"One thing we will never be accused of is being an environmental opportunist. Our environmental work is reflective of our employees."

A Company Commitment. Kernaghan credits these employees as being a key to the company's success.

"We are a big, little company," He remarked. "The strength is our people. We have ex-lawyers, ex-teachers, ex-nurses and ex-pilots, just to name a few. Their credentials are staggering, but they wanted to have a different lifestyle. People with great credentials translates into professionalism."

Besides employee strength, another priority for Kernaghan is to treat each and every customer carefully and consciously.

Kernaghan wants the customer to think of The Weed Man as a resource. "We are careful not to over-promise and under-deliver," he pointed out. "Once we know the client's expectations, then we make a program for them. We have to be pro-active with the customers' properties."

Next year will mark The Weed Man's 30th year in business and Kernaghan believes they already have recognition, exposure and maturity. For the future, he plans to surround himself with good employees and possibly expand in additional countries.

"We want to continue to penetrate markets," he mentioned. "We are franchising in the U.S. now and we have explored possibilities in the Australian market."

As for Kernaghan's personal success, he credits hard work.

"I think the harder I work, the luckier I get," he noted. "I remain true to myself and I see opportunities everywhere. I give back to the industry what it has given me. You know how some

Kernaghan said each person has a responsibility to the environment. Photo:



people say TGIF for thank goodness it's Friday. Well, I say TGIT - for thank goodness it's today. You have to approach each day as a new opportunity." - Angie Dyer

The author contributed this article to Lawn & Landscape magazine.

Laurie Broccolo has a passion for protecting and preserving

the environment.

aurie Broccolo doesn't hide the truth about the people working at Broccolo Tree & Lawn Care, Rochester, N.Y. "Everybody who works here is a real nature lover," she explained. "That love for nature is what drives us. We even get excited when we find new insects on one of our properties. I guess that means we're a little weird, too."

> Weird or not, Broccolo's passion for protecting and preserving the environment has served her, her company and her customers well. In addition, it has earned her recognition as one of the 1999 Environmental Leadership Award recipients.

A Career-Long Commitment. Pursuing a career in horticulture was an obvious choice for Broccolo, as few professions provided the combination of interpersonal interaction and conservationist work. But after receiving her degree Broccolo was frustrated by her initial employer's lack of Integrated Pest Management focus.

"When I got into the industry, there was no such thing as IPM," she noted. "Everything was done in blanket treatments. I tried to get customers interested in our services from a consulting standpoint rather than a spray standpoint, but it was a hard sell. Customers had it in their mind that they were buying product from us, not expertise, and they never looked at the landscape industry as a technical field."

When Broccolo's previous employer was sold in November 1990, she took the plunge and went into business for herself with the goal of selling a different type of lawn care service. Today, Broccolo Tree &

Customer education is a non-stop part of the job for Laurie Broccolo. Photo: Broccolo Tree &



Lawn Care employs 21 full-time employees and adds 10 more employees for the busy season.

The company's emphasis has remained on the IPM approach to lawn care, and that means the staff at Broccolo is constantly educating someone about the meaning of IPM.

"IPM is the whole approach of looking at all of the environment from checking plants and only treating them as needed to planting other plants that attract beneficial insects to following proper design concepts and installing the right plants in the right places," she explained. "Our emphasis on educating customers starts when a phone call comes into our office and we screen the calls to make sure the potential customer knows we don't just visit properties and apply product everywhere.

"After we visit a property, we leave the customers with literature that has been professionally put together and explains our programs and our pricing," Broccolo continued. "The customer needs to trust that we'll do what we need to do and when we need to do it on their property."

The education of employees is driven by several of the company's full-time horticulturists and one person who is designated to constantly identify weed, disease and insect samples that technicians bring back to the office. In addition, each technician is equipped with a radio so they can contact this horticulturist for diagnostic assistance while they are on a property.

An equally important audience to educate, however, is area landscape contractors.

"We track all of our leads, and 48 percent of our sales last year came from landscape contractor referrals," noted Broccolo. "That means educating them to be more plant friendly is important because helping their business helps our business.

"For example, if we see a problem on a job, we'll ask the installing contractor to come out to the job and show them the problem instead of just pointing it out to the customer and hurting that contractor's reputation," she explained. "We have **COMPANY:** Broccolo Tree & Lawn Care LOCATION OF HEADQUARTERS: Rochester, NY CAREER **HIGHLIGHTS:** Founded her own company in 1990 to offer customers an Integrated Pest Management-oriented alternative to other lawn care companies. SHE SAID: "IPM is the whole approach of looking at all of the environment... Our emphasis on educating customers starts when a phone call comes in."

between 60 and 70 landscape companies that refer work to us and we refer work to, and this type of educational approach really helps get them beyond the point of just being labor landscapers."

While the bulk of the company's business is derived from its lawn care, tree and shrub care has become its forté.

"We take care of lawns because everyone has them and that gains us access to the trees, but tree care is more exciting and keeps employees interested longer," Broccolo noted. "Tree care is also more demanding, so we start technicians out in routes where they are partnered with an experienced technician on a route heavy in the lawn care and slowly move that person into more tree care."

Jun with Bugs. Caring for the environment also means instilling an appreciation for nature in the local community, which Broccolo does.

"A new nature center opened in town, and I wanted us to get involved," recalled Broccolo. "So we had a field day where we took a day off from work and invited our customers and the day care centers in the area to come out and catch frogs and let them go catch bugs and let them go, and take nature walks. We had more than 400 people show up, so now this is an event we host every year to show the community how committed we are to the environment."

In addition, the company purchased a red Volkswagen Bug and painted black dots on the car to create a giant ladybug.

The lack of quality employees and the potential for increased regulatory efforts both concern Broccolo as she looks to the future.

Current legislation being considered by the New York politicians upsets her so much that Broccolo would rather not talk about it.

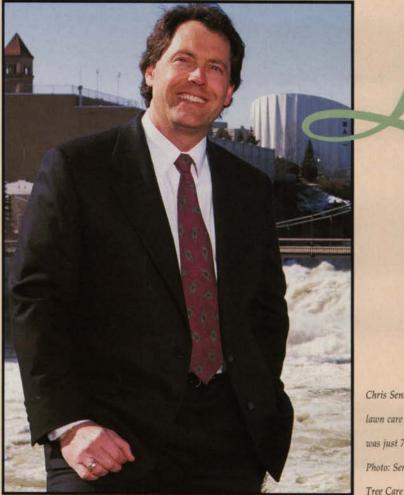
"Manufacturers are trying to make better, more environmentally friendly products, but I get so frustrated when I see how difficult obtaining new product registrations is in New York

> even when the products are so safe," she laments. "Then we have to bang our heads against a wall with the proposed 48-hour notification bill that would make it impossible for us to do IPM-oriented lawn care." – *Bob West*

> The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

"That love for nature is what drives us. We even get excited when we find new insects on one of our properties. I guess that means we're a little weird, too." - Laurie Broccolo

Senske Lawn & Tree Care has learned that a tight marketing approach can lead to growth and success.



awn care is a challenge that features obstacles and enemies, such as pests, diseases and environmental obstacles, which conspire to make a lawn care company's business more difficult.

Senske Lawn & Tree Care, Kennewick, Wash., however, finds itself doing battle with more than its fair share of enemies and obstacles in the five markets it serves throughout Washington and Idaho. Few com-

> panies, in fact, find themselves battling the agronomic changes confronting Senske employees, who must deal with dry, arid climates in some markets and the cool, wet conditions of Western Washington in others.

Chris Senske started his lawn care career when he was just 7 years old. Photo: Senske Lawn & Employees of this 52-year-old firm have come to appreciate the environment of the Pacific Northwest and have committed time and energy to ensuring that the environment is protected and lawn care businesses are allowed to operate using sound practices.

An Early Start. Don't tell any regulators, but Chris Senske got his start in lawn care early. He was 7 years old when he sprayed his first lawn (and received his first dog bite) for his father's company, and he still has fond childhood memories today of riding atop the company's truck from customer to customer.

After graduating high school, Senske went on to the University of Washington where he, like his father who was a chemical engineer, demonstrated a true proficiency for science and obtained a degree in chemistry.

Senske's post-college plans didn't

necessarily include returning home to work for his father's company, but he did so "for a year" as a favor to his father.

"Now, that year has turned into 25 years, and I don't regret it at all," Senske noted.

While Senske's educational background might lead people to think the company operates from a very technical perspective, that's not necessarily the case. Although Senske is quick to point out that he wishes the industry as a whole was more technically demanding.

"There is a benefit to understanding the potential environmental impact of the products we use, how they work, how to mix them and how they break down, but I think the lawn care industry is more marketing oriented rather than technically oriented," he explained. "Automated lawn care doesn't require a great deal of technology, and that's unfortunate because the barrier to entry has reduced and competition has increased."

"We try to emphasize the varied qualities that customers are looking for," Senske commented, adding that his company relies heavily on years of market research into what matters to lawn care customers.

"Surveys have shown that what matters to consumers is that they can have pride in their property, they have a fun and safe place for their children to play and they have a place to entertain," Senske related.

By handling environmental concerns responsibly, Senske said the company proactively avoids any concerns customers may have, although he counters that environmental safety concerns aren't as widespread as many people believe.

"Research we've seen indicates that about 5 percent of the consumer population is vitally concerned about the environment and another 30 percent could be swayed to buy one product over another due to environmental issues so long as the price of the two products is the same," he explained. "So we avoid environmental issues while building customer relationships unless the customers ask us those questions. And, in those cases, we're as forthright and honest as possible to educate them about the facts."

Where Senske's environmental commitment truly shines is the company's involvement in public policy efforts.

"We can't always have an affect on legislative affairs, but at least we try," he explained. "We've

COMPANY: Senske Lawn & Tree Care LOCATION OF **HEADQUARTERS:** Kennewick, Wash. CAREER **HIGHLIGHTS:** Received a chemistry degree from the University of Washington, president of a 52-year-old company that donates the use of its labor and chippers for the development of a Christmas tree recycling program, represents the industry on a state committee that developed a pesticide sensitivity registry for residents. HE SAID: "We can't always have an affect on legislative affairs, but at least we try."

participated in a number of forums related to IPM in the schools so we know the industry is represented and we can make sure the right message is getting out.

"While we have a significant concern in making sure all of our natural resources remain viable, we also have to make sure that public policy is implemented in a viable way that is based on

"Surveys have

matters to con-

pride in their

property, they

safe place

entertain.

Chris Senske

their children to

science," Senske continued. "There is a lot of rhetoric going around about problems caused by phosphates getting into streams and how these problems are all caused by lawn care, and feel that part of our responsibility it to make sure the truth gets out there."

Other programs the company is involved with include donating the use of their labor for the development of a Christmas tree recycling program and representing the lawn care industry on a state committee that developed a pesticide sensitivity registry for Washington residents.

"Trying to positively affectpublic policy is something every company can do," remarked Senske, comparing the passage of anti-lawn care laws to an attack on a knight's chain mail armor. "When companies don't participate in the regulatory process and a new law is made that makes doing our job more difficult, that's one

more notch out of the mail. Eventually, we can end up with a pretty big hole there, which jeopardizes our survival as an industry." – Bob West

The author is the Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.





Cardinal Landscaping Inc. is a fullservice, design and build landscape company in Fayetteville, NC. With relatively mild winters and long summers, they'll routinely service their clients all year round.

"But time's money, and getting the job under control quickly at the first go-around is really important to our profitability," says Cardinal's Quality Control & Purchasing Manager, Kay Gambill. "Especially with bed preparation, there are only so many herbicide options that work quickly and won't interfere with the new plant material." The weather calls the shots Depending on the demands of the job, the particular client, and - most importantly - the weather, Cardinal uses a number of different herbicides.

On overcast or cooler days, Finale is the hands-down favorite because the Cardinal crews know it's the only nonselective herbicide that will work reliably at lower ambient temperatures.

Finale

"Finale is going to do its job in a few days, regardless of the temperature," says Kay, "and when it's cooler we just don't



have time to wait for Roundup[®]. Typically, Roundup takes 10-21 days to do its thing in the summer. In winter, you can easily double or triple that time."

Year round weed & grass control

Although 'The South' and 'cooler temperatures' are not usually thought of together, this interview took place in

January, when it was 60° in Fayetteville and a perfect landscaping day. "Weeds don't quit just because it's winter," says Kay, "and

stovs Put.

Unlike other total weedkillers, Finale Herbicide stays put. So you can clear weeds along paths & driveways in straight, predictable lines, without the 'creep' common to other brands.

Speed Kills

Finale Herbicide kills the weeds as fast as 1 to 4 days. It's also rainfast in just an average of 4 hours. When time is money, Finale is money in the bank.

Cool Performer.

Finale Herbicide still kills weeds and grass in the cooler temperatures found during Spring and Fall. Finale is the coal choice, all year round.

Kills Taugh Meeds.

Finale Herbicide quickly kills difficult-to-control weeds like poison ivy, dandelion, dollarweed, thistle, white dover and many others.

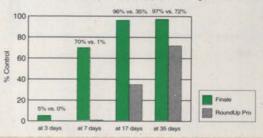
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- Absorbed rapidly through green tissue. Produces visible results in 1 to 4 days.
- · Labeled for use in residential, commercial and industrial vegetation management sites.
- · Easy-to-use, water-soluble formulation.
- Excellent tank-mix component. Compatible with many popular herbicides.
- Excellent environmental profile, with "warning" signal word.

Percent control of Kentucky Bluegrass under cool temperatures Finale at 3 oz./gal. vs. RoundUp Pro at 2 oz./gal.



It took over 35 days for RoundUp Pro to catch up with Finale in cool temperatures against a tough to control grass species in Kentucky Bluegrass.

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weather permitting, Cardinal builds and maintains landscapes all winter long. Finale's reliable cool weather performance certainly helps make our job easier."

Finale's increasing popularity with professional landscape companies all across the country is probably explained, in part, by its unique ability to deliver continued fast performance, even in cooler temperatures.

By spending time and money over the past 90 years in the development of an educational institution, The Davey Tree Expert Co. has jumped ahead of the competition.



"Because employees didn't work over the winter months, the company spent excess time and money constantly retraining new employees in the spring," explained Doug Cowan,

industry in the early 1900s.

ike many landscape contractors today, Martin Davey, Sr., was frustrated with the high employee turnover rate in the green

> CEO and chairman of the board, The Davey Tree Expert Co., Kent, Ohio. "This also prevented the potential for molding employees for foreman, supervisor and salesmen positions."-

> The solution was discovered in 1909 when Davey founded the Davey Institute of Tree Surgery, Kent, Ohio. Its purpose was to retain employees by offering them scientific education to complement their technical skills.

> "Davey brought the workers into Kent during the winter months and they stayed in a large dormitory," Cowan said. "The employees were taught arboriculture and horticultural courses in a college-type atmosphere. When the employees went back to field work the next spring, they were a well-trained, committed work force – more valuable to the company and its clients."

> This extra training through the institute gave the Davey Tree Expert Co. a competitive advantage, while making the employees' jobs more meaningful and interesting, according to Cowan, and the institute became a permanent addition to Davey Tree.

Expanding & Changing Today, the main focus of the institute remains to train Davey Tree personnel across the United States and



(Above) Doug Cowen, right, and Roger Funk inside the Davey Tree Expert Co. headquarters. (Left) The Davey Institute's main focus is to train Davey Tree personnel. Photos: Davey Tree

Canada, and to serve as a place for industry research, said Roger Funk, vice president of the Davey Institute. The company has other institutes stationed across the country and in Canada to provide on-site technical support for area insects and diseases because they vary from north to south and east to west.

"Our job is to obtain the information that needs researched, massage it and give it back to Davey Tree personnel in a manner that they can understand and use," Funk explained. "They are the ones out there performing and we support that with scientific background and knowledge."

But serving as just an in-house cooperative extension service with a 27-acre research farm wasn't enough to keep the institute thriving, Funk declared. In 1992, the company made the decision to provide its customers with an additional service. The company's selected customers can now pay the Davey Institute to have some personal research done for their specific landscaping needs.

"It became apparent that year as the industry was changing so rapidly that to guarantee the life of the institute, more dollars were needed," Funk said. "So, now if Davey Tree works for a utility company, we can also work for that utility company doing any training and research needed, and bring in our own revenue for support."

The institute also started a Conservation Science Group in charge of wetland litigation consulting and headwaters assessment, Cowan explained. "We believe that if we can assist the people who are developing the land that we are going to take care of eventually, we might as well be there from the very beginning," he said.

Another big change that helped to expand the Davey Institute was the implementation of the Internet into the company, Funk en-

"With the Internet, all of our employees are tied into our network and can get all the technical information we have in our electronic database," he pointed out. "Without the advent of email and greater technology, we would have had a terrible time managing the other institutes and getting information to them."

thused.

This also helped to expand the institute staff across the United States, Funk explained. What started with 14 Davey **COMPANY:** The Davey Tree Expert Co. LOCATION OF **HEADQUARTERS:** Kent, Ohio COMPANY **HIGHLIGHTS:** The Davey Institute was founded in 1909, started a Conservation Science Group, provide a twoyear technical degree in urban forestry with Kent State University. FUNK SAID: "The people

> here don't consider it a challenge to be environmental stewards. It's in our blood."



The Davey Institute can provide Davey Tree customers with additional research to help them with their specific needs.

scientists has increased to 71 scientists with degrees in different areas of expertise. "We employ 12 people with doctorate degrees in the institute right now," Cowan enthused.

Environmental Passion. To work at Davey Tree, Funk noted, a person has to have a passion for environmentalism.

"John Davey was a conservationist," Funk said. "The Davey culture is based on it. The people here don't consider it a challenge to be environmental stewards. It's in our blood."

Cowan sees the only challenge in the Davey Tree culture of growth through education as making all of its customers understand the difference.

"We have to pay more attention to the environment now-it's the only one we've got," Cowan stressed. "If nothing else, being more knowledgeable enhances our reputation. We know having our employees educated in arboriculture is very important to our tree care customers, especially those with 100-year-old trees that they want us to take care of, but I'm not sure if our lawn care customers see the significance of more knowledgeable employees yet."

Keeping the Jaith. Because the institute has been around for so long, Funk admitted that it is easy to understand why other companies haven't followed Davey Tree's lead and developed their own institutes.

"Back in 1908, our management took it on faith that this would work," Funk explained. "They didn't think about the cost and they knew it would take a long time before they could quantify the results. Now we have the benchmarks that show us how far we've come with the institute.

"If we wanted to establish an institute like ours today, I don't know if we could," Funk continued. "Once you have the proof that it is helping your company, it's easy to warrant the cost and the need for an institute. It's hard to spend money on education that could be used to buy more landscaping equipment. It's better to tell clients we have research to prove that what we're going to do to their landscape is going to work than to have to go back later and apologize." – Nicole Wisniewski

The author is Assistant Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

Mark Schlossberg takes care of his customers through service and an environmental

awareness.

magine this scenario: a customer – frustrated with his clover problem – calls and leaves a message over a long, holiday weekend. When the call is returned, the customer isn't home. Even though the client in unreachable, a technician is sent out to the property that same day to take care of the problem. By the time the customer returns home, the problem has been resolved. The result? An extremely satisfied client.

> This is exactly how Mark Schlossberg, president of Pro-Lawn-Plus, Baltimore, Md., does business. "I don't look for ways to get out of taking care problems," he asserted. "I look for ways to take care of problems."

> That same philosophy of taking responsibility extends to Mark's view on taking care of the environment.

Mark Schlossberg

has become one of

the lawn care

industry's most

vocal supporters

in Maryland.

Photo: Stuart

Zolotorow

"We have to educate the public and promote the benefits of a healthy lawn," he stressed.

From Sky to Jurf. "Ever since I was 4 years old, I was fascinated with plants," Mark remarked. "I was always amazed that a seed could turn into a beautiful plant."

Because no one in Mark's family was in the lawn care business, he was never pushed

NDA

towards a career in the industry.

While in college, Schlossberg was unsure of where to focus his major and he even considered meteorology. His love of plants finally drew him away from the stars, however, and when he found the agronomy department, he found his career.

"Most of the programs there focused on golf course maintenance so I thought that was the direction I would head," Schlossberg mentioned. "But because one of my professors knew someone at Hydro Lawn, I got my first job there making \$12,000 a year in 1978."

After graduating in May 1977, Schlossberg headed to this first job as a lawn care technician.

Schlossberg moved up the ladder at Hydro Lawn until 1985 when he met Frank Stevens, who owned and founded Pro-Lawn-Plus. Once Schlossberg discovered that Stevens didn't have anyone to leave the business to upon retiring, he made an offer for the company that Stevens accepted.

"I started working with Frank right away," Schlossberg stated. "Then, when he retired in 1991, I took over everything."

Responsibility to the Earth. Once at Pro-Lawn-Plus, Schlossberg became more involved in environmental issues, which therefore influenced his lawn care program.

He offers a standard five-visit program. "First, we inspect the lawn and apply a combination of fertilizer and crabgrass treatment," Mark noted. "Then we spot treat any weeds that need an application."

The technicians will only recommend the minimal amount of pesticides that a customer needs in order to have a satisfactory lawn. When selling the basic program, Schlossberg explains to customers that he wants to limit the pesticides applied to a lawn.

"We don't blanket the lawns, and we use the least amount of pesticides to keep customers happy," he added.

In keeping with the philosophy of environmental leadership, Schlossberg also provides a pesticide-free treatment. This is an organic-based product that approximately 5 percent of his customers purchase.

"This is ideal for those clients who want a green lawn but don't want the pesticides," Schlossberg explained.

"I think that being an environmental steward

COMPANY: Pro-Lawn-Plus LOCATION OF **HEADQUARTERS:** Baltimore, Md. CAREER **HIGHLIGHTS:** Rose from a lawn care technician to branch manager during seven years at Hydro Lawn. Bought Pro-Lawn-Plus in 1991. Currently serving as president of Maryland Association of Green Industries. HE SAID: "We have to

educate the public and promote the benefits of a healthy lawn." is a matter of survival in this industry," he pointed out. "We have to get this message out. We have to educate the public and promote the benefits of a healthy lawn."

Schlossberg definitely works at getting the message out. As president of the Maryland Association of Green Industries, he monitors legislation that could ultimately affect lawn care professionals. The association is responsible for setting up meetings to educate legislators and the group also hired a lobbyist to represent it on lawn care issues in legislation.

"I started dealing with legislation as soon as I came to Pro-Lawn-Plus," Schlossberg said. "It all started with the posting laws that took effect in the mid-1980s. These laws required lawn care companies to post signs in lawns right after treatments. Then, legislators wanted pre-posting as well, but, so far, this has not passed. As an industry, we were successful in stopping that bill from passing."

Constant Customer Concern. At Pro-Lawn-Plus, Schlossberg not only protects the environment but also stresses the importance of customer service in everything the company does.

"Our goal is to give customers more than they expect. I train my employees not to argue over the small stuff," he commented. "Even just a followup phone call to ask how their service was makes people happy. I try to work with the customers as much as possible."

Customer service doesn't stop there – it even extends to the way the company presents itself to the public. "I try to have the technicians in clean uniforms," Schlossberg added. "We keep our trucks in top working condition. Also important is hiring employees who can communicate well with the customers. And the office workers have to be professional."

Mark credits customer service as the key to his company's success. He stressed that a service provider has to take care of customers the same way he or she would want to be treated.

"The worst thing is when a company doesn't care that someone is spending a great deal of money with them," he said, adding that his most loyal customers are the ones who have had problems that the company resolved. – *Bob West*

The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

NORTH CAROLINA LANDSCAPER HAS SUDDEN DEATH EXPERIENCE.

"I started to feel cold. I knew there was no time" says Kay.



For Kay Gambill, time was running out. The temperature was dropping, the weeds were growing, and she and her team had a 2 acre ornamental landscape to clear and re-build in Fayetteville, NC. "Cardinal Landscape works right through the winter" she explained "and that's when most systemic weedkillers quit. But not Finale® Herbicide. Where it'll take Roundup® a month or more, Finale does the job in a few days, even when the thermometer's below 40°. For weeds, it's a sudden death experience, winter as well as summer. Kinda gives you the shivers, doesn't it?"



AgrEvo 95 Chestnut Ridge Road / Montvale, NJ 07645 / 201-307-9700 / www.agrevo-green.com / Remember to read and follow label directions carefully. © 1999 AgrEvo USA Co. Finale® is a registered trademark of Hoechst Schering AgrEvo GmbH. Roundup® is a registered trademark of Monsanto Company.

Truck Preview by Bob West PREVIEW Contractors

have high

Crews and equipment sitting in an office or a garage don't make lawn and landscape contractors any money. So, before the first mower is ever gassed up or the first shrub is ever planted, contractors have to know that they can count on their trucks to deliver their crews and equipment to their service routes and job sites without fail.

SURVEY RESULTS. A 1999 survey conducted by Lawn & Landscape magazine elicited some interesting data about contractors

and their service vehicles.

Full-size pickup trucks remain the most popular choice for landscape vehicles, with 86.5 percent of respondents saying they operate at least one such vehicle. These trucks are followed in popularity by 1-ton cab and chassis models (50 percent), compact pickup trucks (34.4 percent) and medium-duty trucks (32.2 percent).

The debate of "buy vs. lease" clearly results in two distinct, and almost equally popular, philosophies. Almost 25 percent of survey respondents indicated they always purchase their vehicles, while about 23 percent of respondents replied that they lease vehicles as often as possible.

(continued on page 132)

demands for the

vehicles that

drive this

industry.

Contractors are known for putting upwards of 200,000 miles on a truck at times and most truck owners replace their trucks after four or five years of service. Photo: Richard Ivey



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Truck Preview

(continued from page 129)

The question of "new vs. used" is also an issue for truck buyers to grapple with, and contractors are divided almost half-and-half as to their preferences. Twenty-four percent of respondents indicated they buy new vehicles all of the time compared to 21.9 percent who buy used vehicles all of the time.

And truck buyers are generally not locked into acquiring trucks at any one particular time of year, as 43.7 percent said they buy trucks throughout the year and the remaining respondents prefer to buy at various times throughout the year.

While landscape contractors may not always agree about the right time to buy a truck, they do have some clear thoughts on the reasons they purchase a particular truck. When asked about the four most influential factors on their vehicle purchasing decisions, more than 75 percent pointed to overall vehicle quality. Quality was followed in popularity by price (56.2 percent), serviceability (50.0 percent), durability (44.7 percent), tow Popular truck body alterations include changing the bed size and adding dropdown sides for easy loading and unloading. Photo: American Isuzu



rating (31.1 percent) and brand loyalty (24.4 percent).

Contractors are known for putting upwards of 200,000 miles on a truck at times, and the importance of a long life for their trucks was reinforced by the fact that slightly more than one-third of respondents indicated they replace trucks after four to five years of service while almost 30 percent replace trucks every six to eight years.

In addition, the increasing number of

after-market manufacturers of truck accessories has boosted the popularity of customizing trucks.

Almost 22 percent of survey respondents indicated they customize at least 90 percent of their vehicles. The most popular alterations are to change the bed size (52.8 percent), add ramps for loading equipment (52.7 percent), add storage compartments (51 percent) and add hand-held equipment racks (42.7 percent).

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Truck Preview

WHAT THEY SAY. While contractors are always looking to get more out of their equipment, those interviewed for this article seem generally satisfied with the vehicles currently on the market. The durable 1-ton and ¾-ton trucks remain popular for various landscape applications, and contractors continue to convert their fleets over to include as many extended-cab vehicles as possible.

"The extended cabs let us seat five crew members comfortably," noted Glen Wilhite, vice president, Brookwood Landscape, San Diego, Calif. "We even use the extended cabs on our smaller trucks for supervisors and sales people because then they have the additional necessary storage room for blueprints or anything else they may need for appointments.

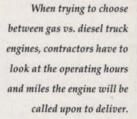
"Then, for maintenance operations, the ¾-ton trucks work well because towing weight is what matters when we hook a trailer up to the truck to carry equipment or debris," added Wilhite.

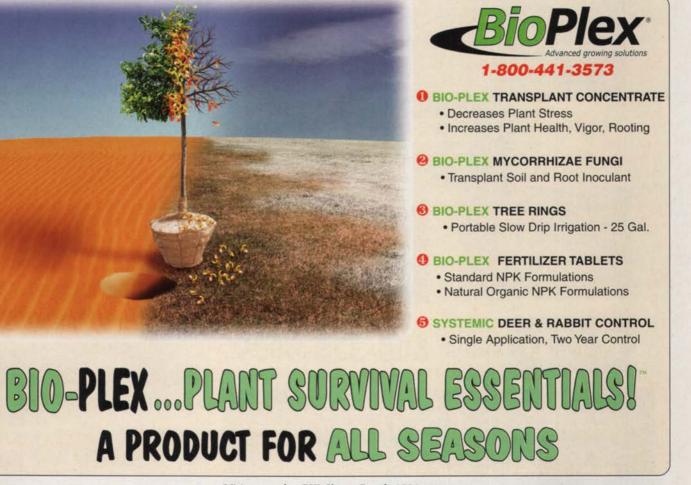
Len Wallace, president, Kd Landscaping

Co., Falmouth, Maine, commented that he is considering purchasing some of the cab-forward design vehicles that put the front seat of the truck above the engine so the driver's visibility isn't obstructed by the hood of the truck.

"We are interested in obtaining the maximum payload while remaining under a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,000







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Truck Preview

pounds so we can stay away from CDL requirements," Wallace said. "We're also looking for as much visibility for our drivers as possible, and the position of the driver's seat as well as the rounded body styles of the cab-forward trucks enables drivers to see a lot better, which is really important for plowing snow."

Ed Crawford, operating manager for vocational marketing, American Isuzu Motors, Cerritos, Calif., pointed out that the tight turning radius offered by cab-forward vehicles can also be an advantage for contractors.

One issue many contractors debate is whether to go with a gas or a diesel engine in their trucks.

"We think diesel is the only way to go," related Wallace. "Granted, nobody likes to pay more for anything and diesel engines do cost more, but a diesel engine lasts longer and the maintenance is much easier."

"We tend to go with a gasoline engine in our ¾-ton vehicles and diesel engines in our larger trucks," added Wilhite. "We'll get about 200,000 miles out of a diesel engine and 120,000 miles from gasoline engines."

"When looking at the gas vs. diesel question, contractors have to look at the operating hours and miles the engine will be called upon to deliver and the conditions the vehicle will operate in," explained Jim McNamara, public relations manager, Sterling Trucks, Willoughby, Ohio. "The engine should also be matched to the required torque capacity of the vehicle. A vehicle that will be used for hauling of heavy materials or that will start and stop or drive in hilly areas often has to have the right transmission."

"Contractors are predominantly buying gasoline engines, but diesel technology is becoming more popular," noted Crawford. "The reliability and longevity issues favor diesel engines, but the cost issue favors gasoline engines."

"Of course, how the vehicles are used will also affect their life span," Wilhite continued. "Putting a lot of weight behind them to tow can hurt the vehicle long term. So we take vehicles that are starting to run down and put them on shorter routes where they only have to drive 15 or 20 miles a day to get more service out of them."

The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

Irrigation Systems

by Nicole Wisniewski

Charlie Harrigan has a lot of pride in the fact that he keeps his irrigation inventory in two immaculately neat storage buildings.

"We don't keep our products in trucks," explained Harrigan, president, Automatic Rain Lawn Sprinklers, Bryantown, Md. "We stock everything in an orderly fashion in our two storage areas. Everything, from heads to controllers, is stacked at a visible level so we can see when we're running low on a certain product. If I know we have eight jobs coming up and I can visibly see that I only have three controllers left, then I know it's time to order more."

Most contractors like Harrigan credit good organization and well-kept inventory as the easiest ways to manage the purchasing of irrigation products. But those qualities aren't the only way to save time, hassle and money when buying heads, controllers, valves, valve boxes, wire, pipe, pipe fittings and other irrigation elements. Buying products at the right time, being aware of inventory risks and how the time spent buying products should be calculated into a customer's job cost, in addition to product pricing and reliability, are some of the most important factors when it comes to investing a landscape or irrigation company's dollars into irrigation products.

RELIABILITY IS NO. 1. Contractors don't want to be anybody's test market guinea pigs when purchasing irrigation products, according to Brian Day, marketing manager, Century Rain Aid, Madison Heights, Mich., which is why contractors focus on reliability and availability as the No. 1 factor in their irrigation product purchasing decisions.

"Our reputation as a company is built on a durable, long-lasting irrigation system," said Harrigan. "We get our product information from magazine advertising and directly from the manufacturer. We also get information on new products by going to irrigation and lawn shows. We talk to the manufacturers and, if they have a new product, they give us samples to try. But if what we're already using works and has kept up with our reliable customer Keeping on top of inventory is just one way buying irrigation products becomes easier for landscape

contractors.

The relationship contractors have with their suppliers can influence their product purchasing decisions. Photo: Century Rain Aid

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Irrigation Systems

image, we don't switch products."

Another factor that influences contractors' product purchasing decision is the relationship they have with their suppliers and what type of service the supplier provides. Services, such as delivery, a large inventory, design service, lead generation, on-site job assistance, technical training and provision of sales tools, are added benefits and cannot only stretch out the money a contractor is spending, but also enhance the relationship between a supplier and contractor, commented Jeff Carowitz, vice president – marketing, Hunter Industries, San Diego, Calif.

Distributor service is the No. 1 product purchasing influence for Jim Baker, owner, First Green Lawns, Lafayette, Colo.

"Our distributor is a better inventory manager than we are so they do our cycle count for us and we purchase what they say we need," Baker enthused. "It's an added service that not only helps us out but builds trust between us and our distributor." By standardizing his inventory, Gary Schepers, president, Schepers Lawn Sprinkling, Grand Rapids, Mich., said he builds a better contractor-distributor relationship, and ordering products from one or two manufacturers vs. four or five manufacturers makes purchasing irrigation products easier.

The service a distributor provides is important because a great deal on a product doesn't add up to much when the supplier doesn't follow through with added and reliable service, Day added.

"If a supplier shows up four hours late to the job site with your products, what is your cost now of that great deal you were supposed to be getting?" Day asked. "Product

he multitude of variables in sprinkler characteristics and features can make head selection a daunting task. The first step in the process is to have a goodunderstanding of the types of sprinklers available.

Generally speaking, there are three different types of sprinklers that are most commonly used on smaller irrigation projects: bubblers, sprays and gear-drive rotors.

Bubblers are designed to apply a large amount of water to a small area in a short period of time. The bubbler delivers water to the area immediately around the head or is sprayed in thick streams a short distance from the bubbler. Because of this high



price, quality and reliability are only small factors in the product purchasing decision when compared to supplier relationship, reliability and performance. How well can your supplier support and back you up if something goes wrong to make sure you're covered? Overall cost of a product in the long run is less expensive once a relationship has developed and deepened between a contractor

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flow rate and close spacing requirements, bubblers are restricted to small, confined, level areas. Bubblers operate over a pressure range of 1 to 90 psi and may be used on most types of plant material with the exception of turf.

Fixed-spray heads may be used for almost any type of landscape planting – from turf and ground cover to shrub beds and planters. The shorter radius (5 to 17 feet) of lawn and shrub fixed-spray heads make for a high level of control for overspray, but their relatively short radius also limits their usefulness to smaller areas. Spray heads typically have flow rates of up to $5\frac{1}{2}$ gpm. This high flow rate restricts the use of the heads to relatively level areas to prevent runoff.

Stream spray heads have been successfully used on gentle slopes because their gpm is slightly lower, while the radius is slightly larger, reducing the risk of runoff. Caution should be exercised when using stream spray heads in shrub beds, however, because shrub branches can block the relatively small spray streams.

The pressures for most spray heads range from 15 to 50 psi. Particular attention should be paid to situations with excess pressure, which produces severe misting and poor water distribution.

Gear drive rotor heads are well suited for medium to large landscapes. Their larger radius (15 to 74 feet) make rotor heads a frequent choice for medium to large landscape areas. The relatively low gpm for the area of coverage is less than spray heads and makes them useful on landscapes from level to steeply sloping. Lower flows allow more sprinklers to be operated at one time, reducing the number of zone control valves and controller stations. Pressure requirements for rotors range from 25 to 100 psi. – **Hunter Industries**

and supplier because there are more valuable services being provided."

BLUE LIGHT SPECIALS. Discounts and special sales for buying products in bulk are tempting to a contractor shopping for irrigation products. One example of a money-saving distributor special is something known as the cash discount advantage, Day said.

"The cash discount advantage means ordering a certain number of products and then getting a discount for making a payment in cash by a certain date," Day explained. "Contractors usually enjoy taking advantage of these types of discounts."

Although some contractors buy as much as they can of a certain product when there is a sale going on, impulse shopping can be dangerous, according to Day.

"What if a contractor decides to load up on a product and suddenly there is employee shrinkage, a fire or a break in?" questioned Day. "Another example is if a contractor takes on a bunch of inventory and then it rains for two or three weeks in a row. Contractors can't make money by tying up inventory space with products sitting in a cor-



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Irrigation Systems

ner. Material costs are not the biggest cost a landscape company encounters. What if the weather and economy turn on you at the same time? Products in a warehouse won't pay anyone's salary. You can't take sprinklers to the bank."

According to Day, managing products on a just-in-time basis allows contractors to reduce their overall risks. "A contractor truly doesn't need any products until he or she has a job to use them on," Day said. "Contractors should turn over their inventory as quickly as they're turning over their jobs. That's what distributors are for."

Purchasing products on an inventoryneed basis varies for contractors based on the size of the company and the number of jobs they have scheduled that week.

Harrigan, Baker and Schepers buy products 15 to 30 days in advance.

"We buy all of our products monthly to replenish our inventory," Schepers said. "We do an inventory check every week and we will buy products occasionally throughout the month if we run out. We only buy products job-by-job if we are working on a larger project. The advantage to buying products one month in advance is a time savings because we don't have to go back and forth to our distributor for products."

Because Automatic Rain Lawn Sprinklers is located over one hour away from the nearest distributor, Harrigan has to keep his storage areas full.

"Once we get a positive response to a proposal for a job, we order the products we need for that job," Harrigan stated. "We usually take a peak at our inventory and see what we need every two weeks. This saves the distributor from making so many deliveries and sometimes we'll get a discount for that. If there is a special or coupon offer through a distributor, we'll order some products in advance and store them if we know we're going to use them. We'll order prod-

Purchasing products on an inventory-need basis varies for contractors **based** on size of the company and the **number of jobs** they have *scheduled* that week.

> ucts, such as a booster pump or an extremely large controller, on a job-by-job basis because our jobs don't require them as often."

> Once in awhile, Baker will order certain products, particularly those he is guaranteed to use, such as heads, valves and pipe fittings, 90 days ahead of time, depending on how much of the season is left for his work.

> "When we purchase products this far in advance, we often negotiate different payment terms with the distributor, such as break-(continued on page 145)



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Educational Schedule-At-A-Glance SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13

1:00 - 4:00 PM	Registration Desk
	Attendee Networking Lounge
2:00 - 4:00 PM	Pre-Conference Workshops
	Managing a Multi-Cultural Workforce (Jennifer Thomas)
	All You Need to Know About Computers and the Web (Bill Cox)
5:00 - 6:30 PM	Opening Session
	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		
	Strategic Planning: Part I (Jim Huston)		
9:00 - 10:25 AM	General Session		
	Managing Growth Effectively (Craig Ruppert and Chris Davitt)		
10:25 - 10:45 AM	Refreshment Break		
10:45 - 12:00 noon	Concurrent Educational Sessions		
	M1 10 Ways to Succeed at Customer Service (Lloyd Smigel)		
	M2 Open Book Management (Phil Fogarty)		
	M3 New Profit Opportunities (Roger Braswell)		
	M4 Motivating Employees: A Different Approach (Bill Hoopes)		
12:00 - 1:15 PM	Contractor Roundtable Lunch		
1:30 - 2:45 PM	Concurrent Educational Sessions		
	M5 Leadership Principles (Bill Hoopes)		
	M6 Repeat M2 (Phil Fogarty)		
	M7 Designing an Operations Blueprint (Jack Mattingly)		
	M8 Repeat M3 (Roger Braswell)		
2:45 - 3:05 PM	Refreshment Break		
3:05 - 5:30 PM	General Session		
	All You Need To Know About Estimating and Bidding		
	(Jerry Gaeta)		
5:30 - 6:30 PM	Networking Cocktail Reception		

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Registration Desk
Continental Breakfast
Breakfast Workshop
Strategic Planning: Part II (Jim Huston)
General Session
Strategies for Increasing Your Profitability (David Minor)
Refreshment Break
Concurrent Educational Sessions
TI Benchmarking Your Performance (Judy Guido)
T2 Valuing Your Business (Ed Wandtke)
T3 Organizing Maintenance Crews (Tony Bass)
Contractor Roundtable Lunch
Concurrent Educational Sessions
T4 Stand Alone or Franchise: What To Do? (Ed Wandtke)
T5 Maximizing Margins (Dick Bare)
T6 Managing Equipment Smartly (Mike Rorie) Refreshment Break
Concurrent Educational Sessions
T7 Employee Incentive Programs (Rick Upchurch &
David St. John)
T8 Marketing Principles for Your Business (Tony Bass)
T9 Repeat M7 (Jack Mattingly)

1:00-4:00 PM

Attendee Networking Lounge Sponsored by Woods Equipment

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 ecommerce? 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



Dr. Stephen Douglas

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 design-



Jim Huston

ing and implementing the proper strategic plan. This comprehensive two-

)7 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

10 Ways To Succeed at Customer Service MI

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

Creating New Business Opportunities M3

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.

Motivating Employees: A Different Approach M4

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

Open Book Management (repeat ses-M6 sion)

For session description see Session M2

Designing an Operations Blueprint M7

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.

Creating New Business Opportunities M8 (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

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.

T2 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 Wondtke, Wandtke & Associates, Columbus, Ohio

т 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

T4 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.

T6 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

T7 **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.

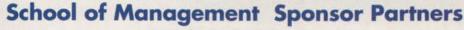
T8 Marketing Principles for Your Business

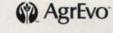
From cable television to personalized direct mail pieces, contractors are flexing their marketing muscle more readily than in years past. You'll review key points on how to "target" market your services to specific customer groups and receive a bigger bang for your marketing dollar. Speaker: Tony Bass,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

T9 Designing an Operations Blueprint (repeat session)

For session description see session M7.

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

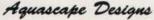




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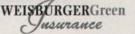




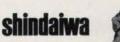


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Kawasaki









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 Forth 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.

management

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



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One-Day Registration\$105 Tournament of Champions Golf Outing\$80

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TOTAL

By Mail: Complete form and mail, with payment, to School of Management,

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

(Three or more from same company)

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Registration Fo	orm	February 13-15, 2000
riogistration ro		Dallas Marriott Quorum
(Please print or type. Form may be photo	ocopied for additional registrants; one form per person)	Dallas, Texas
First Name	Last Name	- 1
Name As It Will Appear On Badge		- School of
Title	Company	Management
Address		Registration Check List
City	State Zip Code	Check List
Phone		Completed
E-mail Address		Registration Form
Payment Information		Included Method
Check Enclosed (payable to School	of Management)	of Payment
Bill My: VISA MasterCard	_ American Express Discover	Made Hotel
Card Number	Expiration Date	Reservation at
Billing Address		Dallas Marriott Quorum
Name On Card	and the second	Called for Discount
Signature		Travel Information
Please Note: Registrations will NOT be proces tions MUST include credit card information. C will be a \$25 fee for returned checks.	esed until payment information is received. All faxed and phone reg heck must be drawn in U.S. dollars and drawn from a U.S. Bank. T	here Y Told a Friend To Register For School of Management
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Payment Type

Amount

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G

Irrigation Systems

(continued from page 138)

ing up the payment into thirds to hang onto some of that money for other business purposes," Baker explained. "Theft is our primary concern when we order products this early, but our supply is kept under lock and key and is insured for fire."

While most people recommend buying products not too far in advance, Carowitz said there are advantages to planning ahead.

"Having the product on hand can allow the contractor to respond to unexpected changes mid-way through a project," Carowitz said. "Spending one hour to drive to pick up two 50-cent fittings is a waste of a contractor's valuable time."

Whether a contractor buys irrigation products in advance or on a job-by-job basis for immediate use, Mark Painter, salesman, Toro Irrigation, Riverside, Calif., said in every case, contractors should be able to organize their workload two weeks in advance and order all of the main items for those jobs.

"Unfortunately, most contractors order products day-by-day, wasting precious working hours in supplier shops," Painter lamented. "Many distributors will allow special pricing on large orders that would represent two to three months of main item purchases in the spring. Overall savings can amount to an additional 5 to 15 percent discount and possibly a delayed payment. These types of deals can be beneficial to good money managers who plan ahead."

JOB COST. Some contractors factor the time spent purchasing irrigation products into their job costs.

Schepers and Harrigan spend only one hour per week ordering irrigation products, which is almost too minimal an amount of time to factor into a job's cost, while Painter said one-third of the overall cost of a job should be attributed to material costs.

"The material cost for irrigation product purchasing is about 30 percent for us, which means if a job was \$1,000, \$300 of that would be for the project materials," Baker said.

Day and Carowitz said that contractors and their jobs vary so greatly that an average percentage couldn't even be established as a portion of job cost, but Day recommended an alternative way to make up for some of those costs and grow profit.

"It's what I call the \$250 rule," explained Day. "Every time you're about to give Mrs. Jones a price for putting in an irrigation system, take a deep breath and add \$250 to the price. If you don't get the job, there's probably something you didn't do right in the sales process. Today, people are making a significant investment in irrigation systems. If you can get an extra \$250 on just 20 projects this year, that's an extra \$5,000 profit. If you're scared to ask for \$250 more, ask for \$25 the first time and add \$50 on the next job. Adding just a little bit to your costs can affect your bottom line and will eventually make up for time spent purchasing products."

The author is Assistant Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.



Visit us at the GIE Show, Booth #129 USE READER SERVICE #101

Fertilizer

by Kate Eidam

Fleroici

Improved formulating technology now provides contractors with more granular herbicide options.

As the demand for the construction of single-family homes, corporate campuses and golf courses increases, so does the need for quality lawn care and landscaping. And one of the biggest challenges facing these industries is the need for effective weed control.

COMBINATIONS

New, unique herbicide formulations have been introduced that, when combined with fertilizer products, offer contractors the ability to fertilize turf and control broadleaf weeds regardless of turf conditions, thereby saving them application time.

SPRAYABLE VS. GRANULAR. The debate between granular and sprayable herbicides has a long

> history. For more than 20 years, professionals have had to use a liquid herbicide to effectively control broadleaf weeds. Companies have certainly tried granular applications, but all too often found that they were unable to obtain acceptable weed control. Many commonly used weed control components work well as a sprayable solution but not very well as a granular application.

Bob Andrews, president of Carmel, Indianabased Greenskeeper, Inc.,

explained that he has tried a variety of granular herbicides over the years. "With granular products, I always seem to encounter two primary problems: the granular products require the turf to be wet, and they usually

The debate between the assets of granular vs. sprayable pesticides has continued for years without any clear winner. Photo: L&L Staff

<u>Fertilizer</u>

don't meet my control requirements," Andrews elaborated. "If the turf wasn't wet enough, the granules fell off and were useless, and if the turf was dry, forget about it. But, for some applications, we had to use a granular herbicide since using a sprayable product was either difficult or impossible."

Most of the granular herbicide products on the market could only be absorbed through the weed's foliage, which is why the labels normally recommended watering the turf prior to application. Granules that fell off of the foliage provided less control.

So many companies have tended to use sprayable products even in applications where a granular herbicide may have been better suited.

NEW TECHNOLOGY. Herbicide/fertilizer compounds have been tested at a number of universities, including Mississippi State University, Iowa State University, Clemson University and The Ohio State University. The compounds tested were both shoot- and root-active, and the results showed increased efficacy on weeds on both wet and dry turf. Tests also showed that the performance with granular herbicide-based fertilizers was as effective, if not better in some instances, as that with sprayable compounds.

Andrews began using one of the products and has been happy with the results. One of the jobs that his company has used them on is a 4-mile, city-owned boulevard that is inaccessible by spray truck.

"The road is long and narrow, and the granular product has given us as much control as a sprayable one would have," Andrews explained.

Andrews said that his decision to use a granular over a sprayable application is based on customer request and application needs.

"Our customers are interested in one thing: *results*," Andrews explained. "They aren't concerned with what product we use to get those results. I've encountered a number of instances where a granular was the most efficient and cost-effective option."

Joe Zelinko, sports turf manager of Oregon, Ohio-based Athletic Field Services, called new granular herbicide / fertilizer combinations a technological breakthrough.

"A lot of hype has surrounded other granular products that guaranteed results, and I was disappointed with their weed control everytime. But these newest formulations have given me some quality results," Zelinko added.

FORMULATOR'S THOUGHTS. A number of formulators have recognized contractors's need for these products and are adding the uniquely formulated granular weedand-feed products to their fertilizer lines.

Doug Masters, national sales manager for the professional products division, The Anderson's, Maumee, Ohio, explained the benefits that carrying this type of product brings to his customers.

"Many customers were looking for an alternative to a sprayable weed control be-



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Fertilizer

cause of application requirements. An effective granular weed control option mixed with a fertilizer was the answer," Masters stated.

"Carrying this type of product offers our customers alternatives – letting them meet their customers' demands," Masters added.

Howard Johnson's Enterprises, Milwaukee, Wis., is another formulator distributing granular weed control fertilizers, which are customized depending on the geographic location where the product is being sold.

"For years, professionals have tried different granular-based products that had to be used on wet turf with less-than-stellar results. For lawn care companies and landscape firms, the performance of their products is what keeps them in business. They can't afford a lot of callbacks or cancellations," added Joe Ernst, commercial sales manager for Howard Johnson's Enterprises.

Masters also feels that lawn and landscape professionals are having a harder time believing that a granular application will be as effective as a liquid application.

"With these segments of the market, getting contractors to use granular products is a matter of battling stereotypes and educating them on the benefits these products offer them and their customers," Masters commented. "Many contractors tried other granular products that only work on wet turf, and often those products didn't meet their weed control requirements."

"Lawn and landscape professionals are used to a contact weed control product and are often suspicious of a granular-based product, which, in the past, hasn't given acceptable control," Ernst agreed. "But the latest granular weed-and-feed fertilizer that we, and other distributors, are carrying offers outstanding weed control on wet or dry turf."

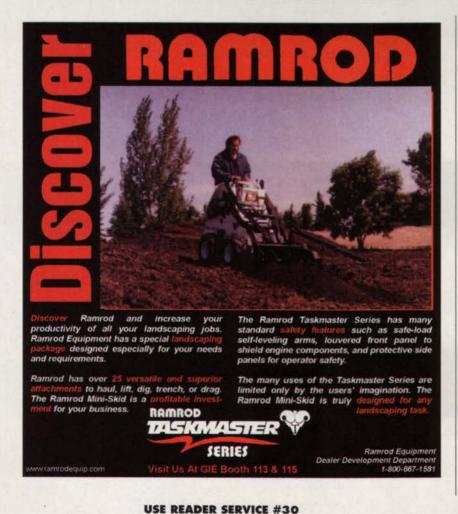
Now turf care suppliers are working to educate contractors about the benefits of the granular weed control-based fertilizers.

Greg Richards, senior product manager for LESCO, Rocky River, Ohio, explained some of the benefits of these products.

"The advanced formulation technology of these fertilizer/herbicide combinations offers contractors results almost equal to sprayable applications," Richards explained. "Many contractors don't realize that the granularbased products don't harm trees or shrubs, but they do offer excellent results for broadleaf weed control with active ingredients that are absorbed by a weed's foliage and roots."

"Even though the initial cost of liquid products might be higher, in the long run contractors can save time and money by being able to effectively control weeds and fertilize the turf concurrently regardless of its condition," Ernst summarized.

"In the last two years, a lot of testing has taken place on a variety of herbicide/fertilizer compound combinations," added Curtis Clark, marketing manager for Riverdale Chemical Co., Glenwood, Ill. "As a result, a number of granular-based combinations that (continued on page 177)





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ew editorial staffing commitments and the introduction of the Virtual Training School will mean more educational information for contractors and more marketing opportuni ties for aggressive suppliers.

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Turbo Tur

by Rick Upchurch and Dave St. John

One contractor shares the details of the compensation plan he implemented to further motivate employees and boost profits.

Nature Scapes, an Atlanta, Ga.-based commercial maintenance and installation company, is a very successful organization. Its owner and founder, Rick Upchurch, has guided the company through 16 years of growth and change.

Last year, however, as he thought about the full potential the company possessed vs. the success it had already achieved, he felt he could do even better. What was needed, he reasoned, was a "tweak," something that would help focus the management team, allow them to share in the results of their labors and do this without significantly increasing his fixed salary costs.

The "tweak" he was looking for came to him during a meeting he had with GreenSearch, an Atlanta-based management search and human resource consulting firm. They helped him devise and implement a management incentive plan designed to help him achieve these objectives.

"We were experiencing steady growth with eroding profits," said Upchurch. "The company was outgrowing its current management style and we needed a tool to help us reach the next level."

Indeed, there was nothing broken at Nature Scapes. It is a solid, viable business with healthy key indicators and performance results, a strong market niche, good financial information systems

and experienced, competent people.

"For years, I tried to give my managers a real sense of responsibility for the business, and they kept giving it right back to me," reflected Upchurch.

The decision to implement an incentive plan prompted a major review, discussion and identification of the "key results areas" in the business. Many of these areas were already embedded in the budget and profit-and-loss statements that the company's accounting manager prepared each month.

One of the reasons the managers in Nature Scapes kept giving responsibility back, as Upchurch described it, was because the results the company needed to achieve

had never been identified, established and aligned with those managers whose decisions had the greatest impact on their accomplishment.

When the analysis was completed, the key results areas of the business around which the incentive plan would be structured were

The Principles



Prior to the

Incentive Plan Implementation

Annual Revenues	• \$3.5 million
Business structure (by division)	 Maintenance (Mainly commercial) Landscape Installation Annual Color (A recently developed division)
Total employees	• ± 75
Number of key managers/decision makers by division and position	 Maintenance (4) Landscape/Installation (2) Annual Color (1) Equipment/vehicle/small tools/shop(1) Accounting (1)
Industry awards and recognition	 Atlanta Business Chronicle's List of Atlanta's Top 25 Commercial Landscape Companies
Annual growth rate	22 percent

defined as:

- · Company revenue
- Cost of sales
- · Labor costs
- · Company gross profit
- Other costs (defined as vehicle, small tools and shop costs)

The identification of these key results areas was followed by a discussion of how all of the plan participants could be linked together and rewarded for both their division/department results as well as the overall company's results. This exercise produced the linkages among the key results for which



Key Results Areas	Maintenance Managers	Installation Managers	Annual Color Manager	Accounting Manager	Equipment Mainte- nance Manager
Revenue Growth	Company Revenue Maintenance Division	Company Revenue Installation Division	Company Revenue Annual Color Revenue	Company Revenue	Company Revenue
Expense Control	Company Cost of Sales % Maintenance Labor Costs %	Company Cost of Sales % Installation Labor Costs %	Company Cost of Sales %	Company Cost of Sales %	Equipment/Vehicle/ Small Tools Costs %
Profitability Improvement	Company Gross Profit Maintenance Division Gross Profit	Company Gross Profit Installation Division Gross Profit	Company Gross Profit	Company Gross Profit	Company Gross Profit

each of the plan participants was to be held accountable.

The chart (on page 41) demonstrates several important principles upon which this plan is built:

 All managers are linked in terms of the company's revenue growth, cost of sales and gross profit.

 Each division manager has accountabilities for the revenue improvement, labor cost percentage and gross profit of his/her division.

• The design of the plan and the way it will provide the greatest financial rewards for its participants require the managers to work together and have a vested interest in each division's performance.

 Since each manager has a different level of direct control over the elements in each key result area, formulas were developed using weighted percentages for each result area and each manager. These weighted percentages were higher in cases in which the manager had a higher degree of direct control over the result and lower in those areas in which he/she had only limited influence over the desired result. A good example of this would be the fact that a division manager might have less control over company revenue growth, but more direct control over the revenue growth of his/her division. In this example, the weighted percentage assigned company revenue would be lower than the weighted percentage assigned for division revenue.

 Weighted percentages are important elements in the development of the formulas by which each participant's incentive award is determined.

• The common thread throughout this plan is that no participant "wins" unless there is real improvement in the overall company results.

This incentive plan requires regular and accurate communication with its participants regarding how the business is doing. Upchurch handles this requirement by scheduling a one-hour meeting with his operations managers on the last Thursday of each month. No plan participant misses this meeting. During this session, the company's accounting manager passes out the month and yearto-date results for each of the key result areas included in the plan.

This information is organized into the following categories:

- Current period
- Current budget
- · Monthly budget variance
- Year-to-date results
- · Budget year-to-date
- · Year-to-date variance

The meeting participants, most of whom have no formal financial backgrounds, examine this information and candidly discuss what must be done to correct unfavorable trends. They work as a team because they all have the same information available to them. The managers also hold informal meetings



USE READER SERVICE #100

LAWN & LANDSCAPE

More Info...

evising compensation plans that work is a challenge for many businesses, but it is an increasingly important challenge in today's labor market. To address this topic, *Lawn & Landscape* is bringing the authors of this article to the Lawn & Landscape School of Management, Feb. 13-15, 2000, in Dallas, Texas. For information on other scheduled presentations, call Maria Miller at 800/456-0707 or check out www.lawnschool.com.

on their own during the weeks prior to their next monthly operations meeting.

They are able to calculate their potential incentive earnings from previously supplied formulas. All of a sudden, how the company will end the year is very important because participant incentive awards are based upon the company's annual performance and are not paid out until those numbers have been calculated at the end of the year.

Has all this been worth it? Have there been any improvements since the introduction of this management tool?

"My managers anticipate and plan more

than they ever used to," stated Upchurch. "We've moved away from managing an internal job costing model requiring tons of data for every project and moved toward managing the bigger picture. We track percentages more closely now, which are key indicators that our costs may be out of line."

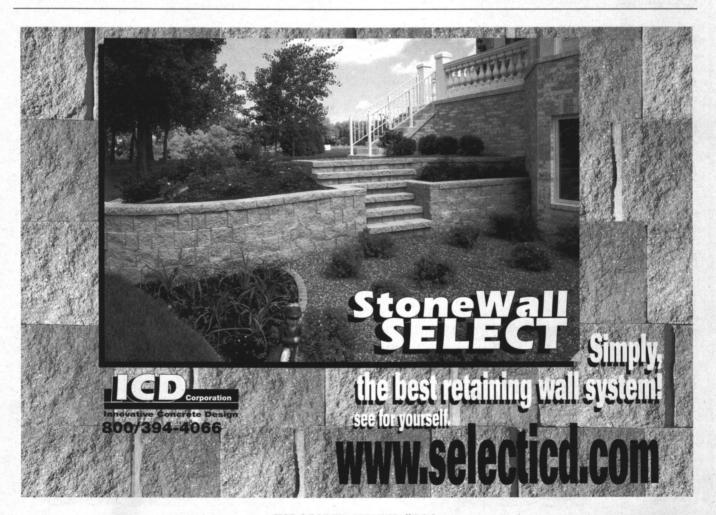
After one full year in place, the plan has helped generate almost a quarter of a million dollars in incremental revenue with an accompanying improvement in gross profit.

The management team has a more acute appreciation of all of the components of a successful business and is busy at work improving them as a team.

A new irrigation division has recently been added and construction is underway for a new 18,000-square-foot facility that will put all company offices, equipment and storage space under one roof.

Upchurch has already begun a project to design a plan like this for his foremen, many of whom are Hispanic and have never been exposed to this method of earning additional compensation.

GreenSearch can be contacted at 888/375-7787 or www.greensearch.com.



Product Preview

MOWERS/ACCESSORIES

LESCO VIPER MOWER

- · Powered by a 23-hp Kawasaki twin-cylinder OHV engine
 - Zero-turning radius
 - 54- or 60-inch anti-scalping floating deck
 - · Single lever cutting height adjustment from 11/2 to 51/2 inches Top forward speed of 8.6 miles
 - per hour
 - Twin 5-gallon fuel tanks Circle 200 on reader service card

ENCORE PROWLER MID-**CUT RIDING MOWER**

61-inch cutting width

- · Available with a 22-hp liquid-cooled Kawasaki engine
- Dual-path hydrostatic drive
- PTO drive maximizes transfer of power between the engine and the blades
- Full floating deck suspension
- · Bearings are fully repairable in the field

Circle 201 on reader service card

EXCEL HUSTLER MID-MOUNTS

· Models 251K and 260K offer a tractor-mounted edger approaches, attachment that allows the operator to edge along sidewalks and curbs from either the grass side or the hard-surface side • 250K features a 51-inch rear-discharge cut and a 22manuhp Kohler Command engine · 260K uses the same engine and has a 60-inch rearfacturers discharge deck · Both riders feature zero-turn radius and a new hydraulic deck lift system as standard equipment continue · Multi-season attachments include a BAC-PAC catcher, edger and even a snow blade Circle 202 on reader service card to produce

SCAG ULTIMATE BELT-DRIVE WALK-BEHIND

· Adjustable floating cutter deck that can be changed from 1- to 41/2-inch cutting heights

Self-adjusting, spring-loaded idler pulleys

Adjust-A-Grip hand force grip

• Available in 36-inch cutter deck with 15hp Kohler engine or

the 48-inch cutter deck with 17-hp Kawasaki engine Circle 203 on reader service card

FERRIS PROCUT Z WITH INDEPENDENT SUSPENSION

• Expanded engine options include a 23-hp Kawasaki engine and a 25-hp Kohler engine

· Independent suspension features control arms and coil springs on the drive wheels that allow each wheel to move up and down independently

- Constructed of 10-gauge steel
- Available in 52- or 61-inch cutting widths
- · Forward speed of up to 9 miles per hour

RANSOMES 700 SERIES RIDING MOWERS

• 723D is powered by a 23-hp Perkins liquid-cooled diesel



engine, while the 725 features a 25-hp air-cooled Kohler gas engine

· All models have a top mowing speed of 6 miles per hour and a maximum transport speed of 8.25 miles per hour Hydrostatic power steering

enhances maneuverability Both models offer a choice

of six new cutting decks

• Side-discharge decks are available in 63-and 72-inch cutting widths

• Rear-discharge decks and mulching decks are available in 60- and 72-inch cutting widths Circle 205 on reader service card







As the

new

millennium



 8-gallon fuel capacity Circle 204 on reader service card

Product Preview

WOODS M-SERIES MOWIN' MACHINES

• Available in two models: the M2250, featuring a 22-hp engine and 50-inch deck, and the M2560, featuring a 25-hp engine and 60-inch deck

 Kohler long-life engines power both midmount mowers

 "User-centered design" includes an adjustablesuspension seat and ergonomically designed hand controls that enable single-handed steering Circle 206 on reader service card

HUSOVARNA COMMERCIAL MOWERS

•Line of six zero-turn radius mowers come with a choice of 42- to 61inch cutting decks

•Walk-behind mowers come in gear and hydro models

• Mowers can move at speeds of up to 9 miles per hour

- Heavy-duty welded steel decks
- 2- to 5-gallon fuel tanks
 Ergonomic controls for
- easy operation
- · Husqvarna zero-turn-

ing radius mowers are powered by Kawasaki and Kohler engines while Husqvarna walkbehind mowers are powered by Kawasaki engines

Circle 207 on reader service card

PESTICIDES/FERTILIZERS/SPECIALTY CHEMICALS/BIOLOGICALS AMERICAN CYANAMID AMDRO PRO

• Fire ant bait label changes for a broad range of product-use sites

• Controls imported and native fire ants, as well as harvester and bigheaded ants

• Now labeled for expanded use in outdoor areas, such as school grounds and cemeteries *Circle 208 on reader service card*

ROHMID MACH 2 FERTILIZER FORMULATIONS

 Fertilizer formulations with molt accelerating compounds that interfere with the normal molting process of the targeted pests

 Product controls a variety of grubs and caterpillars, including Japanese beetles, Oriental beetles, black turfgrass ataenius, European chafers, cutworms, sod webworms and armyworms

Circle 209 on reader service card

DOW SNAPSHOT PREEMERGENCE HERBICIDE

• Controls more broadleaf and grassy weeds in more ornamentals

 Can be used over the top of 413 fieldgrown and 235 container-grown ornamentals to prevent 111 broadleaf weeds and annual grasses
 Controls weeds for up to eight months

• Weeds controlled by

Snapshot include barn-yardgrass, bittercress, common chickweed, foxtail, goosegrass, groundsel, marestail, oxalis, ragweed and spurge

Circle 210 on reader service card

ROHM & HAAS EAGLE® FUNGICIDE

 Protects against dollar spot, brown patch, anthracnose and spring dead spot

Application rates range from 2.5 to 10 ounces per acre, depending upon tree size, volume of fruit and foliage and the species being treated
As a disease preventative on ornamentals, Eagle® controls leaf spot, powdery mildew, rust

and scab in more than 100 plant species • Fungicide sold in 3-ounce, pre-measured, water-soluble packets

• Compatible with most commonly used fungicides, insecticides and spray adjuvants *Circle 211 on reader service card*

PBI/GORDON FOCUS* AND LAUNCH* BIOSTIMULANTS

 Focus[®] is formulated to enhance the vigor and stress tolerance of turf exposed to intensive use or maintained at the high quality level

required on golf courses, sports fields and other prestigious/ornamental turf areas

 Launch® is designed for application where seeding, sodding or sprigging are used to establish or renovate turf

 Focus[®] contains cytokinins and auxins from cold water kelp extract along with humic and fulvic acids to increase root mass and length

 Focus[®] is a sprayable treatment that enhances the uptake and utilization of existing nutrients through both soil and foliar activity and an increase in plant metabolism

 Launch[®] is a manure-based product that contains the same biostimulant ingredients in Focus[®]

 The addition of other ingredients creates a product ideally suited for the establishment of new turf

Circle 212 on reader service card

BAYER MERIT

 Seven new pests have been added to the Bayer Merit label





• Control of royal palm bugs, black vine weevil larvae, psyllids, flatheaded borers, eucalyptus longhorned borers and Japanese beetle adults are added to the label for ornamentals

 Label for Merit granular and wettable powder also have been revised to show suppression of hairy chinch bug nymphs when applied preventively to turfgrass
 Gircle 213 on reader service card

VEHICLES/ACCESSORIES JOHN DEERE 790 COMPACT UTILITY TRACTOR

· 30-hp engine available in either a basic two-

wheel drive or four-wheel drive version
Available with a category I, 3-point hitch that adapts to a variety of implements

• Power steering and a dual-stage dry clutch *Circle 214 on reader service card*

THE ULTIMATE WHEELBARROW





preading mulch and compost by hand is a costly, labor intensive process. It limits production and puts workers at risk for injuries. The Express Blower will turn an inefficient process into a profit center and blow your competition away!

The Express Blower can be operated by one person, with remote control, in any weather, on any terrain. Spread mulch, compost, soil mixes, playground chips or any number of other organic materials for landscaping, lawn restoration, erosion control and much more.

With our ALL NEW Injection System, the Express Blower can inject seed, fertilizer or other additives WHILE BLOWING! Install a lawn with soil mix and seed, or blend weed inhibitors with mulch. You can even topdress and overseed turf with only one application.

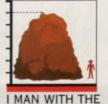
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A typical 5-person crew can spread 8 cubic yards per hour.



One person, can blow 30 to 100 cubic yards per hour.

TORO SITEWORKS DINGO TX

 Toro expanded its Dingo product line by offering improved controls – now, one hand



operates the traction drive while the other is free to control bucket and loader functions. • Dedicated track drive for better digging and

less ground pressure

• 34¹/₂-inch-wide unit

Circle 215 on reader service card



NEW HOLLAND SUPER BOOM SKID-STEER ATTACHMENTS

• FFC lift boom provides heavy lifting capabilities

 Lifts objects over and into awkward spaces like fences or hedges

As a vertical mast, maximum lift capacity is equal to 70 percent of capacity or 1,000 pounds
At full horizontal extension, maximum life capacity is 30 percent of skid-steer's capacity *Circle 216 on reader service card*



GLENMAC HARLEY POWER BOX BLADE • Non-angling for skid-steer loaders • Features a solid carbide-toothed rake that is fixed in a straight forward operating position (continued on page 158)



and welded to a quick attach plateRoller is powered by the boom hydraulic of the skid-steer requiring 14 gpm

• For landscaping, trench restoration or athletic field maintenance

Circle 217 on reader service card

CASE C-SERIES WHEEL LOADERS

Series includes the 621C, 721C, 821C and 921C,



which offer horsepowers of 130 152, 185 and 248 respectively

• The 621C and 721C models are available in extended-reach models and tool-carrier configurations • Attachments include a choice of hydraulic couplers, large-capacity buckets, material-handling buckets, pallet forks, augers, brooms and jib booms

Circle 218 on reader service card

MELROE BOBCAT 873 SKID-STEER

• Features a higher rated operating capacity of 2,400 pounds

- Extended wheelbase of 48.8 inches
- Maximum lift of almost 10½ feet with a 40-inch reach
- Powered by a 73½-hp, four-cylinder, oil-cooled
- Deutz diesel engine for four-wheel drive power
- Travel speed of 8.1 miles per hour
- 25-gallon fuel tank Circle 219 on reader service card

ASV POSI-TRACK

- New model 4810 Caterpillar-powered allpurpose crawler
- Maximum traction and support system undercarriage
- Rubber-tracked system gives the 8,500-pound machine low ground pressure, traction and versatility



• Other features include redesigned hood that hinges to expose the engine, a new wiring harness, a muffler located underneath the hood and a larger radiator and oil cooler *Circle 220 on reader service card*

LIGHTING

RUUD LUMA AFTER-SUNSET 12-VOLT LIGHTING

- Painted finishes covered by DeltaGuard 7-year warranty
- Black, white or verde finishes some models





158 NOVEMBER 1999

USE READER SERVICE #115

are available in brass

• Comes with a choice of path, area and directional fixture heads

• Variety of MR16, PAR36 and fluorescent lamp choices

• Fixtures can be added or replaced along the lighting cable

Circle 221 on reader service card

IRRIGATION STORM IRRIGATION 90DZ IMPACT SPRINKLER HEAD

• Comes as a full or part circle head

- Features electrostatic powder-coated finish on a zinc die cast body and drive arm
- Choice of four nozzles with flow rates of 2.79 to 7.34 gpm and a throw radius of 33 to 48 feet
- Operating pressures are 25 to 55 psi

Circle 222 on reader service card

K-RAIN PRO-PLUS SPRINKLER

• Offers adjustable and true-continuous 360degree coverage

- Adjustable from 35 to 360 degrees
- Can be set before installation or while the system is operating

- Offers a 5-inch riser that pops up through tall turf
- Adaptable to retrofit to any other sprinkler
- Both adjustable and continuous circle heads
 are in one rotor

Circle 223 on reader service card

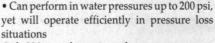
RAIN BIRD BPE/BPES VALVE SERIES

• 3-inch valves are made with a rugged hybrid brass/plastic construction

• Features a brass body and glassfilled nylon bonnet to help guard against extreme pressure surges and clogging from effluent and dirty water

• BPES model is equipped with a patented Rain Bird nylon scrubber mechanism to keep the inlet screen free of dirt, grit and other contaminants

- Both the BPE and BPES feature
- a manual internal/external bleed
- Models have a one-piece solenoid design and captured plunger to allow for easy servicing



Circle 224 on reader service card

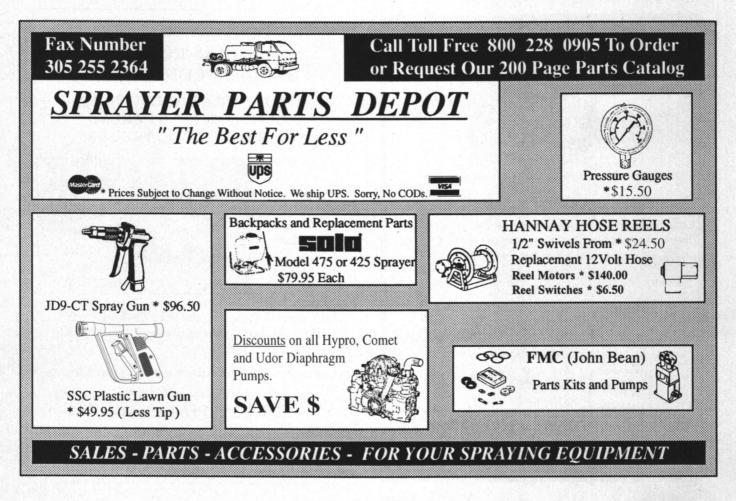
HUNTER PUMP START RELAY

• Available in three models to accommodate a variety of power sources

• Designed to activate on-site booster pumps • Compatible with all standard 24 VAC controllers and offers flying leads that allow for 24-volt connections and a series of "knockouts" on the cabinet to simplify wiring and mounting

• PSR's standard

NEMA 3R-rated enclosure is weatherproof, secure, rust-resistant and shock-proof *Circle 224 on reader service card*



TORO CUSTOM COMMAND COMMER-CIAL IRRIGATION CONTROLLER

· Features include simplistic one-dial design and Armchair Programming

· Incorporates a hybrid design with large display and color-coded dial

· Watering options are available in Custom

Command models with 12, 15, 18 or 24 stations · Four independent programs with 16 total start times and a 365-day calendar for odd/ even day scheduling

· Vandal-resistant metal cabinet protects the controller while SurgePro System defends the system against lightning

Circle 225 on reader service card

INSTALLATION/RENOVATION EQUIPMENT **FINN B40 STRAW BLOWER**

· Chops and blows two to three bales of straw

per minute

 Features a 6-inch diameter counter-balanced 360-degree directional discharge spout with a 45-foot discharge distance and optional 30-foot or 50-foot hose sections with 25-foot discharge distance



· Straw blower is powered by a 20-hp Kohler engine

17-inch diameter blower has six blades

· Discharge velocity of 160 miles per hour Circle 226 on reader service card

TERRACARE TERRATORS

· Model T60 and T36 are both equipped with 12 tines per disc. T36 has 10 discs and T60 has 16 discs

· Discs have been modified from 18 inches to 16 inches

 Aerating width of T36 is 36 inches. Aerating width of T60 is 60 inches

Circle 228 on reader service card

POWER EQUIPMENT REDMAX TRIMMER

· String trimmer that meets CARB II and EPA standards for 2000

· Uses RedMax's Strato Charged engine, the only one to meet the year 2000 standards without the use of a catalytic converter

• 25.4 cc, 2-cycle engine weighs less and is 30 percent more fuel-efficient than previous engines

· Lightweight engine powers a straight, solid steel drive shaft with splined ends connected to a 4-inch, commercial-grade, bump-and-go cutting head

· Ergonomically designed loop handle is positioned on the shaft for optimum balance and reduced operator fatigue

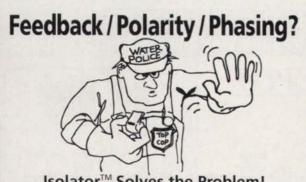
Circle 229 on reader service card

TANAKA PORTABLE EDGER

- · Features a simplified blade height adjustment system and a large rubber front wheel
- · Powered by Tanaka's 24cc, 1.3-hp engine
- · 8-inch cutting blade
- · Weighs 13.2 pounds

Circle 230 on reader service card

(continued on page 163)



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(continued from page 160)

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· Available free to professional users who register on the Vista website at www.VistaPro.com with their name and mailing address

· Program can be installed into AutoCAD and also operates as stand-alone software if the user does not have those programs

· Detailed specs for more than 100 Vista fixtures are featured, along with full-color photos, dimensional cut-aways and complete photometric charts to determine spacing and bulb sizes

· Information on lamp construction, lenses available, finishes, mounting and wiring is also included

Canada CD-ROM

· Contains more than 2,000 color photos and more than 700 illustrations and maps

· Descriptions of 362 weed species

· Program contains professionally narrated lessons and reference information

· Weed database contains detailed description, four to eight photos and a distribution map of each weed species

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options · Products include business forms, checks,

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· Version 2.0 of Weeds of the United States and

Pick-up Units

Conversation

by Bob West

Husqvarna's president shares insight into his leadership philosophy and the company's aggressive pursuit of landscape contractors.

Frankly, the hand-held power equipment portion of the lawn and landscape industry may not include as many manufacturers as the mowing portion of the industry does, but the manufacturers producing this equipment are engaged in an intense battle for market share. Husqvarna Forest & Garden, Charlotte, N.C., has spent the last few years enacting a clearly visible plan for

growth based on fostering relationships throughout the industry and learning about contractors' businesses. In addition, this division of Sweden-based Electrolux sent a message to its equipment manufacturing brethren in the hand-held and mowing categories that it is very serious about raising the company's position in the industry to another level with its October acquisition of mower manufacturer Yazoo/Kees.

Q. How did you get started in this industry?

A. Initially, I went to work for Exxon with the charge to identify strategic sites and repositioning of service stations. I was also involved in training as the training director for the Eastern region, which was the start to my career-long work with independent dealers and retailers to develop their business from a business standpoint and through technical expertise.

> From there, I went to Leisure Time, a distributor of leisure products, and rose to vice president of sales and marketing, again working with (continued from page 166)



- Great for construction of retaining walls and digging in horizontal banks.
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- As compared to the auger, which leaves the walls of the hole flat, the spade scores the hole so that the tree enjoys maximum root growth.

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(continued from page 164)

independent retailers to grow their businesses

I went to work for Stihl from 1981 to 1991 as general sales manager, and I came to Husqvarna in 1991 as president. Now, I'm quite proud of the fact that we've quintupled

Editors

AS PART OF Lawn & Landscape's exclusive conversation series, Bob West, editor of the Lawn & Landscape Media Group, spent some time with Dave Zerfoss, president of Husqvarna Forest & Garden Co. These interviews are not designed to provide the history or background of a company, rather to examine how the people at the helm of uniquely successful companies have steered their firms into leadership roles in the professional lawn and landscape industry.

in size since the current management team has been here.

Q. What has contributed to this growth? A. We have seen the development and introduction of some fantastic new products in our core lines of chainsaws and hand-held power equipment. These products have included an expansion to be a broader sup-

> plier of equipment and an expansion into lawn and garden and now into the commercial side of the business with the Yazoo/Kees acquisition. These product introductions have all been part of our goal to become a total source for the contractor and the dealer.

> I think there has also been heavier emphasis placed on marketing and brand development than there was previously at Husqvarna.

> Q. What triggered Husq-

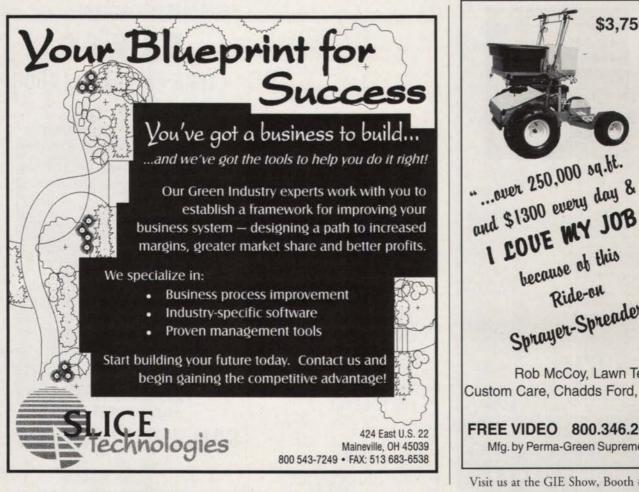
varna's aggressive marketing to landscape contractors?

A. The lawn and landscape market represents a natural extension for us because we are heavily involved in forestry / arborist training and education with associations and contractors in those industries. This is not a new model for us, and we see our next major growth opportunities being in this industry through the servicing retailer or dealer. Our focus is on the retailer and that spins off to the consumer who is interested in buying the best products.

We are looking at this industry from two perspectives - marketing opportunity and what is the natural fit with our retailer. One thing we have realized is that our servicing retailer has had to broaden his line to represent a full complement of lawn and garden equipment, especially commercial mowing equipment, which then ties into professional trimmers and other commercial equipment.

We think there are true synergies to be achieved through this combination. There is

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Zerfoss has developed a plan for growth based on learning about contractors' businesses. Photo: Husqvarna



real marketing potential to us because of our heavy involvement in training and development and association support. The lawn and landscape industry is a specialized business that is serviced through the retailer who requires training and support in order to best service an end-user who also requires training and support. We have spent the time building relationships in the industry and learning about our end-users' businesses because we wanted to make sure we understood the business and their needs before we decided what product lines to develop. **Q.** How do you justify the financial and time commitments necessary to build these relationships and learn about people's businesses when such an investment may not result in immediate and obvious direct results?

A. Everyday we have to rationalize that from a business sense and strategically evaluate where we put our time and efforts. We try to make our investments up front in general, but, in this case, our efforts are natural extensions of our values of excellence, involvement, training and education. The only way to deliver these things is by getting involved.

So we believe in investing in the industry and supporting its associations in ways that represent more contributions than just getting our name on the roster. These are strategic decisions for us where we don't have as much immediate return.

We want to be known within the professional side of the business, but another part of this approach is to be known through our retailers. We have to have the right products to achieve this because for retailers to be successful, they need more resources than ever and to provide them with these resources we have to have more volume. The retailer needs that, and we need to have the right attitude when serving them.

Q. What are the challenges facing the power equipment retailer today?

A. Retailers have had to better define their strategic focus. Some retailers have focused on being more aggressive on the consumer side so they've oriented their business in that manner by upgrading their locations with



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Conversation

better sites, more advertising and more promotion. Other retailers focus on just the professional market, and then there's also a group in between that does both.

We've watched this evolution take place and the importance of support from manufacturers has become even more important for retailers, which has them looking at who they partner with and who provides them with support. I think this is a positive evolution because retailers going to consumers are successful because they've adopted aggressive retail and marketing strategies and retailrs focusing on commercial users are working on being the best at providing those services their customers demand.

In addition, I think there are more demands on retailers today because they have to focus more on retail/marketing practices to be successful. Also, there is the perspective that today's customer is much more demanding from a customer satisfaction perspective. There are also certainly more challenges dealing with issues like regulation, product liability and product application than ever before. As a result, the retailers have to be more knowledgeable about more areas than just stocking product and being the best technician, which they still have to do.

Q. Why did Husqvarna make the Yazoo/ Kees acquisition?

A. Manufacturers have to constantly develop new products as they adapt to users' needs for their markets. We consistently place a high focus on research and development, and this has to be an on-going challenge for a company to maintain a quality product line. This move strengthens our product line.

But I think it is also important to realize that the the retailer today has to do more in the training on the products because that is part of their offerings. And I think manufacturers have to increase their support in this area in the industry. I see a few manufacturers providing this training, but the rest are not making this commitment.

We're working to provide these training efforts and mobile training in the field and we're also working with the associations on training programs. We just feel this is a key responsibility of manufacturers and represents a significant difference between some manufacturers and others.

Ultimately, the manufacturers supplying innovative products along with the services

'We are looking at this industry from two perspectives — marketing opportunity and what is a natural fit for our retailers.'

end-users require will separate themselves from the rest of the market as contractors look for products that are easier to use while prices don't increase. So we have to figure out how to spend less for more quality.

Q. Why is it important for a manufacturer to offer a full line of equipment?

A. I think having a full line is absolutely essential from several perspectives. First, the landscape contractor is time challenged and time is money for him. Whatever time he can spend on what his charter is – generally, to mow and maintain turf – benefits him. The contractor doesn't want to spend that time going from retailer to retailer looking for his equipment needs. He needs one-stop sup-

port in sales and service for the equipment and doesn't want to have to use multiple retailers. The contractor also likes to have consistency across his product lines to deal with one supplier and one manufacturer.

On the retailer side, as these products get broader and more sophisticated, the challenge to provide more service and education is extremely demanding. When the retailer has to defray attention across numerous manufacturers, that means having different parts systems, different computer systems, different educational programs, and this is all time consuming. At the same time, to be able to support any one manufacturer's programs in these areas requires a significant volume of that manufacturer's product pass through the retailer's store, and having a full line helps accomplish that.

Q. What made now the right time for the Yazoo/Kees acquisition?

A. We're extremely focused on our quest to be the total source for our retailers. That's our strategic position with the retailer. The more we can be the total source answers the questions retailers have. To be a total supplier to the end-user of the products makes the contractor want one-stop shopping and retailer wants the resources to support that. This acquisition answers some of those questions regarding training, education and business development for us.

I also think the timing is right because over the last few years we've established a strong brand identity and grown our retailer base throughout the market. Timing in the market is such that this is a developing marketplace, and we're riding that momentum.

Retailers are looking at consolidation in the industry and looking to position themselves with the manufacturer who will offer them opportunities and services. We've been working at this for the last two years. We had to take a critical view and identify where we





USE READER SERVICE #132

LAWN & LANDSCAPE

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want to be involved. Yazoo/Kees' broad product line appealed to us along the company's history of quality and long-term standing in the industry. Another major asset was the R&D going on within this group, some of which is evident today and some of which will be evident as more new products come to market in the next year to two years. **Q.** How do you expect the presence of a line of mowers to help your sales of hand-held power equipment?

A. We're expecting considerable synergies from being a one-stop shop. The products have to merit the selection and can't just be branded to do this, but there is certainly a natural perspective for the end-user to onestop shop for quality service and support. There are also more economic benefits for the retailer for strategic partnering to better manage inventory by carrying one or two manufacturers' lines instead of five or six.

Q. How will the consolidation of mower manufacturers affect the contractors?

A. Consolidation will effect contractors and retailers beneficially. Our perspective is that consolidation will lead to fewer retailers handling larger product selection and doing a better job with those lines. There will ultimately be fewer representatives out there, but they will be providing a more holistic offering of services because the end-user is demanding more.

Having this broader line in their retailer allows the manufacturer to support them more heavily. I think we're seeing some polarization in the market. As we mentioned before, I also think we're seeing the definition of retailers changing. I don't see the retailer go-

ing away like people say, but see him changing his perspective with less servicing homeowners and more expanding as commercial and servicing retailers.

Q. How has the consolidation of contractors changed manufacturers' approach to the industry?

A. As larger end-users consolidate, they demand more services, training and more partnering in terms of providing input on the product and looking for manufacturers to adapt product to their needs. There certainly can be a lot of customization in terms of what services retailers provide so we need to standardize these services with the retailers and communicate them to the contractors. We also need to work in close partnership with the contractors them so they're not going from retailer to retailer.

Q. In a 1998 interview with *Lawn & Landscape*, Ken Melrose, president of The Toro Co., said, "I think the leading manufacturer is going to move into offering more support

We consistently place a *high focus* on **research and development**, and this has to be an *ongoing challenge* for a company to maintain a **quality product line**.

> services to the customer that are non-product oriented but that will help contractors become better business people." How deep into a contractor's business should a manufacturer reach?

> **A.** I think the perspective of what is enough will always be difficult to define because end-users' needs are always changing. From a product basis, we certainly need to develop high-tech, high-quality products that are beneficial to end-users, and to do that the manufacturer has to spend a tremendous amount of time with the end-users to understand what they do, the dynamics of their businesses in terms of what offers the best return on equipment investment, how the equipment is used and can be made most environmentally and egronomically safe and sound for the operator. Manufacturers have to know if the uses for a product are changing as lawn sizes go up and down. What is the impact on the users of the equipment? Also, what is the largest profit return for the user from equip-



LAWN & LANDSCAPE

ment? Manufacturers also have to supply servicing outlets so end-users can get the service that they need, and manufacturers have to have a perspective of the extent of end-users' financial resources.

Manufacturers have a large responsibility to connect the end-user and the retailer and get the retailers involved in end-users' businesses. When one of your basic core values is learning and education, then this is a rather simple extension of your philosophy. The end-user is looking for more support, services and more direct input into those products and services. They want to be involved in the manufacturing process giving input and getting answers to their individual questions. So this needs to be a natural two-way communication process.

Q. How do you personally stay in touch with the lawn and landscape industry?

A. I'm very involved with the associations doing roundtables and speaking engagements. I gather a tremendous amount of support and learning through those experiences. I also do a tremendous amount of travel to visit retailers and end-users of the product on location besides just visiting with them at shows. And currently serving as chairman of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute puts me in front of manufacturers' needs and concerns, and that puts me in touch with other associations.

Q. How would you describe your management philosophy?

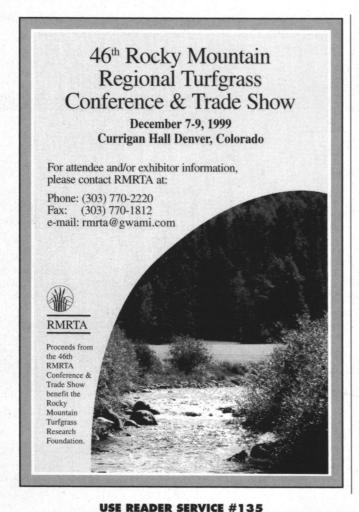
A. I think the biggest management focal point is that we have to have a focused purpose and see our mission and purpose, which, for us, is to help people grow and prosper. Stay-ing focused makes it natural in terms of working with our associates, customers and stockholders as a living triangle. We are constantly staying focused on our purpose and where we're going with that. Talking about our purpose regularly develops a healthy culture.

For example, we have periodic stakehold-

ers' meetings where we close the business for two hours and share information with the employees through open book management. I think it's crucial that management constantly communicate its vision to anyone who will listen.

Q. What are your goals now for Husqvarna? **A.** My goals for the company are focused around our purpose to help people grow and proper. Certainly, we want to increase our revenue and profit, but we have to grow people and have the best people in the industry and be a rewarding work environment for them in order to do so. Growing our dealers' and end users' businesses is also important for us. We want to see profitable landscape contractors out there, and we can help that happen through providing education and training and partnering with them in an on-going process.

The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.



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Fertilizer

(continued from page 149)

deliver improved broadleaf weed control have been identified."

OTHER ADVANTAGES. Often, lawn care companies lose days of potential application due to the threat that a sprayable product might drift in windy conditions and end up causing off-site damage.

"Using a sprayable product is challenging in rainy or windy conditions," Zelinko explained. "A lot of our customers are schools and municipalities, and they are concerned with the damage a sprayable product could cause on a windy day. These customers cannot afford delays in making an application, so a granular product is the answer."

Andrews also added that the degree of weed control is not diminished even if rain falls soon after application with a herbicide / fertilizer combination product.

John Page, department manager for the pesticide division at DeVries Landscape Management, Jenison, Mich., added that the size of the application area often determines whether what product can be used.

"A lot of companies can't spray 100 acres in a day – often due to the lack of equipment," Page explained. "But with a granular herbicide-based fertilizer, an applicator can be hooked up to a tractor, which can usually perform the same size job in one day."

The list of weeds that the granular weedand-feed products eliminate or suppress is extensive.

"Dandelions, wild violet or clovers – the combination products we have used has worked on all of them," related Zelinko. "I have never seen this type of control on such hard-to-control broadleaf weeds with a granular product. I perform less reapplication and the product has a longer residual. Both of these factors save me time and money," Zelinko stated.

The new products also have a lower amount of active ingredient while still giving professionals a higher level of control. Depending on the application and the customer, this can be a distinct advantage.

"Some contractors have made it a policy to reduce the amount of active ingredient in the products that they apply. This product helps them do that," Richards stated.

Kate Eidam is with NDW Communications in Horsham, Pa.

From the Publisher Investing in the Power of the Internet

Quicker than you can read this column, the Internet is attracting several thousand first-time users. And many of those novice Internet users are also readers of this magazine.

While some aren't as quick as others to embrace the efficiencies and the benefits of the vast Internet universe, there's no denying the dramatic effect the Internet has had and will have on commerce.

Lawn & Landscape has invested tremendous time and resources into making our web site -- www.lawnandlandscape.com - the leading vertical portal in the professional landscape marketplace. Our content - driven by our extensive copyrighted archives and only online articles, "push" technology to our readers' desktops, business databases and energized bulletin board activity - is the backbone of our e-business success.

As a magazine and publishing company, we've embraced the business of e-communications. In fact, it's a stand-alone division of our company. Further indication of our commitment to this critical area of business development is our recent hiring of Scott Hunsberger as our Internet Editor dedicated to providing valuable and exclusive editorial content, features and services for the *Lawn & Landscape* Market Portal.

Additionally, we're excited to announce the conversion of *T&O Service Tech* magazine to an online interactive training product that will debut at the Green Industry Expo. Through the Internet we can now reach the estimated 300,000-plus industry technicians across the country and effectively customize content to meet their specific training and educational needs.

In short, we're investing heavily in the power of the Internet to work more dynamically to compliment and strengthen our dominant print communications position. We believe the two entities will work hand-in-hand to provide our readers with the depth of content and range of services they are looking for to help them more profitably run their businesses.

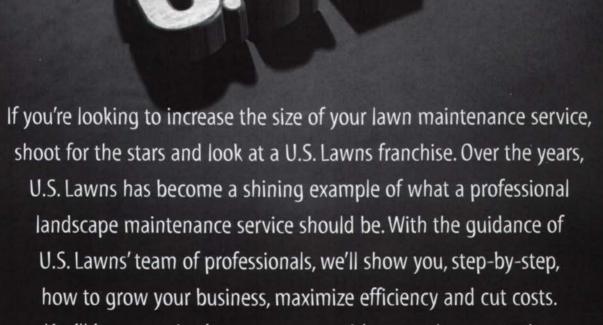
I'm also proud to announce the selection of our Editor, Bob West, to *Folio*: magazine's recent national coverage on "30 under 30." The article provided coverage of gifted up-and-comers in the publishing industry. Bob, who has been *Lawn & Landscape's* editor for more than two years, has spent many long hours bringing you the kind of quality editorial that has had a significant impact on the visibility, credibility and national awareness of the professional lawn and landscape market.

Folio: magazine, a national trade publication covering the business-to-business industry, bestowed its national editorial excellence award to *Lawn & Landscape* a year ago.

There's exciting developments occurring at *Lawn & Landscape* and www.lawnandlandscape.com. Stop by and visit us at the Green Industry Expo, booths 169, 171, 173. See you there.

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IF YOU'RE HESITANT TO TRY NEW THINGS, WE SUGGEST YOU READ THIS WHILE YOU'RE WAITING.

"Our crews fight over the Dingo... they appreciate the fact that we have invested in a machine that provides them with a safe, professional way of being more productive." Dale Elkins, ISS

"We dug the holes, planted 16 trees, and covered them in one hour with the Dingo... that's probably six or seven hours of work without the Dingo." Jon Matthews, The Lawn Stylist

"The Dingo will revolutionize the landscaping business. Jobs that took hours now take minutes...the Dingo does a lot of things you couldn't do with a skid steer, like walking across a lawn or going through a gated backyard without taking down part of the fence...it saved me thousands of dollars in just one day." Robert Maffei, Maffei Landscape Contractors

"Our jobs took twice as long before we had the Dingo. Now I have to sell work like you wouldn't believe to keep my crew busy because they knock the jobs out like never before." Tom Waltz, Harvest Landscape Services

> "It's constructed like a tank." Phil Pickett, Pickett Landscaping

"If I met a skeptic, I'd tell them to try the Dingo. They'd be amazed. In our line of work, productivity is the name of the game and the Dingo gives us the ability to do a job with less people in the same amount of time."

> Charlie Bowers, Garden Gate Landscaping

"It can pay for itself in one year's time." Stephen Hillenmeyer, Hillenmeyer Nursery

This is no time to procrastinate. Call 800-476-9673 or contact your Toro distributor. (And step on it.)



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