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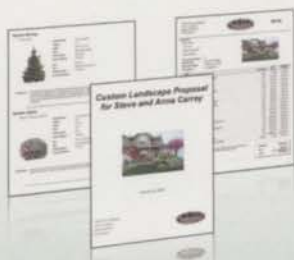
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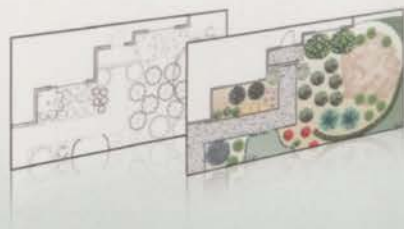
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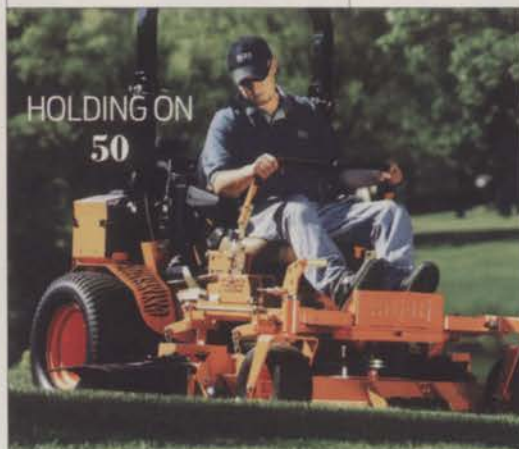
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**CHUCK BOWEN**  
Managing Editor

## Time, attention and focus

If I could have received anything for Christmas, I would have asked for the one thing no one can give me: more time. (No, I loved the socks, Mom. Really.) I imagine your desk looks a lot like mine most days – covered in reports and files, scribbled-on notepads and errant cups of coffee that seem to reproduce in the night. The red message light blinks ominously from my phone, and the notification bell on my e-mail seems to never stop ringing.

The hardest part of work every day is also the most important: cutting down distractions and focusing on the things at the top of your to-do list.

On average, according to *Lawn & Landscape* research, an owner running a \$778,000-revenue landscape business works 50 hours a week – with 26 hours spent on the job performing landscape duties and 24 spent “working on the business rather than in it.”

At some point, owners – of small companies and large ones – need to transition from that *in* part to the *on* part. This month’s cover story, “Time Crunched” on page 20, examines how contractors can best spend the time they have, and maybe not have to end up working 80 hours a week. Unfortunately, one common

method for dealing with an apparent dearth of time is to try to do many things at once – juggle e-mail and phone calls and people coming into your office.

But, people who are regularly bombarded with several streams of electronic information do not pay attention, control their memory or switch from one job to another as well as those who prefer to complete one task at a time, a group of Stanford researchers has found. So you might feel like you’re getting more done, but you really aren’t.

Dave Crenshaw, author of *The Myth of Multitasking*, says the key for business owners is to pick the things they do every day that make them the most money and build their schedule around those activities. Maybe it’s client meetings, maybe it’s running a mower, but whatever it is, you have to do what brings profit to your company. Anything else can be outsourced or delegated.

“Those are the activities that you do that are worth the most per hour and would be the most difficult to replace. So once you’ve identified that, you need to establish in your schedule how much time you’re going to spend for the different activities,” Crenshaw says.

No matter what you try or how big your company gets, there will always only be 24 hours in a day. But by spending your time, attention and energy wisely – and focusing on your most profitable tasks – you can make the most of the day you have. **L**

“At some point, owners – of small companies and large ones – need to transition from working in the business to working on it.”

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**ELEPHANT FEEDBACK**

We received a lot of feedback about October's "Shooting an Elephant." To read more letters, and a picture of Ron Kujawa's kill that precipitated the correspondence, visit [www.lawnandlandscape.com/webextras](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/webextras). — Chuck Bowen

As someone who reads your magazine for information relative to the lawn and landscape industry, I fail to see why you have included an article and the accompanying disturbing picture of Ron Kujawa shooting an elephant. Perhaps he may view this as a "sport," although I certainly do not. May I suggest limiting your articles to the industry topics your magazine purports to cover rather than the inhumane slaughter of innocent and endangered animals.

Ingrid Charles  
A-Lot-Cleaner  
Toms River, N.J.

The article in the October 2009 issue about a man killing an elephant for pleasure is reprehensible. It is a horrendous story about the despicable actions of a man who has no respect for life. Why you felt it belonged in your magazine is beyond my comprehension.

If that is the kind of behavior your magazine supports and encourages, I want no part of it.

Bobbi Bauer  
Owner  
Bobbi Bauer Landscape  
West Palm Beach, Fla.

Just what were your people thinking when they placed a photo of some fat guy gloating over a dead elephant in Africa? I am far, far from some left-wing, hippie mind-set, but I find it absolutely offensive, downright wicked for some rich American to go into the African bush to slaughter a magnificent beast. I

no longer want your publication.

What is the point? Are your readers so red necked out that the huge carcass would thrill them to the spewing of drool?

Robert Haines  
Lacey, Wash.

We have been in the landscape industry for over 20 years. We work in a mountain ski resort area where people value wildlife. We understand and support hunting when it is in the best interest of the animal population or necessary to feed a family. We were disgusted with the article and the pride this man took in killing this animal for such stupid, materialist things. Please remove us from your mailing list.

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# WHO ARE YOU?

The threat of identity theft is real, but you can protect yourself cheaply. BY WILLIAM LYNOTT

The possibility of identity theft is a problem that faces business owners and their bank accounts. Identity theft is a real danger, but the likelihood of becoming a victim is often highly exaggerated. You've seen those TV commercials for FreeCreditReport.com wherein a young guy sings a catchy tune bemoaning the fact that he's a loser driving a dumpy old car or is still living at home because he fell victim to identity theft. This company says it will protect you from that fate – for \$14.95 a month.

Or how about Lifelock? That's the company that says it will take steps to prevent someone from stealing your identity, and pay you up to \$1 million if it fails to do so. It costs \$110 a year.

I'm not going to say these services aren't worth the money; that's a decision you have to make yourself. But there are many free and inexpensive things you can do to protect yourself – some of which are the very things these companies are willing to do for a price.

Yes, those commercials do dramatize genuine risks. And for those who fall victim to identity theft, the consequences can be a nightmare. But you should know the degree of risk that any one of us will become a victim has been significantly reduced by new rules adopted by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and major financial institutions.

One of the most common types of identity theft schemes has been the so-called new-account fraud. This is where the culprit uses personal information such as your name and Social Security number to open up a new credit account in your

name. Until November of 2008, a thief could open up an account in your name but use an address different.

In the age of easy and instant credit, that allowed the thief to make a major purchase, say a new television set, and have it delivered to his address under your name. You wouldn't know anything about all of this until you applied for credit yourself and got turned down because you never paid for that new TV. Under that scenario, your credit standing has been seriously compromised.

Now if someone tries to open a new account in your name with an address different from the one already in your credit bureau files, the credit issuer is required to verify that the applicant is really you. That will usually result in the credit issuer calling the telephone number in your credit bureau files to speak with you to verify personal information that only you could know.

And in November of last year, the FTC provided businesses with a set of 26 "red flag" rules intended as alerts to the possibility of identity fraud. They include such obvious things as photo ID that is not consistent with the person's appearance, and unusual credit activity, such as an increased number of accounts or inquiries.

Many, if not most, of these 26 red flags would seem quite obvious, but monitored together they are expected to go a long way toward curbing the incidence of ID theft.

Among those free or low-cost and proactive things you can do yourself to minimize your identity theft risk is placing a credit freeze on your re-

ports at the three main credit bureaus. Forty-seven states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws requiring the credit bureaus to allow the placing of credit freezes. The procedures for doing this vary by state. You can get more information at [consumersunion.org/campaigns/learn\\_more/003484indiv.html](http://consumersunion.org/campaigns/learn_more/003484indiv.html). It's also a good idea to check your credit report once a year at [annualcreditreport.com](http://annualcreditreport.com) (not to be confused with [freecreditreport.com](http://freecreditreport.com)) or by calling 877/322-8228.

Your ID score is another tool that has just been made available to the general public. In use for a number of years by creditors and financial institutions, the ID score calculates the relative risk that customers are in fact who they say they are. It alerts businesses to red flags that may indicate potential fraud.

San Diego-based ID Analytics has made this score available free to consumers at [myidscore.com](http://myidscore.com). To get your ID score, you'll need to provide some personal information (your Social Security number is not required) and answer a few questions about your finances. The result is a score between 1 and 999; the higher the score, the higher your risk for identity theft.

Paying to guard against identity theft may or may not be an unnecessary entry on the debit side of your financial ledger. However, the likelihood of you becoming a victim is probably a good deal lower than you imagine, and there is much you can do yourself to lower that risk even further. **1**

The author is a freelance writer based in Abington, Pa. He has 40 years experience in business management and financing.





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**JOHN DEERE**



## A well-oiled machine

One of the best ways to make more money in your business is to be organized. If you were to come to Grunder Landscaping Company, you would find a small business with a very low-key, simple office, warehouse and shop.

Likewise, you would also find a rather large yard and storage area and a bunch of trucks and equipment. However, while our place is nothing fancy, it is very neat and organized and clean. And, without a doubt, it's one of the secrets to our long-term success. Our organizational skills make us money on a daily basis.

I'm often humored by the comment, "I know my desk is a mess, but I know where everything is." Really? I don't buy it. I read a study that said the average American spends 55 minutes a day, 27.5 hours a month, and 2 months a year looking for things they know they own but can't find. I'm not sure I believe it's quite that bad, but what if it's anywhere near that? I can say that I think most small businesses have people in their operations who waste an incredible amount of time trying to find things or doing things a second time, because they lost the first attempt. Just last week I had to print out another proposal for a client I could have sworn I had printed already. I found it yesterday in my briefcase. I hate it when that happens. And you should too!

Time really is money, folks. The late great management guru Peter Drucker said, "Time is the scarcest resource and unless it is managed nothing else can be managed." This month let's talk about three

things you can do to save time that can be used to make more money. I'm going to touch on a few different areas of your companies.

**SELLING EFFORTS.** How many of you meet with a client and talk about their project and then instead of taking the time right then and there to work on the proposal, you leave and either go back to work or go home? You come back the next day, the next week or maybe even the next month and do your measurements, your thinking and put some numbers together. This is one of the biggest time wasters I see in landscaping companies. You need to schedule your appointments so you have enough time to meet with the client, talk to them, listen, take notes and then, after that part is over, walk the property, take notes, take photos, take measurements, put together some sketches and just sit and think through the steps it is going to take to do the job.

There is never a better time than the present to try and make a sale. If you can make that sale on the spot, go for it. The faster you get back to prospects and clients, the greater your chance for success.

Take a video recorder if you must and record the property and walk and talk. When you get back to the office, you can sit and watch that and get your proposal done very quickly.

The point I am making is there are many things you can do to save time in the proposal writing portion of your job. You know and I know it. Now we just have to take action and get disciplined with it.

**HOW ORGANIZED ARE YOUR TRUCKS?** I am surprised by the amount of landscapers who don't have organized trucks.

If you are using trucks that don't have storage boxes, you are wasting time. How much time are you wasting loading and unloading tools every day? How many tools are you losing because there's no system in place, such as storage boxes on trucks that assign the tools to a truck and crew? This not only saves you time, but it also puts accountability in place, something we all need to think about.

Every crew we have uses trucks and trailers with storage boxes. We can get by with a small warehouse and most importantly our crews have everything they need when they need it while they are on the job.

Our trucks all have every tool they could possibly need, including a backpack blower, first aid kits, marking paint, grass seed, herbicide, gasoline and tarps, just to name a few. Firefighters don't load and unload their equipment; it's all on the truck. There's a reason for that. You need to do the same. True, you're not in the business of saving lives, but you are or you need to be in the business of saving time.

In today's economy the fat and sassy won't make it. You have to be lean and you have to be focused on organization.


Spring will be here soon. So spend some time in the next month getting your landscape company organized and then realize what a real difference it can make in your life and keep it that way! **L**



### MARTY GRUNDER

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## Live &amp; Learn

by Kelly Pickerel

# The devil's in the details



One Maryland landscaper found that non-descriptive language can lead to big problems.

**Y**ou never know what's lurking underground.

For Andrew Aksar, it turned out to be a drainage pipe. And that one little pipe caused a big headache and led to a rewrite of his previous contract clauses.

"Most of the updating I do (to contracts) is through live and learn," says the president of Walkersville, Md.-based Outdoor Finishes. "In the past, we had no clause about (private) underground obstructions. I did have a clause regarding public utilities like electric, telephone, cable TV, but I did not have anything regarding private utilities."

It all happened this summer, when Outdoor Finishes was contracted to do some landscaping for clients who recently purchased a home. The land-

scaping company generally does basic tree and shrub plantings, along with ponds, patios, retaining walls and lighting. Aksar received the signed contract three weeks before the clients settled the deal on the house. Afterward, they contacted Aksar and informed him the neighbor said there were buried drain lines. The neighbor knew, he said, because the neighbor had installed them himself.

Aksar had already priced the job without knowledge of the drain lines. He says he was focusing on how to move air conditioning units, sheds, shrubs and trees, and he overlooked the downspout situation. Water from three roof downspouts was being piped through the buried drainage pipe.

"We've had a couple incidents where we have people with underground obstructions," Aksar says. "We've had problems where we've been doing excavating and hit these pipes. Often times, we have no idea they exist underground."

Aksar decided to replace the piping after working out a deal with the client. Outdoor Finishes would supply the labor at the company's expense, and the customer would pay for the materials. The company essentially did three hours

of work for free.

"Usually, the clients wanted us to take responsibility for (underground mistakes), which is why we added the clause that said we were not responsible for these issues," he says.

Originally, Aksar had a disclaimer page that clients must initial. But after this incident, he realized the clause was too vague.

"We have it covered now that anything underground that we can't see or are not aware of, we're not liable for," he says. "We lose time and money if we fixed it at our cost, but by having a clause regarding such an issue, it enables us to charge for fixing it."

Aksar says Outdoor Finishes has been updating its contracts and clauses consistently since forming in 1990, but there are always things the company forgets. That's why he recommends spelling everything out as clearly as possible so contractors are never stuck in an awkward – or expensive – situation.

"In the future," Aksar says, "that will help alleviate me from standing on their front steps going back and forth arguing about who's going to fix it and where are the costs." **L**

The author is an intern at *Lawn & Landscape* magazine. She can be reached at [kpickerel@gje.net](mailto:kpickerel@gje.net).



Underground irrigation lines can be damaged by an unaware contractor.





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# Entering a CRISIS



Author Robert Glennon says if we don't change the way we value water now, it might be too late. *By Kelly Pickarel*

**R**obert Glennon lives in Arizona. It's hot. It's dry. The grass, the flowers, the cats, the dogs – they all scream for water.

But Glennon believes there will be a time when the luscious East is also screaming for water. In his second book, "Unquenchable: America's Water Crisis and What to Do About It," Glennon attempts to present solutions to the ever present problem of water. Las Vegas has suggested importing Mississippi River water to solve its shortage problems, Tennessee has had to truck in water from Alabama when it ran out and Lake Superior (the largest freshwater body on Earth) was too shallow to float cargo ships in the summer of 2009.

Glennon says those in the landscaping industry have made large gains for a greener environment, but unless Americans understand the value of water, the latest gizmos and gadgets for water conservation won't interest them.

#### What led you to write "Unquenchable"?

I did another book, "Water Follies," that led me to give talks in 30-something states. In the course of that, I realized there were some real problems in sections of the countries that weren't water

scarce, like Florida, Georgia, North Carolina. I also had a project going on to study what was going on in the West, how water was being reallocated by sales and leases of water. There were people who needed new supplies and were going to farmers and asking them to sell some water. I wanted to write a book that would really resonate with the general public, not just about ground water or surface water, not just the West but also the East that included conservation, dam building and environmental problems.

#### How are landscape and lawncare professionals handling water?

The people who are working with water – turf, xeriscaping, residential, commercial – they all take pride in what they're doing. They don't want to waste water. If they do, they're threatening their own livelihood in the business.

#### How do you feel about landscaping companies current use of irrigation techniques?

From my perspective, there's been some tremendous sophistication for some years. There are smart controllers that use satellite data that can tap into soil

sensors. There's all kinds of neat stuff out there. The technology is there to use water very efficiently. I don't think there are financial incentives to do so. The price of water is too low. Unless we price it right, people won't take advantage of the great technology in the industry.

#### The Irrigation Association recently released a report saying the country used slightly less water in 2005 than in 2000. How do you think it will look in 2010?

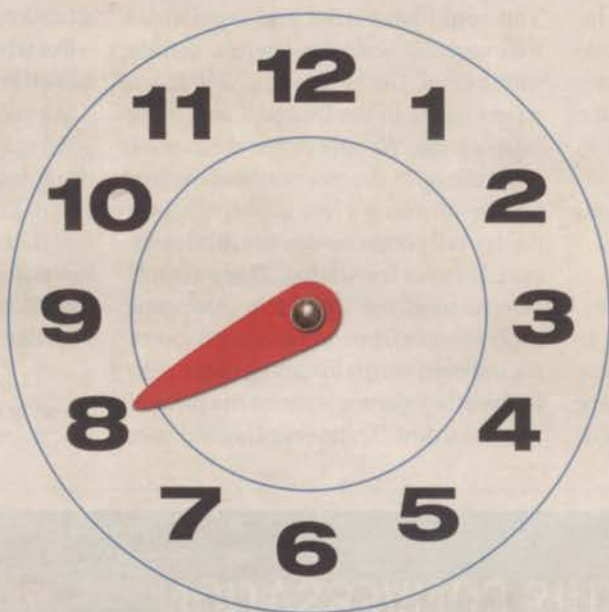
Water use has gone down. I think it is absolutely due to changes in the irrigation processes, particularly in the agriculture sector. They're changing from flood irrigation to center pivot systems and from center pivot systems to drip or micro-irrigation. There is considerable conservation that has come from those practices. There are two problems. The fact that overall national use went down obscures the fact that regionally, we have huge shortages. That's the problem, the fact that nationwide the overall use is down slightly obscures the fact that people are moving from where the water is to where it isn't. California, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Florida, Georgia – the fastest growing states in the country are suffering water shortages.

The report is largely based not on people actually using less water, because the number of people (in the country)

“It's not an environmental problem, but an economic problem.”



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## INTERVIEW

went up. What really affected the numbers is that industries used less. Power plants used less. With the federal Clean Water Act, it was going to be expensive for industries if they didn't figure out ways to use water more efficiently. Intel has reduced its water use by 75 percent, but how much more could they reduce? They're not going to go down another 22 percent to only 3 percent. Both industry and power industry have made substantial improvements in their water use, but we can't expect that to happen again. There are a lot of demands in new energy.

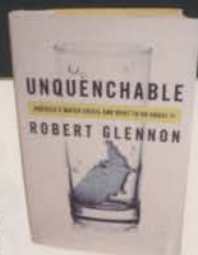
It's not an environmental problem, but an economic problem.

### What do most people not know about the politics behind water?

Most people don't even know where their water comes from. There are public opinions in California that show

people are woefully ignorant of where their water is coming from. There's a real challenge for people who are in the water business to try and show people this is a scarce resource.

You can have conservation programs where you run education campaigns. You could have rules and regulations that prohibit watering lawns a certain number of times a week. What we haven't done in the United States is use price signals. We Americans are spoiled. We wake up in the morning and we turn on the tap and it's less money than we pay for cell phone service or cable television. It's very frustrating. There are lots of neat tools out there (for landscape professionals), but in many situations, it's not even worth installing the meters or the other gizmos because the price of water is so low. The average homeowner



has no interest in saving water. As I go around speaking to people in the irrigation business, I hear these horror stories of customers who just don't have any interest in saving water because the water rates are so cheap. That's a huge problem.

### Have we learned anything from extreme situations? Have 'temporary' attitudes — like when a drought limits water use — turned into permanent conservation?

All too often it doesn't. Georgia is a good example: They didn't learn a darn thing from the drought. Nothing substantial has changed in Georgia. They saw themselves facing a crisis and they did nothing. They took short-term action. It was a band-aid over the wound. And that's karma. Apathy rules. **L**

The author is an intern at *Lawn & Landscape* magazine. She can be reached at [kpickerel@gie.net](mailto:kpickerel@gie.net).

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Thurs.	9:30	Planting	8 1/2
Fri.	9:30		8 1/2

### WHEN YOU CAN HAVE THIS.

Job Site Name	Cost Code	Mon.	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Total
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Planting Job		-	-	-	7:50	7:40	15:47
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# Time Crunch

How contractors find the time to **mow, manage** and **market**. BY JULIE COLLINS

When landscaping season ramps up in Parker, Colo., Steve Tinnes thinks nothing of devoting 60 to 80 hours a week to his residential landscaping business, Tinnes Lawn Service. It's the nature of the beast.

His day starts at 4 a.m. with paperwork. Employees arrive at 8 a.m. And often, as late as 9 or 10 p.m., Tinnes is still making calls. "It's pretty grueling for the first six weeks or so until things settle down," he says.

Tinnes isn't interested in dominating his market. He says \$200,000 in sales is about all he'd ever want to achieve. Still, he's looking for ways to delegate more work to his employees to make his life easier and his business more efficient.

"While my objective is to delegate everything, I end up putting a lot more hours in per week due to training and follow-up, scheduling, customer concerns and equipment maintenance," Tinnes says.

The challenges he faces in juggling his daily to-dos are common among landscape business owners. Many log long hours – particularly when the weather warms and customer start calling.

On average, according to *Lawn & Landscape* research, an owner running a \$778,000-revenue business works 50 hours a week – with 26 hours spent on the job performing landscape duties and 24 hours spent working on the business rather than in it.

Those figures vary drastically depend-

ing on the size of the company, however. As the business grows, owners should spend significantly less time out in the field and more time behind the scenes. But for small shops, owners are often spread thin. And even owners of larger outfits find it challenging to juggle ever-increasing demands on their time.

Like most things in business, it all comes down to the bottom line. If you want to make a fair wage, time management is key.

**FINDING BALANCE.** Landscape designer Alison Fleck, owner of San Francisco-based Simply Perfect Gardens, runs a one-woman shop. She estimates that each week she spends about 8 hours in client meetings, 16 hours on client designs, 12 hours on field work and about 4 hours on what she calls "stinking accounting." Plus there are additional activities – such as networking, working with service organizations and continuing education – that she doesn't count as part of her workweek.



"I usually do four 8-hour days and two half days. That way I can spend a half day on continuing education or networking or whatever and not burn out," Fleck says. As much as possible, she keeps Sunday work-free. "It's socially acceptable not to pick up your phone on Sunday, so it's easy to do," she says.

To maintain balance, a few years ago Fleck began tracking her work hours as if she were an employee. "So when I come in at 5:30 in the morning, I'll start writing down what I do. It may just be a note, but I really do keep a daily log," she says. "That way, I'm more aware of burning time in the office."

Like Tinnes, many business owners find early morning is prime productivity time. Fleck starts at 5:30 a.m. to get in a few hours of work before clients start calling. One of her biggest challenges is the fact that many clients aren't available to meet until the evening. "That means if I start my workday at 5:30 in the morning and finish it at 9 at night, I'm going to have to take a really long lunch break or I'm going to burn out," she says.

It all comes down to billable hours for Fleck. "I try to keep my billable hours to at least 50 percent of my work hours, and if I'm not, I try to tweak it. I have to have at least 20 hours of billable wages a week or I can't survive."

Paul Rapoza, president and founder of Rapoza Landscape in East Falmouth, Mass., typically works 40 to 50 hours a week, although in the spring that weekly number is closer to 60 hours. His residential landscaping company does about 60 percent maintenance and 40 percent construction and brings in an annual revenue of 1.8 million, mostly by catering to clients who have vacation homes on Cape Cod.

Typically, Rapoza's time is evenly divided between working on job sites, meeting with clients and doing sales, handling office work, and managing the business and any challenges that arise. "I would like to get out of the production/management," Rapoza says. "I enjoy it, but it takes a good chunk of my time, and a lot of time is not planned. Especially with construction, there are things that will pop up that are pretty distracting."

Rapoza would devote that extra time to focusing on clients. "I made an effort this spring to spend more time with clients, to take them out to breakfast or lunch and visit their properties more often," he says. That was helpful for sales and also for building rapport and strengthening relationships with clients.

Rapoza is on the right track. The secret to finding balance lies in identifying your most valuable activities, says business coach and time management consultant Dave Crenshaw, author of *The Myth of Multitasking*. "Those are the activities that you do that are worth the most per hour and would be the most difficult to replace," he says. "So once you've identified that, you need to establish in your schedule how much time you're going to spend for the different activities. You might try to manage employees on Tuesdays, put in all estimates on Mondays and Fridays, and so on."

This doesn't mean you ignore all employee questions except on Tuesdays. It's about devoting time to certain tasks on a regular basis. "Most of the time business owners manage crisis-by-crisis, and what they need to do is take a more proactive approach and work on building systems that minimize those emergencies that take place," he says.

Crenshaw stresses that it's also important to leave a buffer in each day for interruptions. "A lot of business owners have a tendency to over-schedule their

day and pack it completely full. When you do that, whenever an emergency or interruption comes along, it messes up your whole day and makes you feel like you can't get in control," Crenshaw says. "So it's better to under-schedule than to over-schedule."

**THE MYTH OF MULTITASKING.** Alison Fleck says she spends a couple of hours each day multitasking to tackle the paperwork that builds up in her office. "I kind of have to," she says. "Office work is best done on a multitask basis for me." That way, she says, she can file papers and tackle other office chores while she's waiting for someone to call her back.

Yet when it comes to focusing on designs or meeting with clients, everything else is on hold. "There are times when I don't even pick up the phone," Fleck says. "I'll just return the call later."

Paul Rapoza says he multitasks too. "It's probably not the best idea, but sometimes when I'm driving to a job that's 20 or 25 minutes away I'll use my Bluetooth while driving to make a few calls," Rapoza says.

In some cases, multitasking may be unavoidable. Yet time management pros stress that it's not an effective means of getting things done on a regular basis. "When you're constantly switching between tasks, you're incurring a lot of costs in terms of attention and focus. You want to minimize those switches as much as possible," Crenshaw says.

And whatever you do, he adds, don't multitask with human beings. "It's one thing to be inefficient with your time – jumping back and forth between paperwork, e-mail, that sort of thing. But when you multitask on a phone call or when meeting with a client or employees, you're going beyond inefficiency and damaging the relationship as well. Whenever you multitask you send the



message to that person that they're unimportant."

Denise Landers, founder and CEO of Key Organization Systems, says the first step to avoiding multitasking is grouping as many similar activities – such as responding to phone calls or processing e-mails – together as you can. "Do it all together in a block in the morning, then again in the afternoon. You're still being responsive if you get back to people within a day or half a day."

One system Rapoza employs involves his entire management team. "If they have something they need to talk to me about or have a question, I prefer they e-mail me if it's something they don't need an answer to immediately. Then I deal with it when I have time rather than being bombarded by questions." In addition, Rapoza and his management team often schedule appointments with

one another to address issues, rather than dropping everything each time something minor surfaces.

Grouping such activities opens up uninterrupted blocks of time you can use to focus on other aspects of your business, such as planning and marketing. "I know landscape business owners are out in the field and have customers and employees, but how do you do estimates? How do you do marketing for your business? You can't ignore that or your business isn't going to grow. You may be very busy, but you have to feed the pipeline," Landers says.

One of the unique challenges landscape professionals face is that work locations are often spread out. "That's all the more reason to have systems in place so you know what time you have to deal with work in the office or meet with customers," Landers says. "You need to

know what you're doing every day and have your day prioritized."

#### MASTERING THE ART OF DELEGATION.

Delegation can be the key to a business owner's success – but it's often easier said than done. "It's something I struggle with," Rapoza admits. After about 15 years in the business, his company had grown to the point where it was bringing in \$500,000 to \$600,000 a year. But then the growth stopped.

"The problem was me. I wasn't delegating and felt everything had to be perfect," Rapoza admits. "If you want to grow, you have to delegate. It's a necessity."

Over the past five years, Rapoza has worked hard to farm out some of the tasks he used to do. "I would say I'm getting better at that, but there are certainly things I do somebody else

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could be doing."

One of the best moves he made early on was hiring a part-time office manager. "That was when we were relatively small. It's just the type of thing I didn't need to be doing, and it makes sense to hire someone who's better at it and focused on it," Rapoza says.

Putting a quantifiable dollar value on his time helped Rapoza figure out what he should delegate. "I heard once that if you're making, say, \$100,000 a year, that translates to \$50 an hour. If you're doing a job that's less than fifty an hour, you should look to hire someone else to do it or delegate it," Rapoza says. "I don't do that with everything, but if I do a lot of \$10 or \$15 an hour work, I probably shouldn't be doing it. I look at either delegating or hiring somebody."

On a larger scale, industry consultant Marty Grunder, owner of Miamisburg,

Ohio-based Marty Grunder Inc. and Grunder Landscaping, recommends that business owners with more than \$1 million in revenue allocate 75 percent of their time to planning and sales, and only 25 percent working in the field. That may mean hiring more laborers.

Whatever portion of your work you'd like to delegate, the first step to successful delegation, business experts agree, is getting your own systems in place. "What I see most often with business owners is that when they feel they don't have enough time to get everything done, they hire someone or buy some piece of technology they think is going to make their life more efficient," Crenshaw says. "Then they figure out that person or thing can't give them enough time, so they fire the person or throw away the object, and start the process all over. Instead, you need to

get as efficient individually as you can by implementing personal systems, processes and procedures."

Only then, Crenshaw says, should you look at new technologies, outsourcing and, finally, hiring employees. "If you get to the point of making a hire then, you can help an employee succeed because you've built the system in advance."

Delegating can help you find the uninterrupted block of time you need to focus on business growth, Landers says. "I hear people say 'it's just easier to do it myself,' or 'I don't have time to train somebody,' or 'nobody else can do it as well as I can,'" Landers says. "If you start hearing yourself say those things, stop and think. It does take time to train people, but the payback in the long-term is worth it. Let employees be part of your business. Involve them in it."

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Yet delegation involves more than simply throwing tasks at employees as they crop up. It's all about implementing a system. "Often people have no idea what others in their office are doing on a given day, but you have to know how to cover for each other in an emergency," Landers says. "Get a system in place that you're all using so everyone knows how to jump in and what to do if something comes up – even if you're just a two-man office. Then you're also ready for growth."

Or a much-needed vacation. "I've discussed with my most-qualified employee to take over some management tasks so I can take a few short breaks during the season if I choose to," Tinnes says of his off time. "A fishing trip to Alaska would be fun." 

The author is a freelance writer based in Lincoln, Ill.

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## Organization Secrets From A Pro

Denise Landers, founder and CEO of Key Organization Systems Inc., recommends three key techniques for staying organized in the office and out in the field.

**Plan your day in advance.** "Plan your day the night before so when you go to sleep you know where you're headed the next day," Landers says. That way, you'll rest easy – and be ready to hit the ground running in the morning.

**Use index cards.** Carry index cards that fit in your shirt pocket or briefcase, Landers says. Leave them next to the bed, in the car, everywhere you go. When you have an idea or a new task comes to mind, you can write it down on a card and add it to your stack. "A list is hard to prioritize, and it's overwhelming with multiple lists," Landers says. "With index cards you can easily prioritize and group."

**Carry hanging folders.** In the office, hanging folders can be used to group everything you have to do in one place. The same system works on the road too, so paper clutter doesn't take over your front seat. Put a box of hanging folders in your truck so you have the forms, materials lists, design plans – everything you need. "You can have a folder for each customer or project right there with you, and when you're done you carry it back to your office and it's all in one place," Landers says.

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# All Aboard

Three landscape firms share how they creatively restructured labor hours to preserve jobs in a tough economy.

Labor is the single greatest expense for landscape companies. And when the going gets tough, labor is often the first item slashed to preserve profits. But letting go of valuable employees may cost more than an owner realizes.

“We have a lot of long-term employees, and the reality is, they’re more valuable to you the longer they stay with the company,” says Kevin Marko, landscape division manager at Chalet Landscaping in Chicago.

Before you do anything, talk openly to employees about the company’s situation and what measures are necessary to preserve its success for the future. Help them understand that you want to do everything you can to make things work for the company and employees.

Trimming back labor hours by moving to a four-day workweek was one solution

for Marko and the two other business owners we talked for this month’s Business Briefcase. So was cutting hours, letting attrition ride its course, and transferring employees from less profitable divisions in a company to busier departments.

All this change can upset employees who are used to lots of overtime and the same-old schedule. The key to introducing a new schedule – or letting people know that layoffs could be a reality – is to level with employees. Don’t be embarrassed to tell them you haven’t taken a paycheck in three months.

Tell them you understand how tough it will be to take a pay cut or work fewer hours. Employees see the owner driving around in the same car, going to the same home and they don’t necessarily realize that the owner is going through

tough times him or herself.

Owners almost always take a pay cut or forfeit pay entirely before pulling back hours and dollars from their valued workers. But how many owners share this fact with their staffs?

Honesty goes a long way toward getting all of your employees on board as you manage labor expenses and keep strong employees on your team. The more employees feel they are part of the solution, the less of a problem they will be when decisions are made.

This month, *Lawn & Landscape* spoke with three landscape firms to learn how they adjusted work schedules and trimmed labor expenses while keeping their star players. **L**

The author is a freelance writer based in Bay Village, Ohio.

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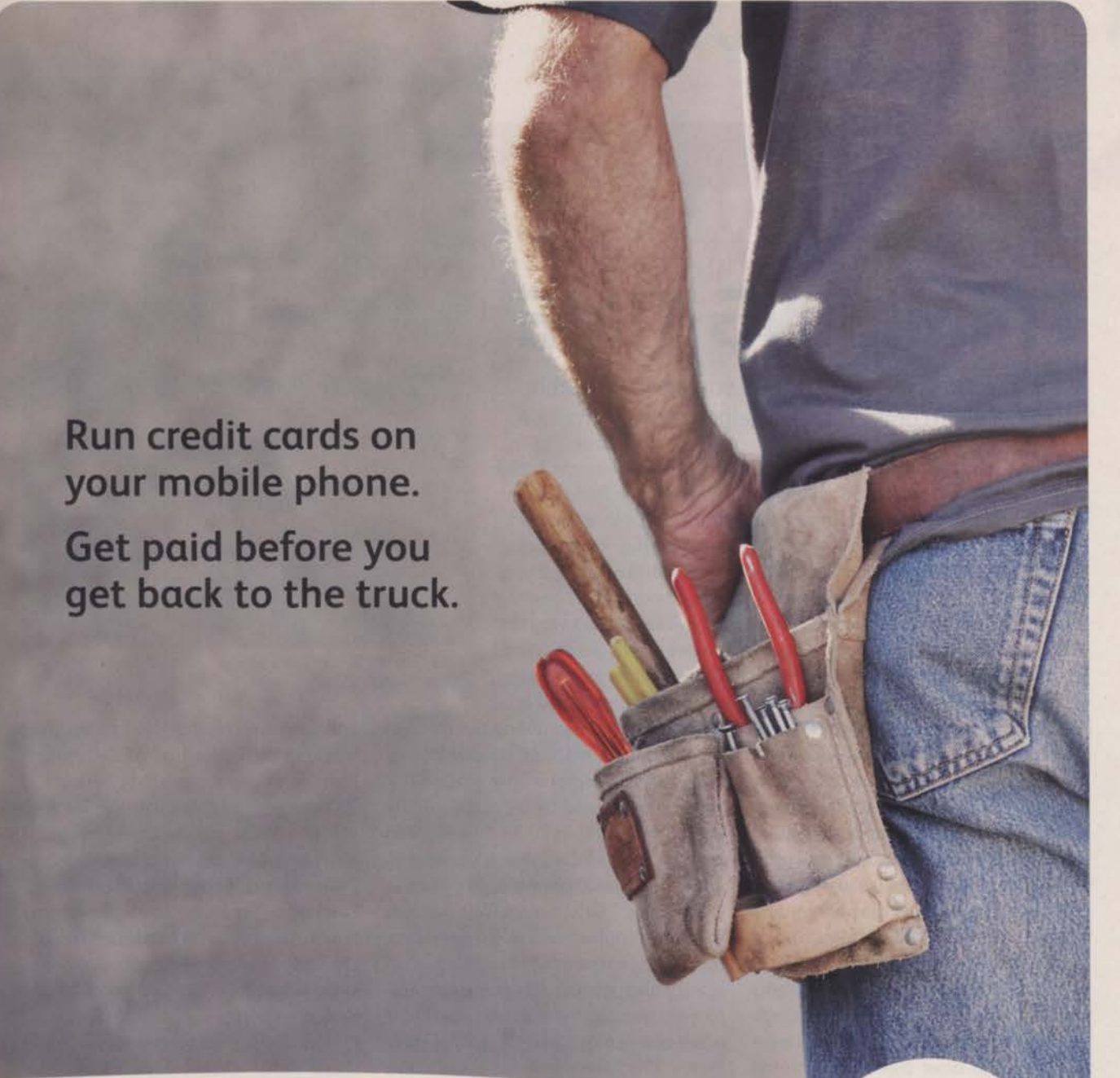


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SMALL

BY KRISTEN HAMPSHIRE

## TRIMMING TIME

A four-day workweek wasn't quite enough to trim labor costs, but open communication helped maintain morale.

Linda Grieve knew early in 2009 that plans for expansion would be benched this year. Maintaining steady business would be tough enough. "We had a nasty spring here, and the phone didn't ring," relates Grieve, president of Perennial Gardens in Des Moines, Iowa. "We were concerned as we were bringing employees in to start the season."

She was worried there wouldn't be enough work to fill employees' usual five-day 45- to 55-hour workweeks. Overtime was typical, and generally the company sold out its available work hours two weeks to a month ahead of time. "By June, we are usually sold until at least September, then in August when kids are back to school, the phone starts ringing and we're sold through Christmas," Grieve says.

Perennial Gardens usually completes a couple of jobs in the \$150,000 range each season. Not this year. Big jobs were \$20,000, and most customers wanted projects in the \$2,000 to \$5,000 range. That put a lot of pressure on designers to constantly sell.

Reacting to the sluggish market, in

July Grieve restructured employee schedules to a four-day, 40-hour workweek. Open communication with the 30 employees was important to helping them understand why the change was necessary. Grieve held a meeting and explained the national economic outlook, narrowing the focus to Iowa and then their own neighborhood. She showed everyone how much work was typically sold by July, comparing that to work sold in 2009. "We showed how many workdays that translated to and emphasized that we didn't want to cut salaries," Grieve says. "We want to treat our people as well as we can rather than doing surprises."

Surprises are the last thing her employees wanted. They shared news that other companies had let go half of their crews. They were grateful that Grieve was doing all she could to keep people on board.

Meanwhile, the four-day workweek jumpstarted efficiency, and Grieve noticed employees became more mindful of time taken to load up trucks and drive to jobs. "The shorter workweek made everyone rethink what they were doing, how they could do it in less time," Grieve says.

Also, Grieve gathered feedback from employees about the schedule. "Employees feel comfortable coming to us and saying, 'This isn't right,' or, 'This really works great,'" she relates.

Unfortunately, the four-day workweek didn't trim labor costs enough,



Linda Grieve: "We may be pretty lean and mean for another year."

and Grieve recognized that rather than working until the end of December, their year would probably finish at Thanksgiving. In August, she let go a garden crew – one she added two years ago. She took them out to lunch, and expressed her difficulty with the situation. She had never let go an employee who didn't deserve to be fired. In October, she laid off a designer for the season; in early November, she said goodbye to a design assistant.

"Hopefully next spring we can bring them back," Grieve says, though she says a board update from the American Nursery and Landscape Association suggested the recession would last through 2010 and begin to turn around in 2011. "We may be pretty lean and mean for another year," she says.

Strong communication will continue to be a focus at Perennial Gardens as Grieve maintains the high morale of employees and makes sure everyone understands the reality of the situation. "You treat your employees like family, you have them at your home, you talk to them, you celebrate their birthdays," Grieve says. "Hopefully, we can keep our good people and expand their schedules." **L**

### Perennial Gardens

**Principal:** Linda Grieve, president  
**Location:** Des Moines, Iowa  
**Established:** 1996 **2008**  
**Revenues:** \$2 million **Customers:** 90% residential; 10% commercial  
**Services:** design/build, garden care  
**Employees:** 17



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MEDIUM BY KRISTEN HAMPSHIRE



Jeff Berghoff

## Transplanting **TALENT**

Transferring employees from a sluggish construction division to a booming maintenance department kept key players on board during a tough year.

To determine how much his company should spend on labor in a down economy, Jeff Berghoff took a step back in time to 2008. He pressed rewind on his \$13 million firm, which designs, builds and maintains distinctive gardens for estates in Paradise Valley and Scottsdale, Ariz.

"We felt if this is the worst economy since the Great Depression, let's prepare," says Berghoff, president, Berghoff Design Group.

He consulted 2002 records, when the

company's revenues were \$8 million.

"We asked ourselves, 'What kind of company were we then, and how did we make money then?'" Berghoff says. "We knew whatever we did then we needed to do today because 2009 was probably not going to be a great year."

The maintenance division was going gangbusters and had a record year in 2009 – all of those completed design/build projects filtered into the maintenance division, and new crews were actually required to manage the accounts.

But the construction backlog had dried up. Projects were near completion or already finished. Designers were selling, but not nearly the volume as in 2007.

To accommodate for the shift in business, Berghoff redistributed labor. He transferred talented construction crew members to the maintenance division, then weeded out the maintenance crews so only the strongest workers remained.

"We wanted to keep our well-trained construction guys and repurpose them in a sense, and retain them," Berghoff says, figuring construction would even-

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tually rebound and then his core people would still be on board. Meanwhile, he actually needed to add three more maintenance crews in 2009 to keep up with the influx of work.

The plan went over well with construction workers who were offered transfers. Most of them took the opportunity. Others planned to move out of state, or decided not to stay on board. The result was a strong maintenance work force and lean construction division that could manage the lightened workload. "The guys were happy to have a job," he says. "And we wanted to move them into maintenance because we knew more of those accounts were coming online."

Meanwhile, Berghoff altered designers' schedules to a four-day, 32-hour workweek, cutting pay by 20 percent. The prior August, he had let go one draftsman, and he didn't hire an intern

for 2009. He had developed his core group and wanted them to stay on board – but something had to give. "I wanted to keep them all busy, and by going to this four-day, 32-hour workweek, we were able to keep costs down," he says. "If designers aren't busy, construction isn't going to be busy."

But already business is picking up on the construction side. Berghoff expects to add two more crews for 2010, noting he'll cherry-pick workers who had shifted to maintenance to rejoin the construction division.


Customers who used to wait six months to meet with Berghoff to discuss a design can book him the same day if they want. Construction is still slow, but profitable. "We're getting by," Berghoff says.

Maintenance is a different story, with a happy ending. "Everything fell into place," he says, noting the company con-

## Berghoff Design Group

**President:** Jeff Berghoff **Location:** Scottsdale, Ariz. **Established:** 1997 **2008 Revenues:** \$13 million **Customers:** 60% residential; 40% commercial **Services:** design/build and maintenance **Employees:** 200

verts most of its design/build clients into maintenance customers. Because the firm manages estates, customers are not interested in bringing in fly-by-nighters to manage their properties.

Berghoff's main goal concerning labor for 2010 is to keep everyone busy. "Our workload is picking up again, and we have been working on homes in design and everything is lining up – clients are moving forward," he says, optimistic. "We'll need those construction crews to break ground." 

The author is a freelance writer based in Bay Village, Ohio.

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LARGE

BY KRISTEN HAMPSHIRE

# Leaving labor alone

Holding on to the company's greatest investment – its people – will position the firm to start 2010 off strong.



The goal at Chalet Landscaping was not to lay off a single person in 2009. Mission accomplished, thanks to adopting a four-day, 40-hour workweek and dressing down some expensive employee parties.

"We've thinned down," says Kevin Marko, landscape division manager at the 92-year-old company. "Looked at our labor, our overtime, downtime, expenses and we've made cuts in a lot of areas, but not our people.

"We've always been a company that is heavy into overtime – the seasonal mentality is, let's do the work while we have it," he says.

Employees might work 60 to 70 hours a week in the spring and 50 to 60 hours a week the rest of the season. "So this is a drastic change," Marko says. The company saved \$100,000 in overtime the first month of the new schedule. In October 2009, the company saved 6,000 hours of overtime. "When you pay the guys time-and-a-half, that's quite a bit of money," he remarks.

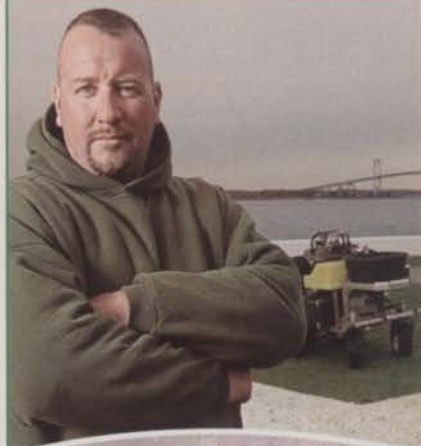
That doesn't count the investment in training employees, especially workers

who have been with the business 10-plus years. "You make an investment in your people and grow that investment," Marko relates.

While staff's hours have been cut by one-third in some cases, employees have embraced the new schedule and understand it is necessary. In fact, Marko says with this and other changes the company has made concerning expenses, he notices greater camaraderie – a team approach from the top down.

For instance, Chalet Landscaping typically hosts an expensive holiday party, complete with sit-down dinner and live music. This year, the company decided to hold an employee appreciation bonfire where the managers cooked, served and cleaned up after the event. "I broiled brats in beer at my house, and the owner of the company made brownies and lemon bars," Marko describes. "Managers did all the work and refused to let any of the employees do anything. The feedback I got was they enjoyed it more than the formal Christmas parties because of the message that was sent."

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### Chalet Landscaping


**Principal:** Kevin Marko, landscape division manager **Location:** Chicago, Ill. **Established:** 1917  
**2008 Revenue:** \$27.5 million  
**Customers:** 100% residential  
**Services:** design/build, maintenance, tree care, garden care, retail **Employees:** 70 year-round; 200-225 in season

Similarly, Chalet dressed down its annual Labor Day picnic by covering the cost of the venue, band and games, but asking employees to bring a picnic lunch. "They turned out in record numbers," Marko says.

These big budget cuts actually improved employee morale, and altering the parties rather than cutting them completely showed workers that the company puts people first. Plus, the company could retain all employees because of the shift to a four-day workweek.

Still, business will be down significantly in the landscape division this year – the \$18 million landscape division will lose an estimated \$4 million. Marko says this recession is unlike others, where the company went unscathed. Because home values are down so much, residents struggle with the notion of investing more in their properties. Marko says the customer base has decreased by 20 percent because of this.

But when the market recovers, Chalet will have maintained its experienced, dedicated employees. And despite losses, the business is in better shape because of its labor and expense decisions. "Profitability is still down significantly, but it's not down where it would be if we hadn't made those large-scale changes," he says.

"When we come out of this," Marko adds, "we'll be ready for the first opportunities for success because we haven't had to let people go." 

The author is a freelance writer based in Bay Village, Ohio.



Lawn & Landscape

# MOWER BUYER'S GUIDE



## Get More from **Your Mowers**

By increasing the efficiency of crews and equipment, contractors can make their maintenance divisions more profitable. BY CHUCK BOWEN

**M**owing and maintenance services were a bright spot in a dark economy in 2009, and many companies are hanging their hats on the service to pull them out in 2010. According to *Lawn & Landscape* research, mowing and maintenance saw 6.3 percent growth last year, and is predicted to grow 13.5 percent this year. *Lawn & Landscape* magazine talked to several contractors to find out how they make their mowing crews more efficient, productive and profitable.

**CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON.** Mike Rorie, who operated Cincinnati-based Ground Masters for 30 years and grew it to \$29 million before selling it to The Brickman Group in 2006. Today, Rorie is a vice president of The Brickman Group.

Rorie, who focused on commercial maintenance at his company, says contractors looking to do more with their mowing crews should focus on finding the best pieces of equipment. And by best, he means the one or two kinds you use the most – not the fastest, biggest or even most expensive mowers

you can find.

“There’s a piece that’s going to have the biggest application at your work,” he says. “A lot of guys say ‘give me the fastest, biggest mower and I’ll be the most productive.’ But that’s not the case.”

Contractors are likely servicing the same types of accounts day in and day out, and need to find the “bread and butter piece,” Rorie says, that will fit all those accounts. At Ground Masters, with 30 trucks and crews in five cities, he used 48-inch walk-behinds and 72-inch riders.

Whatever size or style mower you choose, it should be available easily from a good dealer and easy to repair, Rorie says. And go with a well-known manufacturer who provides a good warrantee.

Having the same machines on all your crews allows for efficiencies in all facets of the business – training new employees, buying parts, repairing them and the logistics of fitting them onto trailers. By having fewer variables, it makes this part of your business as repetitive, easy – and boring – as possible.

“The only thing we want to be unique is the experience for the customer,” he says.

**MAINTAIN YOUR MOWER.** If you have 40 mowers in your fleet or just four, like Tom McAnany, owner of 4 Seasons Landscaping and Lawn Care, they’ll all need basic maintenance to keep them running right through the season.

McAnany, who runs the Clementon, N.J.-based company with partner Greg Porco, runs a zero-turn, 36-inch rider and two push mowers. He learned the importance of maintenance the hard way this season.

“Keep your mowers up on maintenance. We didn’t change the oil, (and it was) down for a week,” he says. “It’s just like your car. It went completely dry on us. We had to replace the mower.”

He was without the machine for three days, which backed up his accounts a week. To avoid this problem next year, he’s setting up a regular maintenance schedule – oil checks, blade changes – on a spreadsheet.

Tim Thornton, president and owner





of the Chesapeake Lawn and Home in Tuxedo, Md., agrees. He brought in \$820,000 in 2008, and runs 10 mowers – eight ride-ons and two for trim. Basic oil and spark plug changes are left to his 14 employees, but any mechanical problems beyond that get sent right to the dealer.

"It's cheaper to do it that way," Thornton says. "We don't have enough to put in a mechanic full time."

**GO WITH GPS.** The only real way for your mowing crews to get more work done is if they're actually at the job site.

Three years ago, Eli Hall grew suspicious of one of his crews when their time sheets showed them taking 15 minutes to drive 45 minutes away.

"I knew they were lying, but needed a way to prove it," says Hall, who owns the \$1.3 million-a-year Association Maintenance Services in Phoenix.

So Hall installed a GPS unit in their truck. Turns out the four crewmembers were simply adding an extra half-hour to their time and route sheets. "The GPS paid for itself after one truck," Hall says. "The first day I saved \$50 and the machine costs \$30."

He now uses computer programs to schedule each of his five maintenance crews, and hard-copy route sheets to record the start and stop time for each account. Hall says it took him six months to set up and implement the program so it ran well. And he said contractors don't have to go whole-hog; they can add GPS units to their trucks slowly.

At the end of every day, he compares every route to make sure he makes at least 50 percent profit. If not, he digs into the data to find out what knocked things off kilter – a flat tire, a down mower or a trip to the dump to drop off clippings.

"It's very systematic. Everybody knows their budget time," he says. "We're really close on watching that stuff." **L**

The author is managing editor of *Lawn & Landscape* magazine. Send him your productivity tips at [cbowen@gie.net](mailto:cbowen@gie.net).

## Manufacturer Contacts

As part of the *Lawn & Landscape* Mower Buyer's Guide, we are providing an overview of the mowers many manufacturers offer professional contractors. Also included in this guide is a listing of companies that participated and their contact information.

To submit mower information for inclusion in a future issue *Lawn & Landscape*, contact managing editor Chuck Bowen at [cbowen@gie.net](mailto:cbowen@gie.net) or 330-523-5330.

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Lawn & Landscape  
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Bad Boy Inc.	ZT Series (26 HP Briggs & Stratton ELS)	50	Gas	Dual Integrated Hydrostatic Transaxle	Yes	Air	Riding
Bad Boy Inc.	ZT (27 HP Kohler)	50, 60	Gas	Dual Integrated Hydrostatic Transaxle	Yes	Air	Riding
Big Dog Mowers	C-142 & C-146	42, 46	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Big Dog Mowers	R-748 Briggs & Stratton, Kohler	48	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Big Dog Mowers	R-754 Briggs & Stratton, Kohler	54	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Big Dog Mowers	X-1052, X-1060 Kawasaki, Kohler, Briggs & Stratton	52, 60	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Bob-Cat	FastCat Pro 61	36, 42, 48, 52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Bob-Cat	FastCat RZ	42, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Bob-Cat	Predator Pro	61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Bob-Cat	ProCat	52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Bob-Cat	ProCat 942253F	61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Bob-Cat	Z-Control Hydro, 933330	36	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Bob-Cat	Z-Control Hydro, 934330	48	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Bob-Cat	Z-Control Hydro, 935330	54	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Bob-Cat	Hydrostatic Walk-Behind	36, 48, 54	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Bob-Cat	Classic Pro	32, 36, 48	Gas	Gear-drive	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Country Clipper	Jazee One	38, 42	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air cooled	Riding
Country Clipper	Jazee	42, 48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air cooled	Riding
Country Clipper	Jazee Pro	48, 52, 60	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air cooled	Riding
Country Clipper	Charger	52, 60	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air cooled	Riding
Country Clipper	Boss	60, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air cooled	Riding
Country Clipper	Boss	60	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid cooled	Riding
Country Clipper	Trek Hydro	36, 48	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air cooled	Walk-behind
Cub Cadet	Z Force	48, 54	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Riding
Cub Cadet	TANK	48, 60	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Riding
Cub Cadet	TANK M	48, 54, 60, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Riding
Cub Cadet	TANK S	60, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Riding
Cub Cadet	TANK S 6032 D	60, 72	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Liquid	Riding
Cub Cadet	TANK S 6031 LP	60, 72	Liquid Propane	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Riding
Deere	John Deere Quik-Trak	48, 54, 60	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Stand-on
Deere	John Deere Z-Trak	60, 72	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Liquid	Riding
Deere	Series II Front Mower	60, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Liquid	Riding
Deere	Series II Front Mower	60, 72	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Liquid	Riding
Deere	1600 Series II Turbo Wide-Area Mower		Diesel	Hydrostatic		Liquid	Riding
Deere	Commercial Walk-behind	36, 48	Gas	Gear-drive	Mulch kit	Air	Walk-behind
Deere	7H17 Commercial Walk-behind	48, 54	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Walk-behind
Deere	LESCO SL	34, 48	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Stand-on
Deere	LESCO WL	32, 36, 48	Gas	Gear-drive	Mulch kit	Air	Walk-behind
Deere	LESCO WL	36, 48	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Walk-behind
Dixie Chopper	Iron Eagle 2344	44	Gas	Transaxles	Yes	Air	
Dixie Chopper	Iron Eagle 2350	50	Gas	Transaxles	Yes	Air	
Dixie Chopper	Iron Eagle	44, 60, 50	Gas	Transaxles	Yes	Air	
Dixie Chopper	Silver Eagle	34, 44, 50, 60	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	
Dixie Chopper	Magnum 2760	50, 60	Gas	Transaxles	Yes	Air	
Dixie Chopper	Classic	50, 60, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	
Dixie Chopper	Xcaliber	56, 66, 74	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	
Dixie Chopper	Xcaliber	66, 74	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	
Dixie Chopper	Xcaliber	66, 74	Propane	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	





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Make	Model	Deck Size	Gas/Diesel	Hydrostatic Vs. Gear-Drive	Mulching Capabilities	Liquid/Air Cooled Engine	Walk-Behind, Stand-On Or Riding
Dixie Chopper	Eco-Eagle	66	Natural Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	
Dixie Chopper	Diesel	66, 74	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	
Dixon Industries	Kodiak	52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Dixon Industries	Grizzly	60, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Encore	Premier	32, 36, 48	Gas	Gear-drive	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Encore	Premier	36, 48	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Encore	Fuzion	34, 42, 48	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Encore	Z Series	42	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Encore	X-Treme 48K19X	48, 52, 60	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Encore	Prowler Mid-Cut	61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Encore	Prowler Mid-Cut	61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Encore	Prowler Mid-Cut	61, 72	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Encore	Prowler Mid-Cut	72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Encore	Prowler Front-Cut	52, 61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Encore	Prowler Front-Cut	61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Encore	Prowler Front-Cut	61, 72	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid	Riding
EverRide	EverRide Warrior	54, 60, 66	Gas	Hydrostatic	No	Air	Riding
EverRide	EverRide Hornet	52, 48	Gas	Hydrostatic	No	Air	Riding
EverRide	EverRide Fury	48, 52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
EverRide	EverRide Wasp	32, 36, 48	Gas	Gear-drive	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
EverRide	EverRide Wasp	36, 48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Exmark	Lazer Z	48, 52, 60, 66, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Exmark	Lazer Z XS	60, 66, 72	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Exmark	Lazer Z ASX	52, 60, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Exmark	Lazer Z AS	48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Exmark	Quest SP	44, 48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Exmark	Quest	42, 48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Exmark	Vantage	48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Stand-on
Exmark	Navigator - Mower Only		Gas	Hydrostatic		Air	Riding
Exmark	Navigator - Deck Only	42, 48	Gas				
Exmark	Turf Tracer - Mower Only		Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Exmark	Turf Tracer FMD524 - Deck Only	52, 60					
Exmark	Turf Tracer HP	36, 48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Exmark	Viking	36, 48	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Exmark	Metro	32, 36, 48	Gas	Gear-drive	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Exmark	Metro 26	26	Gas	Gear-drive	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Exmark	Commercial 21	21	Gas	Gear-drive	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Exmark	Commercial 21AS	21	Gas	Gear-drive	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Ferris	IS5100ZC33D61	61	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Liquid	Riding
Ferris	IS5100ZC33D w/ 5100/72R	72	Diesel	Hydrostatic	N/A	Liquid	Riding
Ferris	IS5100ZC33D w/ 5100/72	72	Diesel	Hydrostatic	N/A	Liquid	Riding
Ferris	IS5100ZC33D w/ 5100/61R	61	Diesel	Hydrostatic	N/A	Liquid	Riding
Ferris	IS500ZB	44, 52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Riding
Ferris	IS3100ZK	61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	N/A	Air	Riding
Ferris	IS3100ZB	61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Riding
Ferris	IS2500ZY	52, 61	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Liquid	Riding
Ferris	IS2000ZK	61, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Riding
Ferris	IS2000ZB	61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Riding
Ferris	IS1500ZXBV2861	61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Riding
Ferris	IS1500ZK	44, 48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Riding
Ferris	EVKAV	36, 48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Riding
Ferris	H2225KAV w/ R61	61	Gas	Hydrostatic	N/A	Air	Riding
Ferris	H2226B w/ R61	61	Gas	Hydrostatic	N/A	Air	Riding






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Make	Model	Deck Size	Gas/Diesel	Hydrostatic Vs. Gear-Drive	Mulching Capabilities	Liquid/Air Cooled Engine	Walk-Behind, Stand-On Or Riding
Ferris	H2227KOH w/ R61	61	Gas	Hydrostatic	N/A	Air	Riding
Ferris	CCWKAV	36, 48, 52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Walk-behind
Ferris	HC32KAV13E	32	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Walk-behind
Ferris	HC36KAV13E	36	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Walk-behind
Ferris	HD1648	48	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Walk-behind
Ferris	FCRP216019KWV	21	Gas	Gear-drive	Mulch kit	Air	Walk-behind
Ferris	FCP216019KWV	21	Gas	Gear-drive	Mulch kit	Air	Walk-behind
Ferris	FCP215520HV	21	Gas	Gear-drive	Mulch kit	Air	Walk-behind
Grasshopper	120K	48	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch	Air	Riding
Grasshopper	124	41, 48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch	Air	Riding
Grasshopper	220	48"	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch	Air	Riding
Grasshopper	223	52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch, rear discharge	Air	Riding
Grasshopper	227	52, 61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch, rear discharge	Air	Riding
Grasshopper	321D	52	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Mulch, rear discharge	Liquid	Riding
Grasshopper	325D	61, 72	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Mulch, rear discharge	Liquid	Riding
Grasshopper	329	52, 61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch, rear discharge	Liquid	Riding
Grasshopper	329B	52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch, rear discharge	Air	Riding
Grasshopper	335	61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch, rear discharge	Air	Riding
Grasshopper	430D/61, 430D/61 4XRD	61, 72	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Mulch, rear discharge	Liquid	Riding
Grasshopper	432/61, 432/61 4XRD	61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch, rear discharge	Liquid	Riding
Grasshopper	616T	44, 48	Gas	Hydrostatic T-drive	Mulch	Air	Riding
Grasshopper	620T	48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic T-drive	Mulch, rear discharge	Air	Riding
Grasshopper	721DT	52, 61	Diesel	Hydrostatic T-drive	Mulch, rear discharge	Liquid	Riding
Grasshopper	723T	48, 52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic T-drive	Mulch, rear discharge	Air	Riding
Grasshopper	725DT6	52, 61, 72	Diesel	Hydrostatic T-drive	Mulch, rear discharge	Liquid	Riding
Grasshopper	727T6	52, 61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic T-drive	Mulch, rear discharge	Air	Riding
Grasshopper	729T6	52, 61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic T-drive	Mulch, rear discharge	Liquid	Riding
Grasshopper	729BT6	52, 61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic T-drive	Mulch, rear discharge	Air	Riding
Grasshopper	735T6	52, 61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic T-drive	Mulch, rear discharge	Air	Riding
Grasshopper	930D	52, 61, 72	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Mulch, rear discharge	Liquid	Riding
Grasshopper	932	52, 61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch, rear discharge	Liquid	Riding
Gravely	Gravely 21" Walk Behind - Kohler X17	21	Gas	Push	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Gravely	Gravely 21" Walk Behind - self-propelled - Kawasaki	21	Gas	Infi-speed	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Gravely	Gravely WAW1334 - 13 HP Briggs Intek Single	34	Gas	Belt Drive	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Gravely	Gravely Compact-Pro 34 Kawasaki FX V-Twin	34	Gas	Pumps and Wheel Motors	Yes	Air	Riding
Gravely	Gravely Compact-Pro 44 Kawasaki FX V-Twin	44	Gas	ZT3100 Transaxles	Yes	Air	Riding
Gravely	Gravely Pro-Turn Kawasaki FX V-Twin	48, 52, 60	Gas	ZT3400 Transaxles	Yes	Air	Riding



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Make	Model	Deck Size	Gas/Diesel	Hydrostatic Vs. Gear-Drive	Mulching Capabilities	Liquid/Air Cooled Engine	Walk-Behind, Stand-On Or Riding
Gravely		52	Gas	ZT3400 Transaxles	Yes	Air	Riding
Gravely	Gravely Pro-Master Kawasaki FX V-Twin	52, 60	Gas	Pumps and Motors	Yes	Air	Riding
Gravely	Gravely Pro-Turn Kawasaki FX V-Twin	60, 66	Gas	ZT3400 Transaxles	Yes	Air	Riding
Gravely	Gravely Pro-Master 260H Kohler Command V-Twin	60	Gas	Pumps and Motors	Yes	Air	Riding
Gravely	Gravely Pro-Master 260H Generac V-Twin	60	LP	Pumps and Motors	Yes	LP	Riding
Gravely	Gravely Pro-Master 260H Briggs & Stratton Daihatsu Diesel	60	Diesel	Pumps and Motors	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Gravely	Gravely Pro-Master Kawasaki FX V-Twin	66, 72	Gas	Pumps and Motors	Yes	Air	Riding
Gravely	Gravely Pro-Master 272H Briggs & Stratton Daihatsu Diesel	60	Diesel	Pumps and Motors	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Gravely	Gravely Pro-Master 320HD - 27 HP Kawasaki Twin	60	Gas	Pumps	Yes	Air	Riding
Gravely	Gravely Pro-Walk Kawasaki	32, 36, 48	Gas	Gear-drive	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Gravely	Gravely Pro-Walk 36 HR - Kawasaki	36	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Gravely	Gravely Pro-Walk 48 HR Kawasaki Kai	48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Gravely	Gravely Pro-Walk 52 HE FL Kawasaki Kai	52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Stand-on
Gravely	Gravely Pro-Stance Kawasaki Kai	34, 48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Stand-on
Great Dane	Great Dane Chariot	48, 52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Great Dane	Great Dane Super Surfer	48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Stand-on
Great Dane	Great Dane Surfer	34, 48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Stand-on
Husqvarna	LZF6127	61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Husqvarna	PZ	54, 60	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Husqvarna	PZ6029PFX	60	Propane	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Husqvarna	PZ6034FX	60	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Husqvarna	PZ7234FX	72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Husqvarna	PZ6029KUB	60	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Husqvarna	WC21	21	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Husqvarna	W21SK	21	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Husqvarna	W21SBK	21	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Husqvarna	W21SH	21	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Husqvarna	W21SBHC	21	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Husqvarna	WGP3213	32	Gas	Gear-drive	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Husqvarna	WGP3613	36	Gas	Gear-drive	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Husqvarna	WGP4815	48	Gas	Gear-drive	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Husqvarna	WGE3613	36	Gas	Gear-drive	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Husqvarna	WGE4815	48	Gas	Gear-drive	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Husqvarna	WH3617	36	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Husqvarna	WH4817	48	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Husqvarna	WH5217	52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Husqvarna	WH3615	36	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Husqvarna	WHF3617	36	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Husqvarna	WHF4817	48	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Husqvarna	WHF5223	52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Husqvarna	WHF6123	61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Husqvarna Professional Products	IZ	48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	Sport	42, 48	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	Mini FasTrak	36, 42	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	FasTrak	48, 54	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	FasTrak Super Duty	36, 42, 48, 54, 60	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding



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Make	Model	Deck Size	Gas/Diesel	Hydrostatic Vs. Gear-Drive	Mulching Capabilities	Liquid/Air Cooled Engine	Walk-Behind, Stand-On Or Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	M-1	21	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Hustler Turf Equipment	TrimStar Hydro	36, 48, 54	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Hustler Turf Equipment	Z-4	48, 54, 60	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	Hustler Z XR-7 Deck	54	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	Hustler Z XR-7 Deck Rear Disch	54	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	Hustler Z XR-7 Deck	60, 66	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	Hustler Z XR-7 Deck	60	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	Hustler Z Diesel XR-7 Deck	54, 60, 66, 72	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	Hustler Z Diesel Rear Disch	54, 60, 72	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	Super Z Rear Disch	60, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	Super Z XR-7 Deck	54, 60, 66, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	Super Z XR-7 Deck	60, 66, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	ATZ XR-7 Deck	60, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	ATZ XR-7 Deck Rear Disch	60	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	3500/3700	60, 72	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	3500/3700 Rear Disch	72	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	4600	72	Diesel	Hydrostatic	No	Liquid	Riding
Hustler Turf Equipment	4600 Range Wing	146	Diesel	Hydrostatic	No	Liquid	Riding
Scag	SFW	36, 48	Gas	Gear-drive	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Scag	SW	32, 36, 48	Gas	Gear-drive	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Scag	SW52V-17KAI	52	Gas	Gear-drive	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Scag	SWZ	36, 48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Scag	SWZ52V small frame	52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Scag	SWZ52V large frame	52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Scag	SWZ	52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Scag	SWZU	48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Scag	SWZV	36, 48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Scag	SVR	36, 48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Stand-On
Scag	STHM	61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Scag	SFZ	36, 48, 52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Scag	STC	48, 52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Scag	STWC	48	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Scag	STWC	48	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Scag	STWC	52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Scag	STWC	52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Scag	STWC	61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Scag	STT61V	61	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Scag	STT	52, 61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Scag	STT	61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Scag	STT	52, 61	Propane	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Scag	STT61V-31KB-DF	61	Gas, Propane	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid	Riding
Snapper Pro	SPCRP216019KWW	21	Gas	Gear-drive	Mulch kit	Air	Walk-behind
Snapper Pro	SW20KAV1336	36, 48, 52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Walk-behind
Snapper Pro	S50XB2648	48	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Riding
Snapper Pro	S50X	36, 48	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Riding
Snapper Pro	S75X	52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Riding
Snapper Pro	S150X	48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Riding
Snapper Pro	S150X	52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Riding
Snapper Pro	S200X	61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Mulch kit	Air	Riding
Snapper Pro	S800X	61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	N/A	Air	Riding



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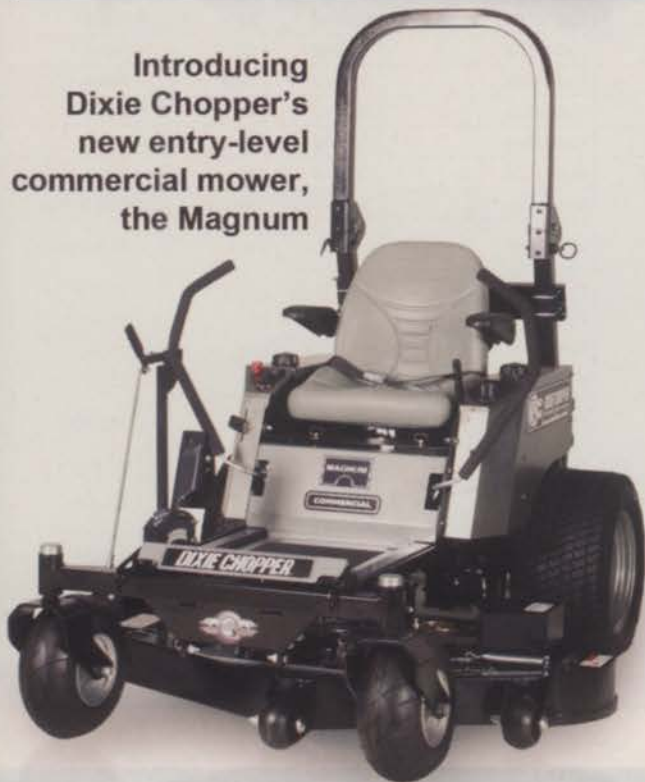
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Make	Model	Deck Size	Gas/Diesel	Hydrostatic Vs. Gear-Drive	Mulching Capabilities	Liquid/Air Cooled Engine	Walk-Behind, Stand-On Or Riding
Snapper Pro	S800X	61, 72	Diesel	Hydrostatic	N/A	Liquid	Riding
Swisher	ZT	42, 50, 52	Gas	Dual Hydrostatic Hydro Gear-drive	N/A	Air	Riding
Swisher	ZT	54, 60, 66	Gas	Commercial Hydrostatic Eaton	Three Gator Mulcher blades	Air	Riding
Toro	22155 Professional Walk-Behind	21"	Gas	Hydrostatic		Air	Commercial Walk-behind
Toro	Professional Walk-Behind	21	Gas	Hydrostatic		Air	Commercial Walk-behind
Toro	Mid-Size Walk-Behind - Fixed Deck	32, 36, 48	Gas	Gear-drive		Air	Commercial Walk-behind
Toro	Mid-Size Walk-Behind - Fixed Deck	36, 48	Gas	Hydrostatic		Air	Commercial Walk-behind
Toro	Mid-Size Walk-Behind - Floating Deck	32, 36, 40, 48, 52	Gas	Gear-drive		Air	Commercial Walk-behind
Toro	Mid-Size Walk-Behind - Floating Deck	36, 40, 48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic		Air	Commercial Walk-behind
Toro	Master Commercial Zero-Turn Rider	52, 60, 72	Diesel	Hydrostatic		Liquid	Commercial Riding
Toro	Z Master Commercial Zero-Turn Rider	48, 52, 60, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic		Air	Commercial Riding
Toro	GrandStand Stand-on	36, 40, 48, 52, 60	Gas	Hydrostatic		Air	Commercial Stand-on
Toro	Z Master G3 Commercial Zero-Turn Riders - Performance Series	48, 52, 60, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic		Air	Commercial Riding
Woods Mow'n Machine	CZ Residential	42, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Optional	Air	Riding
Woods Mow'n Machine	CZ Pro	36, 48, 52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Optional	Air	Riding
Woods Mow'n Machine	ME2661B	61"	Gas	Hydrostatic	Optional	Air	Riding
Woods Mow'n Machine	MZ Premium	52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Optional	Air	Riding
Woods Mow'n Machine	MZ Premium	61"	Gas	Hydrostatic	Optional	Liquid	Riding
Woods Mow'n Machine	MZ Performance-Series	61, 72	Gas	Hydrostatic	Optional	Air	Riding
Woods Mow'n Machine	Front-Deck	52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Optional	Air	Riding
Woods Mow'n Machine	Front-Deck	52, 61, 72	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Optional	Air	Riding
Wright	WVG	32, 36, 48	Gas	Gear-drive	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Wright	WVP	32, 36, 48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Walk-behind
Wright	WS3215KAW	32	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Stand-On
Wright	WS3216KAW (California Only)	32	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Stand-On
Wright	WS3615KAW	36	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Stand-On
Wright	WS3616KAW (California Only)	36	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Stand-On
Wright	WS	36, 42, 48, 52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Stand-On
Wright	WSZ	52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Stand-On
Wright	WSR	36, 42, 48, 52	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Stand-On
Wright	WSE	36, 48, 52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Wright	WZ	48, 52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
Yazoo-Kees	Mid-Max ZT	52, 61	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air	Riding
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# Holding on

Service takes center stage as contractors choose to keep equipment longer.

As forecasts predicted, 2009 was a tough year for landscape contractors and the heavy equipment industry. Depending greatly on increased consumer spending, new home starts and infrastructure improvements, contractors and the manufacturers who supply them with equipment like skid-steer loaders, telescopic handlers, backhoes and excavators have felt the pinch more than just about any other economic sector.

While the economy is now showing signs of life, many contractors are continuing to play it safe by reducing over-





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head, scaling back on employees and being very conservative when it comes to new equipment purchases.

Mike Werner, vice president of customer support operations at heavy equipment manufacturer's JCB North American headquarters in Savannah, Ga., has seen evidence of this scenario first-hand.

"For a number of reasons, many contractors are holding on to their equipment longer in today's market," Werner says. "Over the past year or so, the credit crunch has made it a challenge to secure financing for projects. Customers may not have the money to spend on improvements to their properties. This leads to lighter workloads and machines that aren't getting used nearly as much."

Within the heavy equipment industry, machine life is measured in two primary ways: years old and service hours. In

There's another obvious repercussion of overlooking important maintenance and service work – **huge repair bills.**

most cases, the service hours measurement is a more accurate indicator of the amount of wear a machine has experienced. However, the number of years a machine has been around does have an effect on its residual value.

While some contractors keep a machine three to five years, or around 5,000 to 8,000 service hours, others have made it a standard practice to turn in machines at three years or 3,000 hours to get a higher resale or trade-in value. Now, those same contractors are



keeping their equipment longer because they simply can't afford to sell them.

"Just like what we've seen in the housing market with home prices dipping below market value, the price of used equipment has gone down because of weaker demand," Werner says. "Many owners of heavy equipment are electing to keep their machines longer and wait out this soft market rather than

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## STRATEGIES ///

Tips for managing day-to-day operations

### Maintenance tips

Chris Powell, field manager of commercial engine support for Briggs & Stratton Commercial Power, provides a short list of engine maintenance musts:

- Check and change the oil regularly.
- Change the air and oil filters based on the manufacturer recommendations – your engine cannot breathe through a clogged air filter or clean the oil through a dirty oil filter.
- Use original manufacturer products and parts – these are specially made for the engine and if you use a non-manufacturer part and it damages your engine, it may void the warranty.
- Mower storage – if storing for any length of time, be sure to add a fuel stabilizer to keep the fuel fresh.

sell them or trade them in for less than they're really worth."

**AT YOUR SERVICE.** As expected, keeping an older machine on the job may save money, but it also offers up its own challenges. Many owner-operators perform their own maintenance work – oil changes, daily greasing, checking fluid levels and inspecting the axles – while letting their dealers handle the actual servicing of the machine. However, the fact that owners are holding onto their equipment for longer periods of time brings up service issues with which they may not be familiar, having traded in their equipment long before it required service in the past.

"Owners who used to trade in their machines often need to be aware of the importance of additional servicing at their local dealer after their equipment is over three years old or so," Werner says. "They may have never had to have their powertrain, transmission or axles serviced. Hydraulic relief valves should also be checked for pressure. Brake pads and tires typically need to be replaced after a few years of steady use, and

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## STRATEGIES /// Tips for managing day-to-day operations

gauges should also be monitored for accuracy."

While regular dealer servicing is extremely important, Werner says older machines can benefit greatly from a few additional maintenance activities that contractors can handle on their own. Some of these activities include regularly inspecting for hose damage, hydraulic leaks, tire wear and pins and bushings that need grease. Cylinder rods should also be greased and checked for damage.

"The damage incurred by not maintaining hoses, tires and hydraulic leaks will eventually lead to one thing that most owners cannot afford right now, and that's downtime," Werner said. "If

a hose blows in the middle of a job, that job is at a standstill until the machine can be repaired. That means operators and laborers will be sitting around waiting to start back up, and they need to be paid regardless."

There's another obvious repercussion of overlooking important maintenance and service work – huge repair bills. Letting equipment components wear prematurely by simply not changing the oil or greasing pins and bushings can shorten the components' wear life by as much as 50 percent. This negligence can lead to service bills that are twice as large, or the need to repair or replace parts in half the usual amount of time. **L**

## On the smaller side

### When to repair, repower or replace small engines

Landscape contractors need reliable equipment. If your equipment doesn't have efficient, dependable engines, you're dead in the water right from the start. But how should you know when to repair the engine, repower with a new engine, or replace the machine entirely?

"Contractors should base this decision on the total cost of engine repairs they've had on an existing machine during a one-year span," says Chris Powell, field manager of commercial engine support for Briggs & Stratton Commercial Power. "If the total cost of engine repairs is more than 25 to 40 percent of the cost of the engine, the engine is likely wearing and not as efficient. It's time to repower with a new engine."

Powell adds that as an engine wears and uses more oil, hydrocarbons and carbon monoxides increase. Repowering the machine with a newer grade, air-cooled engine not only runs cooler, it reduces the environmental impact as technologically advanced engines produce fewer emissions. By adding a new engine to a commercial mower, contractors can receive the benefit of increased fuel efficiency, reduced emissions and a new engine warranty.

Whether a landscape contractor is working to maintain an existing engine, or thinking of repowering with a new engine, regular engine maintenance increases the longevity of the machine. Performing a simple tune-up – replacing oil, spark plugs and the appropriate filters – can reduce emissions by up to 50 percent and preserve the life of the mower.

Engine maintenance is an important step to an efficient engine, but Powell says the number one issue with any engine with high usage hours is oil consumption. Dealers can assist contractors by performing a simple leak down test on any engine to help quickly evaluate the potential of that engine.

"In today's economy, you have to get the best bang for your buck," says Powell. If you have a piece of equipment that is in good shape, with normal maintenance repairs it could run another couple of years. Adding nice, fresh power with a fresh warranty is much less expensive than replacing the entire machine and provides new engine reliability."



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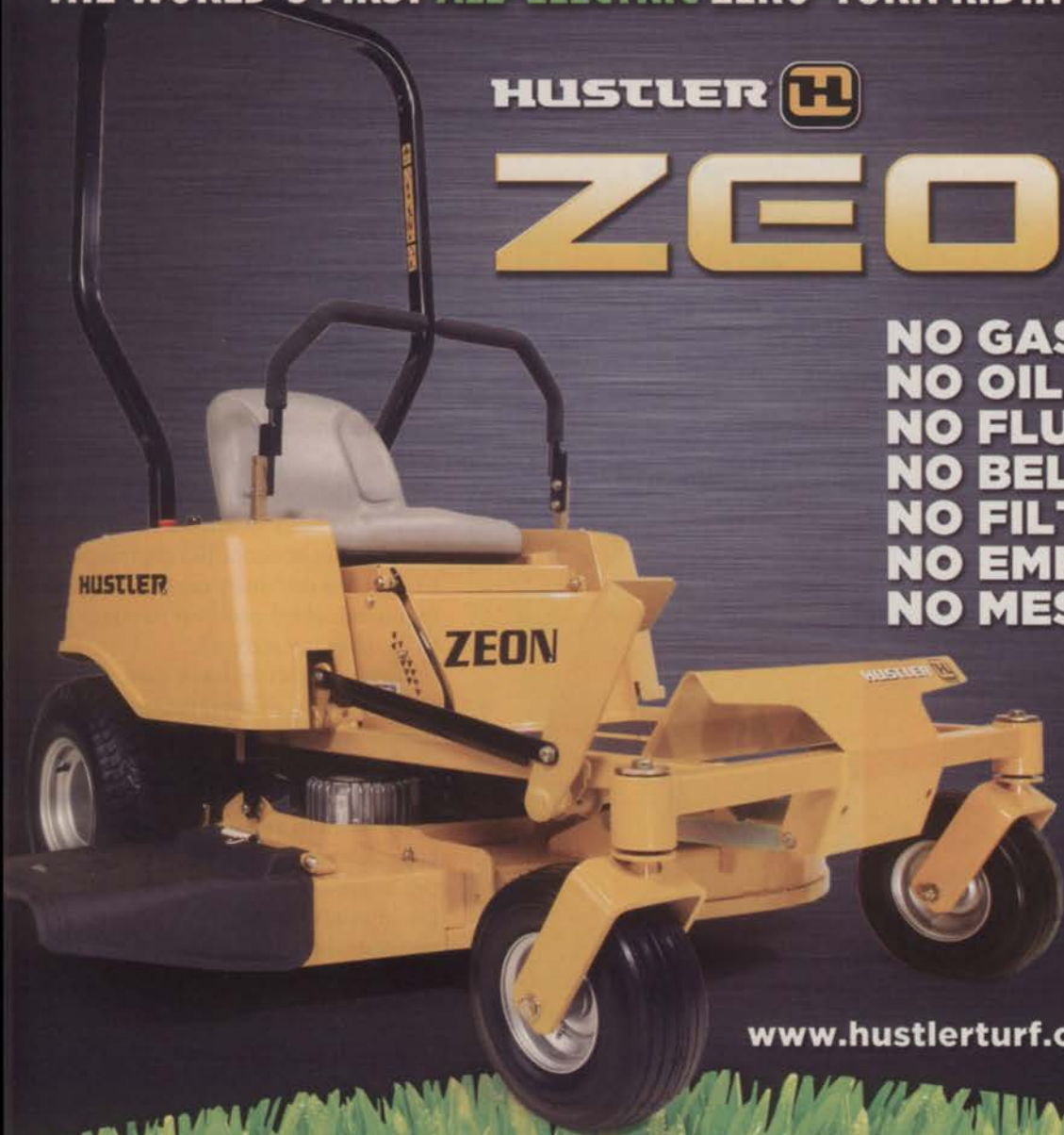
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# Rise Above the Competition with Specialty Projects

Specialty gardens can add to your bottom line. BY POLLY BAILEY-RULE



It's the perfect opportunity; landscape contractors are seeking additional revenue sources and ways to differentiate their business while homeowners are looking for ways to improve their property values and elevate their enjoyment of their backyards. This attention generated from the sustainable movement has created an increased interest

in attracting wildlife to landscapes, especially butterflies and hummingbirds. Having the knowledge to create and install these specialized gardens will help you set your company apart from the competition.

As for any wildlife habitat, the basic criteria that need to be met are warmth, shelter, food and water. A butterfly or

hummingbird garden needs to have at least five to six hours of sun a day. Butterflies are cold-blooded and like to warm themselves in the sun, but be cautious to locate the garden in an area that is out of the wind. They are small creatures and will not feed in an area where they have to fight the wind. Butterfly houses can be placed in the garden, but incorporating some shrubs such as *Hibiscus* (Rose of Sharon) or *Itea* (sweetspire) in the approximate area will provide adequate shelter, too. Be sure to include small rocks in the garden so they have a place to rest.

Hummingbirds are much less particular creatures. Not only can they hover motionless before a flower, they can dart backwards, up and down so quickly they seem to vanish from sight. They have an incredibly fast metabolic rate and must consume huge quantities of fuel. Ounce for ounce, hummingbirds require more calories than any other warm-blooded animal to both maintain their body temperature at about 105 degrees, and to fuel their extremely rapid movement (a hummingbird may beat its wings up to 75 times per second).

Hummingbirds have two major sources of food – flower nectar and tiny insects and spiders. Insects (which includes butterflies) cannot see the color red, but birds can, so hummingbirds are most drawn to orange, pink and red tubular flowers. Flowers with back-turned petals are also good sources of nectar for hummingbirds as insects cannot negotiate the turn to get into the flower. Likewise, flowers that droop or hang down are difficult for insects to enter. Hummingbirds are attracted to flowers



Warmth, shelter, food and water are the basic criteria for any wildlife habitat.

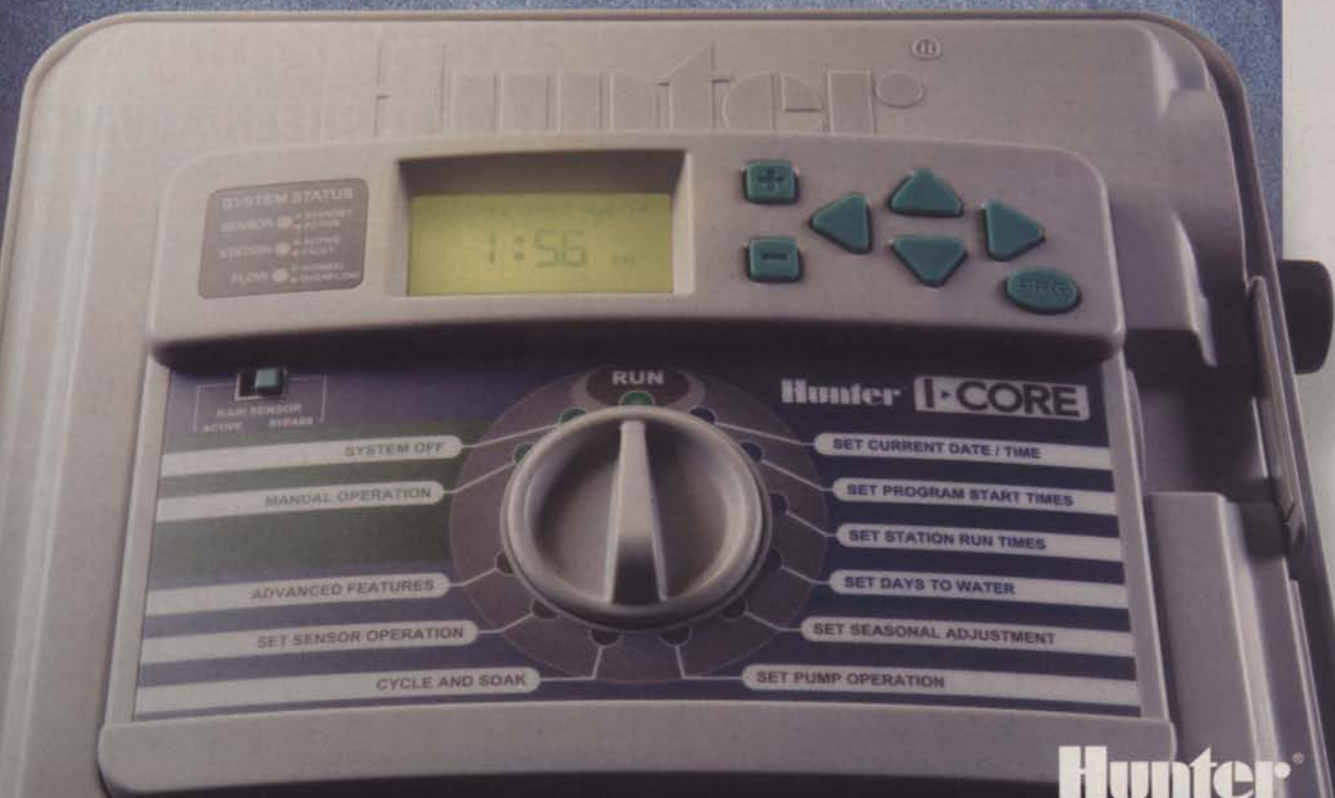


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## STRATEGIES // Tactics for managing day-to-day operations

such as: *Agastache*, *Weigela*, *Salvia*, *Monarda*, *Calibrachoa*, *Penstemon*, *Cuphea*, *Fuchsia* and *Lantana*.

Nectar is a prime food source for butterflies, so plant choice is critical. Butterflies prefer flowers that have short nectar tubes and that are purple, pink, white, yellow or blue. Good nectar plants for butterflies include: Bloomerang *Syringa* (lilac) – Proven Winners says this variety blooms longer than traditional lilac plants – *Lavender*, *Gaura*, *Phlox*, *Asclepias* (milkweed), *Verbena*, *Dianthus*, snapdragons, *Lobularia* and *Petunias*.

In addition to the new generation of butterflies from early summer, some butterflies emerge from pupa in early fall. They will seek a sheltered spot, such as a hollow tree or a vacant shed, in which to pass the colder months of the year in relative safety after flying around until late fall hunting for food

sources. Be sure to include late season food sources such as Lo & Behold 'Blue Chip' – a dwarf variety of butterfly bush – *Buddleia*, *Solidago* (goldenrod) and *Caryopteris* in your planting design.

Don't forget to provide larval host plants like verbenas, violets, hollyhocks or herbs such as dill, parsley or anise so the butterflies can lay eggs. These plants are also food sources for the ensuing caterpillars. Be certain to inform the property owners (and your own maintenance crews) that pesticide use needs to be restricted in wildlife plantings.

Make sure to include a water source in your plans. It does not have to be anything fancy – butterflies actually prefer to drink from mud puddles because besides water, they also require the minerals and salt found in the mud.

With a little planning, you can add butterflies to your list of services.

A shallow area where water can collect is all that is necessary. Hummingbirds also make use of birdbaths for water and a hummingbird feeder will add to available food sources.

It's more important than ever to stand out from the crowd and the ability to install these specialty plantings will help you increase your business. **L**

The author is a certified landscape professional, master certified nurseryman and landscape account manager for Four Star Greenhouse/Proven Winners in Carleton, Mich.



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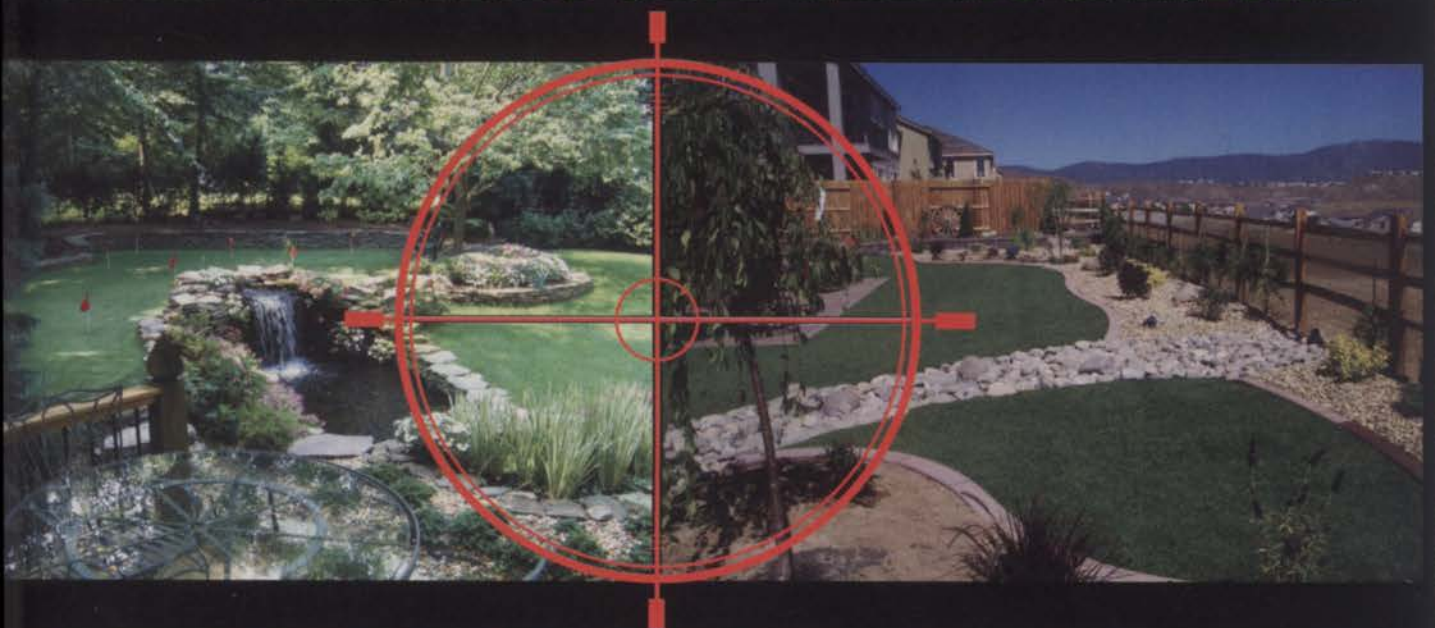
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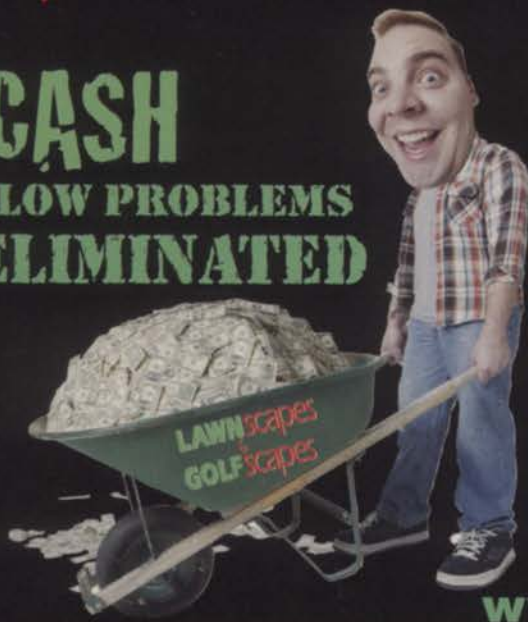
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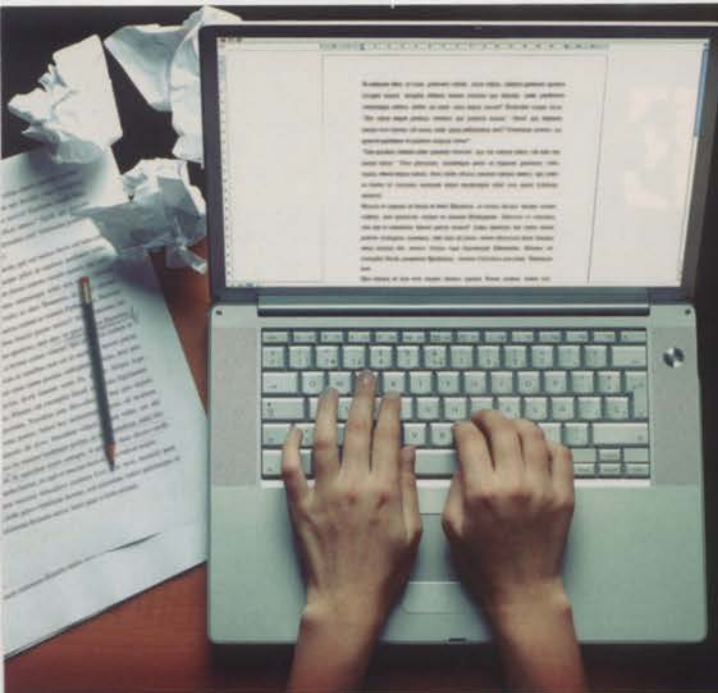
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# Bid Better

## 6 ways to customize your proposals win more RFPs

BY MICHEL THERIAULT

Successful RFPs must stick in the client's mind so when they evaluate the proposals and chose a winner, they are comfortable and confident in your ability to do the job.

Unfortunately, many service companies tend to rely on a lot of boilerplate material and equipment/product flyers when putting together their proposals. The lack of details and effort won't excite the client or hold their attention when they evaluate your proposal.

A winning bid must be customized to the client's situation and linked with the specific scope and unique needs of the client. Rather than using boilerplate or including generic information, the reasons for choosing you need to be described specifically – sold – to the client based on the solution, features and benefits that distinguish you from the competition and solve their needs.

Instead of general solutions, your proposal must speak directly to the client's needs and provide details that show that you understand the client, support what you are saying and that you know how to serve them. Use these six techniques to customize your boilerplate material:

Research what's important to the client, including issues or hot buttons by networking, speaking with people who are familiar with the client and by searching the internet for news and articles about the client. Find presentations and articles given by the client's decision makers to understand what they care

about. Make a list of them and match them to your boilerplate information. Edit your proposal to address these issues within the boilerplate material and describe the benefits you have related to their issues. Use headings to clearly identify the customized material.

Scan the RFP documentation for key phrases, words, terminology, acronyms, job titles, etc. and incorporate these into your boilerplate material. Either replace your terms with theirs or explain how your terms relate directly to theirs.

If you use pre-written descriptions of your experience or resume, edit them to focus on issues that matter to the client. Pull out items from your experience or resume that relate most directly to the client and emphasize them. If specific features of your equipment specifications or service processes address the client's unique requirements, add a separate section to the sheets that describe those benefits to the client.

Don't just do a search/replace with the client name in your boilerplate material. Make sure the context of each one still makes sense and when possible, change from using the client name to you or you're, for instance. You can also replace the generic company name with titles and department names when applicable. Change system, process or other terminology to match theirs. This makes it more personal and easier for them to link your solution with their needs. Reword descriptions

of processes and related flow-charts or organization charts to match the client's organization.

Re-structure your text to match the evaluation matrix and evaluation criteria. Put your information in the same order they will be evaluating it and separate out information that specifically supports the criteria they use to evaluate you with. Add headings to make it easy for the evaluators to find it. Even if you don't restructure your entire proposal, use headings and even numbering that relates directly to the evaluation criteria or include a summary table that pulls out the key information and presents it using the same format as the evaluation matrix.

Even if you don't make many changes to your boilerplate text, add sidebars, pull-out boxes or summary paragraphs that specifically link your text to the client's needs and explains your benefits and advantages over the competition using terms and phrases from their scope of work and specifications.

Saving time and effort with boilerplate material isn't the way to win more business. By using these techniques, you can modify your boilerplate material with minimal effort and create a more compelling proposal that will be appreciated by your client and increase your evaluation scores. **L**

The author is an independent consultant based in Guelph, Ontario. He can be reached at [www.successfuel.ca](http://www.successfuel.ca).



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## Buying and selling a business: Part I

**S**urprisingly, in spite of the current economic doldrums, there is a lot of activity regarding green industry businesses being bought or sold. Mergers, while not as common as acquisitions and divestitures, are also occurring. You may think that this topic is not relevant for your situation or your company. I'd encourage you to think again.

**IT TAKES A TEAM.** Buying, selling or merging with another business is a challenging team event. Developing a viable exit strategy is even more challenging. You don't want to do it alone. Assembling a solid team to help you with the process is as important as the process itself.

The primary team members are an attorney and a CPA who are familiar with the merger, acquisition and divestiture process. Ask around, or call the Better Business Bureau for a referral for such specialists. Your personal CPA and/or attorney aren't always right for this team. However, they should be able to refer you to others who are.

It's also wise to talk to other business persons who have bought or sold businesses. Their hindsight wisdom can provide some invaluable insight into this process. Discussing this matter with a consultant can also be wise.

**HOW IT WORKS IN REAL LIFE.** Bob, a client in the Midwest, was in his mid-50s and had wanted to sell his business for some time in order to make a career change. His company was mostly construction, with some maintenance. The maximum sales for Bob's

company were a little more than \$300,000. The previous year's sales were way down, less than half the maximum, as Bob had to take off a lot of time due to family issues. You wouldn't think his company was a good candidate to sell, but he sold it for a little more than \$300,000. Both the buyer and he were very pleased with the deal.

A number of years ago an irrigation client on the East Coast was approached unsolicited by the owners of two separate irrigation companies, neither of whom knew each other. Nor did they know the other had also approached my client. Both owners, one in his 30s and one in his late 50s, were doing sales in the \$300,000 to \$350,000 range and wanted to sell their companies to my client.

The buyer made a very good offer to the two target companies. However, both owners decided not to do the deal. My client and I were a little disappointed but felt the offer was a good one, which we didn't want to increase.

A year later, the owners of both companies came back to my client to ask if he was still interested in doing a deal. My client said he was, and bought both companies for the same amount offered previously.

An attendee at one of my seminars phoned one day. He had a million-dollar commercial maintenance company he wanted to sell. I told him it would probably sell for about \$.60 to \$.75 on the sales dollar, or in the \$600,000 to \$750,000 range. This would include assets and goodwill. I added that, depending on circumstances and the motivation of a buyer, he

might get up to \$850,000.

He said his CPA evaluated his business (using some elaborate business-school model) in the \$1.7 to \$2 million range, or about \$1 million higher than my estimate. I told him that was great, but that he'd better get all his money up front, because he'd never see it if he carried a note for any of it. The numbers simply wouldn't work out. I never heard back from him.

Not too long ago, I spoke with a former client who sold his maintenance business to a private individual. A year or two later, he went to work for one of the large consolidators. He was less than thrilled with what he saw. Management of the organization was chaotic and quality in the field was suffering tremendously.

He said to me, "Jim, you should tell your clients that if they want more work they should follow our trucks, find out who our clients are, and market to them."

The insinuation was that quality control in the field was so bad that these accounts were ripe for the picking. My reply was, "Harry, they already are."

**CONCLUSION.** Don't think that you are too small of a landscape firm to purchase or sell a business. You'd be surprised if you talked with some of my clients who bought businesses. They're not that big.

Also, think exit strategy. What are you going to do with your business when you are ready to retire? The information in the issues to follow will not only help you to prepare your own exit strategy but it will also help you to get the maximum dollar for it. **L**



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# Reliability Means Profitability

Two companies weigh in on how they buy string trimmers. BY CHUCK BOWEN



Contractors look for durability and reliability in their string trimmers.

Any maintenance operation needs crews that show up every day, and equipment that shows up, too. Nothing derails a solid day of work more than equipment that is finicky or unreliable. *Lawn & Landscape* caught up with two contractors to get their perspective on what to look for in a string trimmer.

**ALL DAY LABOR.** Steve Rak, vice president of Southwest Landscape Management in Columbia Station, Ohio, says he needs equipment that is going to work for his crews every time.

"Our biggest issue is, is it reliable? Is it going to work for us day in and day out?" he says.

Rak uses RedMax string trimmers, mainly because they're highly recommended by his outdoor power equipment dealer. "Basically, we usually buy equipment because of the dealer and the

In season, Rak has 18 employees and about 20 string trimmers running almost non-stop. With that many pieces of equipment out in the field, he receives a fleet discount from his outdoor power equipment dealer. And, he recently decided to move from high-end models to mid-range ones; he now pays between \$250 and \$300 for each one, instead of \$400. He made the move to save money, and it forced him to give up some horsepower, but his crew didn't even notice the change.

"I personally didn't notice that much of a difference," he adds.

Rak's advice to contractors ready to pull the trigger on a string trimmer purchase is to find a model that is easy to change the line on. "That takes some time," he says. "That is the most time consuming thing with those machines is changing the trimmer line. Is it easy for guys to get the heads off?"

With so many string trimmers running, Rak says he often replaces the old ones instead of repairing them. "When you have 20 guys out there, (the equipment) gets somewhat abused," he says. "When you need them, you need them. You need to service the client."

And this year, his business is up about 10 percent, which has allowed him to purchase a few more new mowers and string trimmers for his operation.

"I'm sure that's not the case for everybody, but for us we had to go buy some new stuff. It was time to get a couple of new pieces of equipment," he says about his purchasing plans. "You have to know what to look for and know when they've lived their life."

**BOTTOM LINE.** Jay Gilbert, president of All Things Green Landscaping, Vero Beach, Fla., echoes Rak's feelings on reliability in outdoor power equipment.

"I just care that they work and they're comfortable in my hand. That's the bottom line and that's what helps the bottom line – that they work," Gilbert says of his string trimmers.

Gilbert uses Echo trimmers in his one-man operation. He likes their durability and reliability. All Things Green, founded in 2004, does landscape and lawn maintenance, and irrigation work with a 40 percent commercial and 60 percent residential split.

These days, Gilbert says he's hanging onto equipment longer than he would in boom times.

"I'm holding on to them as long as I can, until the motors go," Gilbert says. "Once the motors go, I just use them for parts."

His trimmer fleet is nine strong – a remnant from when he had nine employees, before he shrunk the business to make it more manageable – and comprises four different models. He says he plans on moving toward just one model, to make repairs easier.

The U.S. economy has been tough on Gilbert's company; he plans on holding steady next year on sales and power equipment purchases.

"It's tough like anything. A lot tougher," he says. "I'm buying less equipment, spending less money. Instead of expanding, I'm just staying where I'm at." **L**

The author is managing editor of *Lawn & Landscape* magazine. Send him an e-mail at [cbowen@glie.net](mailto:cbowen@glie.net).

## TALKING TRIMMERS

On average, landscaping companies spent **\$1,500** a year on trimmers and edgers, and more than one third – 33 percent – of companies planned to purchase more trimmers or edgers in 2009.

service they're going to give us," he says. "Usually they give us good advice."

Southwest Landscape Management does nearly 100 percent commercial landscape maintenance – a lot of homeowners' associations, subdivisions and cluster homes – and snow and ice removal in the winter months. This year's revenue should exceed \$1 million.





## Fighting price pressure

Hydroseeding companies rely on quality products and customer relationships to stay afloat. BY CHUCK BOWEN

As commercial construction slows, hydroseeding firms are working to stay afloat. Here's how two companies fight price pressure and untrained competition.

**TROUBLE AHEAD.** When you only have a few ingredients, each one has to be great to make the final product stand up. That's the philosophy for Dennis Richmond, vice president of the Wiley, Texas-based Hydromulch Services.

Richmod uses wood fiber mulch, lots of good fertilizer and a polyacrylamide – a type of polymer additive that conditions the soil, opening it up and

preventing erosion from rainfall.

"You get what you pay for. You're always going to find a contractor that will do it cheaper," he says. "Pretty soon you can't afford to do it right. The trend is inferior product or less product in the tank. They don't end up with a good stand of grass. We're not willing to do that. Just don't go down that road; make it as good as you can."

Hydromulch works with landscape contractors on large commercial turf establishment at schools, churches or office buildings. Hydroseeding makes up about 70 percent of its \$2 million-a-year business; the rest comes from other

erosion control services.

Business is down this year for the nine-employee company, Richmond says, but it's relying on its two decades in business to buoy it through the tight times. Richmond's company is dependent on construction, and as such it will feel a larger hit next year, and in 2011.

"When construction slows down, it's going to affect us," he says. "We're seeing most of our trouble next year."

This is Richmond's third or fourth recession, and he says he doesn't panic any more. The company has reduced overhead, costs and even profit margins, and has gone back to its customers to

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**SEEDING SERVICE**

15 percent of companies offer hydroseeding services. Companies with gross sales of more than **\$200,000** do the most; 24 percent of those companies offer the service.

strengthen their relationships.

"We know it will turn around eventually," he says. "If you survive ... then you'll be in a good position to take advantage."

What makes that survival difficult is competing companies that use inferior

products and bungle jobs, which can cause people to lose faith in hydroseeding and push them toward sod farms.

Richmond works mainly with Turf-Maker hydroseeding equipment. He's been using its machines since he entered into the business 22 years ago, and

says the company supports its clients – something he recommends contractors look for in their equipment suppliers.

"A lot of it was my relationship with Jim Lincoln," Richmond says of the TurfMaker president. Lincoln himself has come out to inspect and repair malfunctioning machines at a Hydromulch job site. "You want to talk to the people who stand behind it. That's the way Jim is, and that's the way his company is."

**LEARNING THE BUSINESS.** Bobby Thomas started mowing lawns, but quickly moved into erosion control, and now Reel Neet Erosion Control in South Haven, Miss., does between \$6 and \$7 million a year in revenue and has 60 employees. He mostly works for developers. Now he's installing 10 acres of turf at a natural gas pipeline.

Thomas says that as construction has slowed, he's had to look farther away from his headquarters to find work. He recommends contractors learn as

**AVERAGE HYDROSEEDING SPEND**

On average, companies spend **\$7,800** on hydroseeders each year.

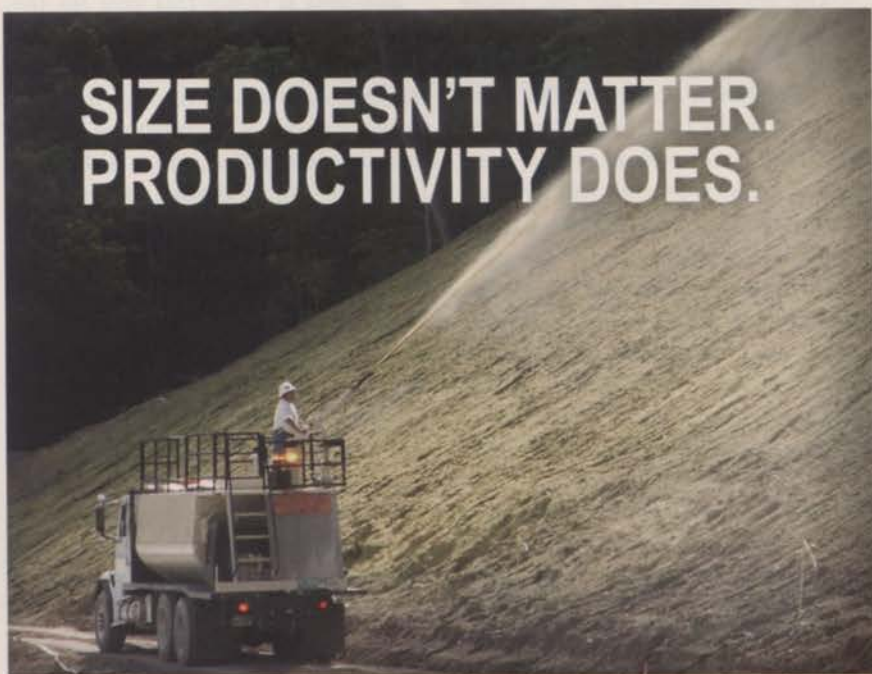
much as they can about the business before they make the decision to bring hydroseeding services in-house.

"Right now, it's a bad time to be getting into the business," he says. "They should learn everything they can, 'cause there's a lot of people out here that think they know how to hydroseed."

Thomas uses Finn equipment; it was the first hydroseeder he bought and he has stuck with them. At his current pipeline job, he has one mounted to an old Army truck and another on a bulldozer. The site is so big, and the terrain so hilly, he has to use other trucks to push the machines up steep grades, then pump water up to two miles away.

"It's kind of an unusual job," he says. "Getting your water to it, that's a challenge." **L**

The author is managing editor of *Lawn & Landscape* magazine. Shoot him an e-mail at [cbowen@gle.net](mailto:cbowen@gle.net).



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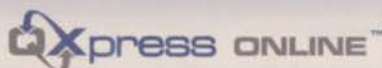


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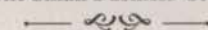
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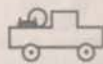
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