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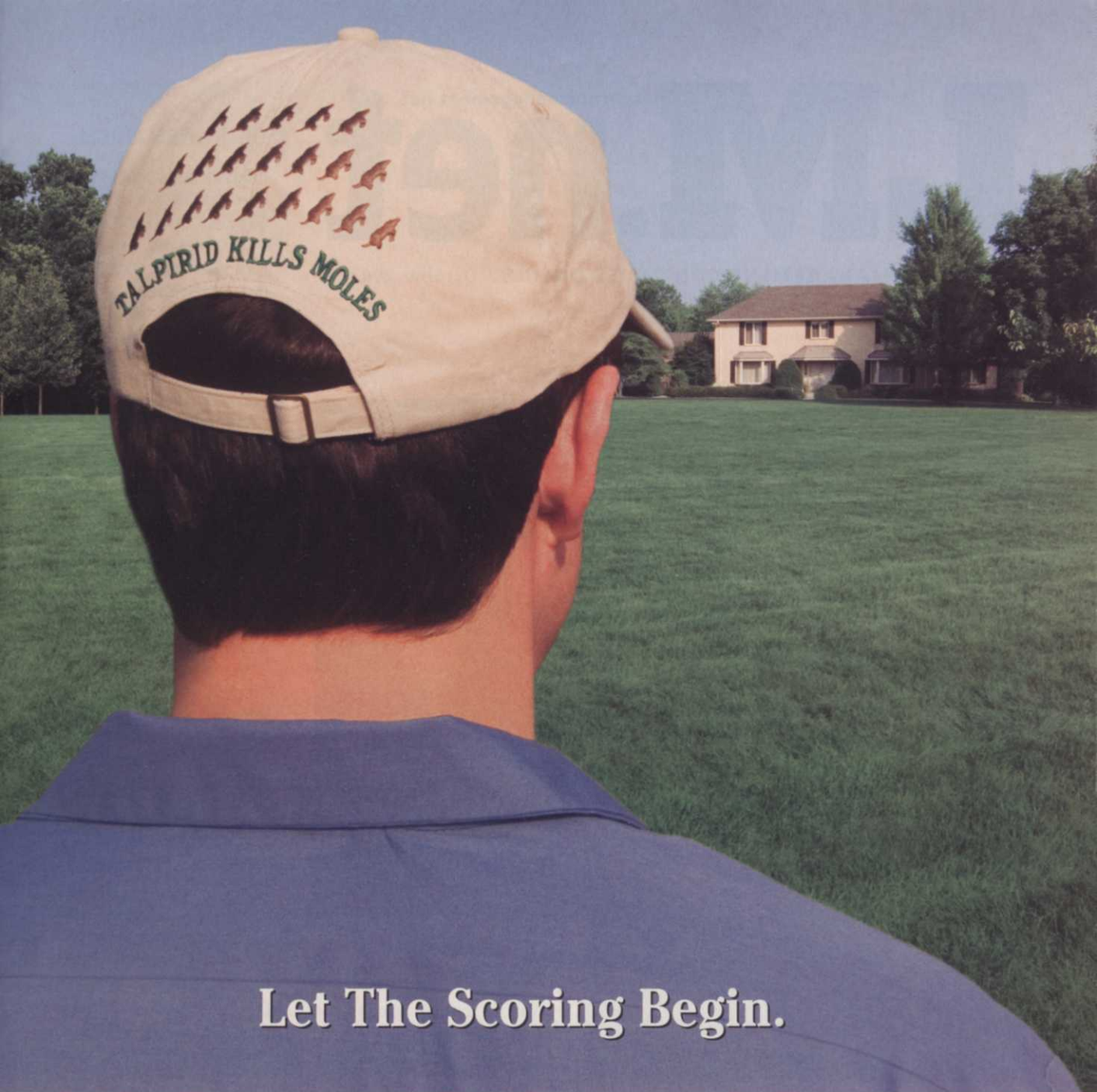
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50 years young and still giving back to customers and the community.
BY JANET AIRD



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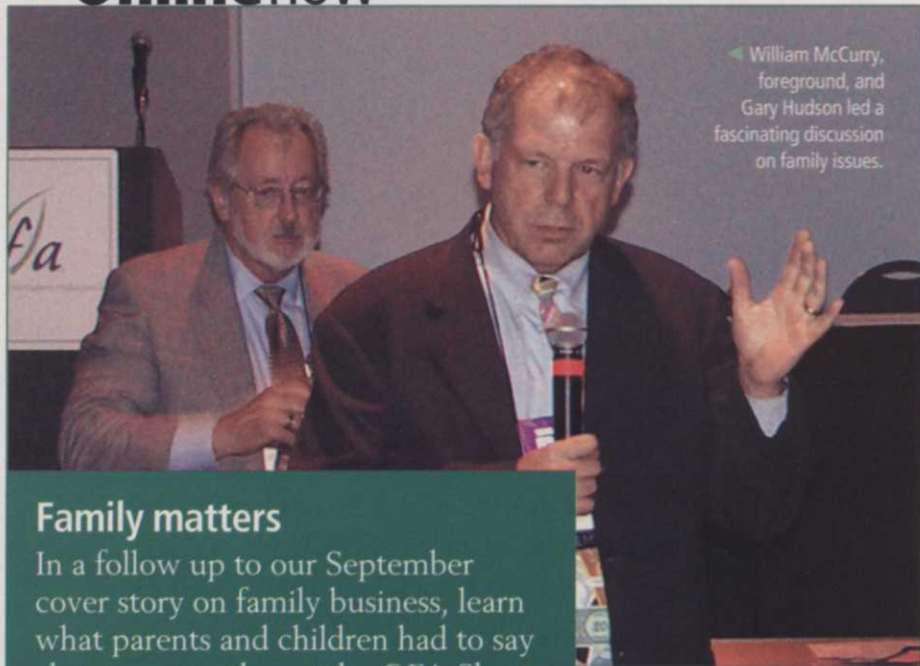
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William McCurry, foreground, and Gary Hudson led a fascinating discussion on family issues.

Family matters

In a follow up to our September cover story on family business, learn what parents and children had to say about one another at the OFA Short course in a class conducted by business consultants Gary Hudson and William McCurry. Visit www.landscapemanagement.net/Familybusiness.

» Readers respond

What are you most looking forward to at the upcoming GIE-EXPO?

40%

Outdoor product demo area

20%

PLANET's excellent educational sessions

16%

Networking with friends and colleagues

4%

Just can't get enough of Louisville!

20%

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Want to weigh in? Our survey question changes every month and we publish the results here. Visit www.landscapemanagement.net to voice your opinion.

» Special issue

Even if you haven't started thinking about 2008, your friends at *Landscape Management* have. In December we deliver our annual Outlook issue. Designed to give you insight into what to expect for the upcoming year, we're talking with contractors in every part of the country. We'll explore the trends and expectations for the coming year.

» Overheard "I think in this day in age, you absolutely must have a Web site. I can't believe we don't have one. We're working on it...really." — Mark Lay of AA Tex-Lawn Co., Indian Trail, NC

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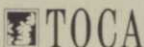
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Circle 107

Builder survey promising

BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

Dining outside for our family a couple of decades ago meant loading a picnic basket with hot dogs, condiments, a tub of cold potato salad and a pie, cherry being my favorite. The basket also contained a tablecloth or blanket, a long fork to turn the dogs on the grill, a pie knife, a tiny transistor radio, some paper plates, plastic forks and napkins. Then, of course, we would load up a cooler full of soft drinks and a bag of charcoal.

After building a deck (basically a rectangular box of pressure-treated wood) onto the back of our house, our outside dining experience evolved from the Neanderthal-charcoal age to the bought-at-K-Mart-propane-grill age. This was the height of outside dining and backyard entertaining, especially when we pulled the speakers of our stereo through the back (kitchen) door onto the deck.

Little did we imagine then that "landscapers" would someday routinely design and incorporate outdoor kitchens into residential landscapes. These are complete kitchens with ovens and stainless grills built into stone, refrigerators, and, in many cases, elaborate entertainment centers. Did we forget the water features and night lighting for additional ambiance? Affluent homeowners now routinely request all of these from landscapers.

An article in a local newspaper got me to thinking about this. It referred to a "Home of the Future" survey conducted by the National Association of Home Builders. The NAHB released results of the survey of "housing experts" earlier this year. Curious, I went to the NAHB Web site (www.nahb.org)

to discover what the "upscale" home of 2015 might be like.

The results are encouraging to our industry. In terms of "upscale homes," builders foresee growing demand for outdoor kitchens, fireplaces, pools/spas, entertainment centers and lighting.

They also predict that the typical "upscale home" will be about 4,000 sq. ft. (compared to 2,330 sq. ft. for the "average" home), will be 2-story, contain 3 1/2 to 4 1/2 bathrooms, two master bedroom suites, a formal living room (or parlor/retreat/library). The survey predicted it will:

- ▶ be significantly "greener" and more resource efficient
- ▶ have more emphasis on handicap access
- ▶ be built with 9-ft. ceilings on the first floor, 9-ft. to 10-ft. ceilings on upper floor
- ▶ have a front porch, rear porch, patio and deck
- ▶ have exterior walls of vinyl or fiber cement siding or brick
- ▶ feature an exterior of stone, brick, stucco or fiber cement siding

The study says that kitchens and bathrooms will be among the most important factors affecting consumer buying choices. Near the top of the list will be homeowners' desires for more open space.

While nobody can predict the future, these "building experts" give us another reason to look to the future optimistically.

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When I look at the planning process, I want to see some real creativity around creating a unique advantage in the marketplace.



Using creativity in planning

BY BRUCE WILSON

Do we spend enough time brainstorming creative strategies and solutions? Most company owners spend time trying to increase competence, often imitating others. It does not give them an advantage; it merely improves their competence, which is not a bad thing. But is this a lasting advantage?

Real advantage in a market comes by being "first" and/or "only" in some phase of the business. It comes from offering a "uniquely yours" value proposition to your customer base.

Be the leader, not the led

So, when I look at planning, I want to see creativity, the development of a unique advantage in the market. I want competitors to copy me, not the other way around.

That advantage may manifest itself in product offerings, in marketing or in operational delivery.

Often people turn to technology for a creative advantage, especially young companies with young leaders. They're comfortable with technology. In contrast, owners of more mature companies benefit from years of experience. Change is happening. The younger generation is rapidly gaining experience to enhance its technological expertise. This will have a profound effect on the industry in a variety of areas.

One promising area primed for market leadership opportunities is water management. Increasing

demands on water availability caused by population growth and development will eventually shape our industry in a different way. How many of our communities have experienced water rationing of one form or another? Irrigation knowledge will be more important to companies as will other forms of environmental responsibility.

Landscape companies now struggling to fix sprinklers and keep irrigation running will have to become responsible water managers if they want to be market leaders. The technology is available now. They will manage water resources using tools that are available but still under utilized. Smart controllers, for example, will become the norm.

The solution is not to irrigate on odd days only. The solution is more efficient use of water.

Labor — be creative

Another opportunity for leadership is in managing our work forces. Immigration reform is a political hot potato. Will we be victims or do we creatively want to address the labor problem? Do we raise prices and attract trainable labor from untapped segments of the resource pool or do we do nothing and hope our government does the right thing? Do we look for ways to reduce our dependency on manual labor?

Creative strategies that are truly "break through" ideas are hard to come by. It will not be easy, but it is worth the effort.

— *The author is a partner with entrepreneur Tom Oyler in the Wilson-Oyler Group, which offers consulting services. Visit www.wilson-oyler.com.*

In the Know

BUSINESS NEWS YOU CAN USE

COUNTDOWN TO CRISIS?

H-2B extension expires



WASHINGTON, D.C. — H-2B Disaster Day has passed. By its inaction, Congress let the H-2B Returning Worker Exemption expire on Sept. 30, meaning that the H-2B cap of guest workers will be limited to 66,000 in 2008.

Though the returning Worker Exemption has expired, there's still time for Congress to act before the Green Industry is hit with a major worker shortage.

"But the clock is now ticking," said immigration attorney Don Mooers.

USCIS reaches H-2B cap for first half of '08

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced that it has received a sufficient number of petitions to reach the congressionally mandated H-2B cap of 33,000 for the first half of Fiscal Year 2008. Sept. 27 was the "final receipt date" for new H-2B worker petitions requesting employment start dates prior to April 1, 2008.

A contingency from the Ohio Landscape Association asked members of Congress to support the H-2B program during the Save Small Business Fly-In on Sept. 6.

As Mooers explains, the Department of Labor is still processing Labor Certification Applications that depend on returning workers. It is only when the H-2B process gets to the Department of Homeland Security stage that true disaster will hit and requests for workers will be denied. For now, Mooers encourages H-2B users to continue to fill out their applications.

"Once Congress extends that bill, which we are still confident they will do, they will be able to go backwards and find out how many H-2Bs (returning workers) were processed, and then open up those slots in the H-2B program," explains Hank Lavery of Save Small Business. "I'm a user of H-2B myself, and I'm still working with my agent and filling out my forms. And I'm going to work my butt off to make sure that the bill gets passed.

"But as a business owner, I'm also starting to think a little about what I'll do if it doesn't pass," he adds.

NTF seeks federal funds

BELTSVILLE, MD — The National Turfgrass Federation is requesting \$4.1 million in new and continuing federal turfgrass research funding. The NTF's mission is to identify and aid in generating resources and implementation of research through the National Turfgrass Research Initiative. The NTF also seeks 501(c) 6 non-profit status from the IRS.

HRI awards scholarships

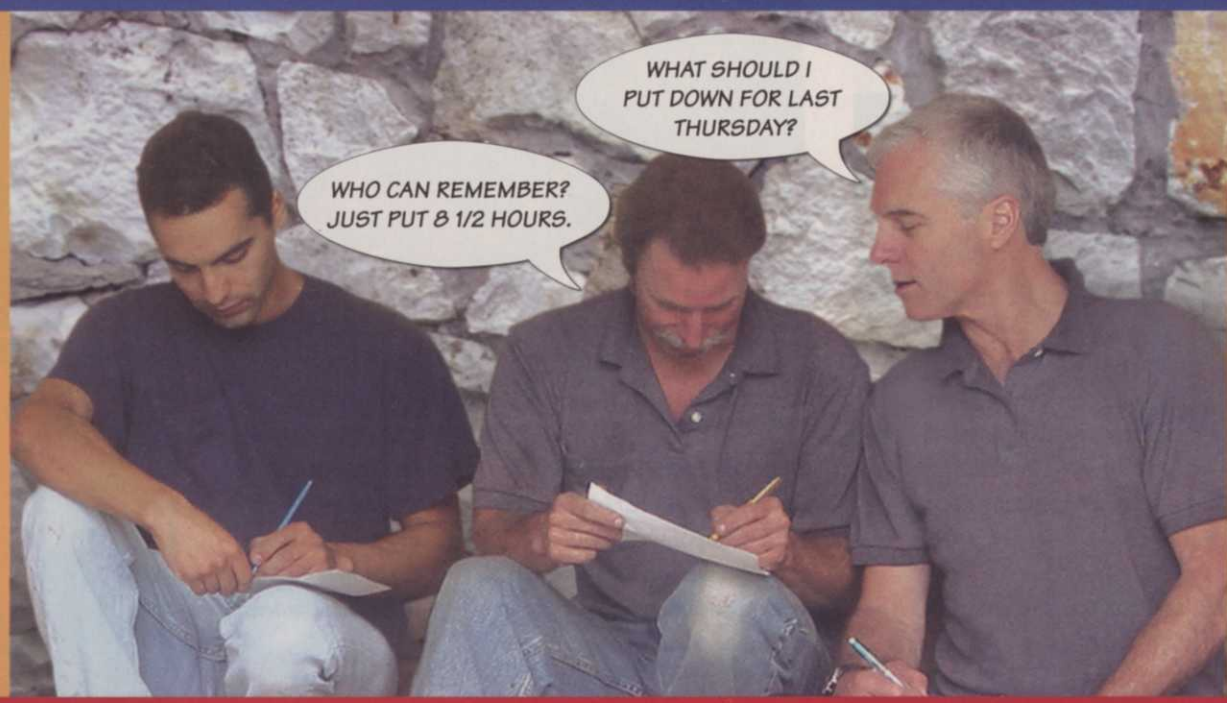
WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Horticultural Research Institute, the research arm of the American Nursery & Landscape Association, has awarded the following 2007 scholarships: Spring Meadow Nursery Scholarship to Warner Orozco-Obando of Auburn University; Timothy Bigelow and Palmer W. Bigelow Jr. Scholarship to Kelly Jarvis of the University of Rhode Island; Usrey Family Scholarship to Colin S. McKim of the California Polytechnic State University; Carville M. Akehurst Memorial Scholarship to Thomas N. Saunders Jr. of Virginia Tech.

Home Depot to close landscape supply stores

ATLANTA — Home improvement retailer Home Depot plans to close 11 Landscape Supply concept stores within the next two months. The 5-year-old chain includes five Atlanta-area stores and six Dallas-area stores.

[CLIPPINGS]

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Wednesday	7	1/2	4	'	'	8 1/2
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Employee Signature: *David B.* Total Hours: **41 1/2**

Employee Report

Burns, David Date Range: 10/15/2007 through 10/19/2007

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			12:41 PM	3:22 PM	Irrigation	2:41	7:38 hours
Tue	10/16	Brentwood	7:12 AM	12:07 PM	Irrigation	4:55	
			12:43 PM	3:23 PM	Irrigation	2:40	7:35 hours
Wed	10/17	Brentwood	7:12 AM	12:02 PM	Irrigation	4:50	
			12:46 PM	3:49 PM	Irrigation	3:03	7:53 hours
Thu	10/18	Crestview	7:17 AM	12:19 PM	Planting	5:02	
			12:50 PM	3:46 PM	Planting	2:56	7:58 hours
Fri	10/19	Crestview	7:13 AM	12:07 PM	Planting	4:54	
			12:44 PM	3:39 PM	Planting	2:55	7:49 hours
Total						38:53 hours	

Signature: *David B.* Burns, David

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In the Know

LEGALLY Speaking



BY KENNETH D. MORRIS, ESQ. L.L.C.

Q How do I know my local trade association has the necessary safeguards in place to prevent antitrust violations during its meetings?

A Well-run associations will have an antitrust compliance policy, which sets out the standards of conduct that the association expects its members to adhere to during meetings. As part of this policy, the association's committees prepare minutes of their activities. These minutes — as well as all of the association's marketing, membership and training literature — should be reviewed by a lawyer before being released to members.

Please be advised, any discussion of the pricing of products or services at association meetings, whether official or ad hoc, is illegal under antitrust law. If you sense that any illegal activity is being conducted, you should immediately leave the room. By staying in the room you become part of an illegal conspiracy to violate the antitrust laws by restraining competition and engaging in this group activity.

Kenneth D. Morris, a Philadelphia-based attorney with more than 30 years corporate and law firm experience, offers information on industry legal issues in each issue of LM. Contact him via www.kenmorrislaw.com.

Note: The above should not be interpreted as offering legal advice in any jurisdiction where such practice is not authorized. Engage competent counsel familiar with your jurisdiction when legal issues arise.



NEW ORLEANS — On Sept. 6, during its 17th Annual Meeting, RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment), the national trade association for specialty pesticide and fertilizer manufacturers, formulators and distributors, provided resources, muscle and 20 of its members for an afternoon's work in the continued restoration of one of New Orleans' most unique green spaces, Longue Vue House and Gardens.

Longue Vue is an 8-acre historic site that reflects the city's fight to bounce back from the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005.

"After the storm, about 80% of our grounds were under two feet of water," explained Amy Graham, head gardener at Longue Vue. "We also suffered severe wind damage and lost a number of trees along with a significant portion of our tree canopy."

RISE volunteers worked under Graham's guidance during an afternoon of weeding, replanting, raking, maintaining and restoring the

RISE members shared their talents and expertise to restore the Longue Vue House and Gardens.

gardens according to the original 1934 plan.

"We serve the lawn and garden industries every day, but usually we go about it in a much different way," said Josh Weeks, chairman of the RISE Governing Board and vice president with Bayer CropScience. "Putting on the gloves and boots and grabbing a shovel is a little different, but it's been fun and our industry will leave a lasting mark here at Longue Vue as part of New Orleans' restoration."

"Thanks to individuals and organizations like RISE who pledge time, resources and make the effort, we are well on our way to restoring Longue Vue to its original beauty, but there is still plenty of work left to do," Graham said.



Problem It's 1 p.m. Friday afternoon and a client calls. He forgot to tell you about the big "Autumn Fest Party" the company is hosting for new clients on Saturday afternoon. He needs you to install a few "Autumn type" displays by noon on Saturday to create the party atmosphere. What are you going to do?



Every day you see horticultural problems. Sometimes the solution is obvious, but others are more difficult to solve. Brickman Group Senior Horticulture Specialist H. Bruce Hellerick tackles these issues each month in Problem Solver. He can be reached at Hellerick@BrickmanGroup.com



Solution

We all get these last minute requests from clients, and that's when you call on the talents of your most innovative and creative staff members. Here are a couple simple displays that are quick and easy to create and could provide a festive atmosphere for this event.

- If possible, use what the client already has on site. In this case, they already had the whiskey barrels with purple fountain grass planted in the center. Just add bunches of corn and then fill in with a variety of pumpkins, gourds and squash.
- Guests were delighted when they arrived to see all these festive touches. Note how the corn stalks were positioned around the trunks of the shade trees and that the corn husks have been pulled back to expose the bright yellow kernels. This is really maximizing all the potential color in a display.

ANLA challenges "Social Security No-Match" regulation

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA) joined seven business organizations on a lawsuit filed in mid September, challenging the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) "Social Security No-Match" regulation issued on Aug. 15, 2007. The no-match rule would require employers to take additional steps within a limited time frame when they receive notice from the Social Security Administration that employees' names and social security numbers do not match, and to terminate their employment if the discrepancy cannot be resolved.

In an effort to reduce the administrative burden on its small business mem-

bers, ANLA has joined an effort in the courts, basing its argument on the failure of DHS to comply with the requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA). Under RFA, government agencies are required to assess impacts of new regulations on small businesses and to seek less burdensome ways for small entities to comply with federal requirements.

Many Green Industry businesses face high demands for seasonal workers, and would be required to comply with the no-match rule while simultaneously attempting to meet their seasonal hiring needs.

"Asking small business owners to dedicate the resources necessary to

comply with these regulations during critical seasonal times, when we are struggling to secure and maintain a workforce, is not reasonable," said Dwight Hughes Jr., ANLA president and owner of the Dwight Hughes Nursery in Cedar Rapids, IA.

The lawsuit also argues that due to errors in the Social Security Administration's database, many American citizens could be unjustifiably terminated because of implementation of the no-match rule. Judge Maxine M. Chesney of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California approved a restraining order, temporarily halting the implementation of the no-match rule by DHS.

In the Know

People & companies



Juan Carlos Vila, president and CEO of **Vila & Son Landscaping**, accepted the Latin

Builders Association (LBA) Award of Excellence in the category of Landscape Contractor as well as the coveted Director of the Year Award.



Colleen Heitzler was promoted from her position as chief financial officer to

chief operating officer for **Aquascape Inc.**

Mark Borst of Wyckoff, NJ, president and founder of



Borst Landscape and Design, has been named among NJBIZ's 2007 Forty

Under 40 recipients.

Syngenta Professional Products named **Robert Goglia** as market manager for lawn care.



Sod Solutions Inc., hired **Justin Wallace** as director of communication.

BASF Agricultural Products appointed **Paul Rea** as director of its Specialty Products Division,



which includes Professional Pest Control, Professional Turf & Ornamentals and Professional Vegetation Management.



Jacobsen, a Textron Inc. company, added **Britton Harold** as the company's new product manager for parts and accessories.



Jan Wemple has joined Northbrook, IL-based **Moore Landscapes Inc.** as the compa-

ny's first sales and design consultant.



Morris-Depew Associates hired **James McCord** as vice president of landscape architecture.



Ruppert Nurseries added **Will Brown** (above, left) as safety and loss prevention manager and **Avery Shepherd** as estimator for the company's Virginia Landscape Installation Branch.

Bayer: Consumers putting more \$\$ value on free time

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC —

According to a recent survey conducted on behalf of the Bayer Lawn Care Institute, nearly 60% of homeowners surveyed believe they have less free time now than they did five years ago, with 40% of these respondents indicating that they have far less free time.

This fact, coupled with additional findings regarding what motivates consumers could help lawn care professionals better position their business in order to expand their client roster.

The objective of the survey was to determine how consumers view their free time and what they are willing to do to acquire more of it.

"As a homeowner and father, I understand how important and valuable free time is to me and my family," ex-

plains Scott Welge, director of marketing, Bayer Environmental Science. "The goal of this survey is to gather information that lawn care professionals can use in an effort to better understand their customers and as such more effectively market their business."

Based on survey results, the average homeowner spends nearly eight hours each week on lawn care and landscaping. These same individuals place a monetary value of \$94 on one hour of their free time – meaning that in a given week, the amount of time they spend on lawn care and landscaping is valued at nearly \$750.

The difference in how consumers value their free time and the actual cost of a lawn care service is a stark contrast. In a 2006 survey sponsored by the Bayer

Lawn Care Institute, homeowners reported having spent an average of \$360 each year on lawn care services – significantly less than the perceived cost of a homeowner's free time.

"The information garnered from this survey, coupled with findings from the 2006 survey, indicate that lawn care professionals could significantly benefit from positioning their services as another way for homeowners to gain additional free time," explains Welge.

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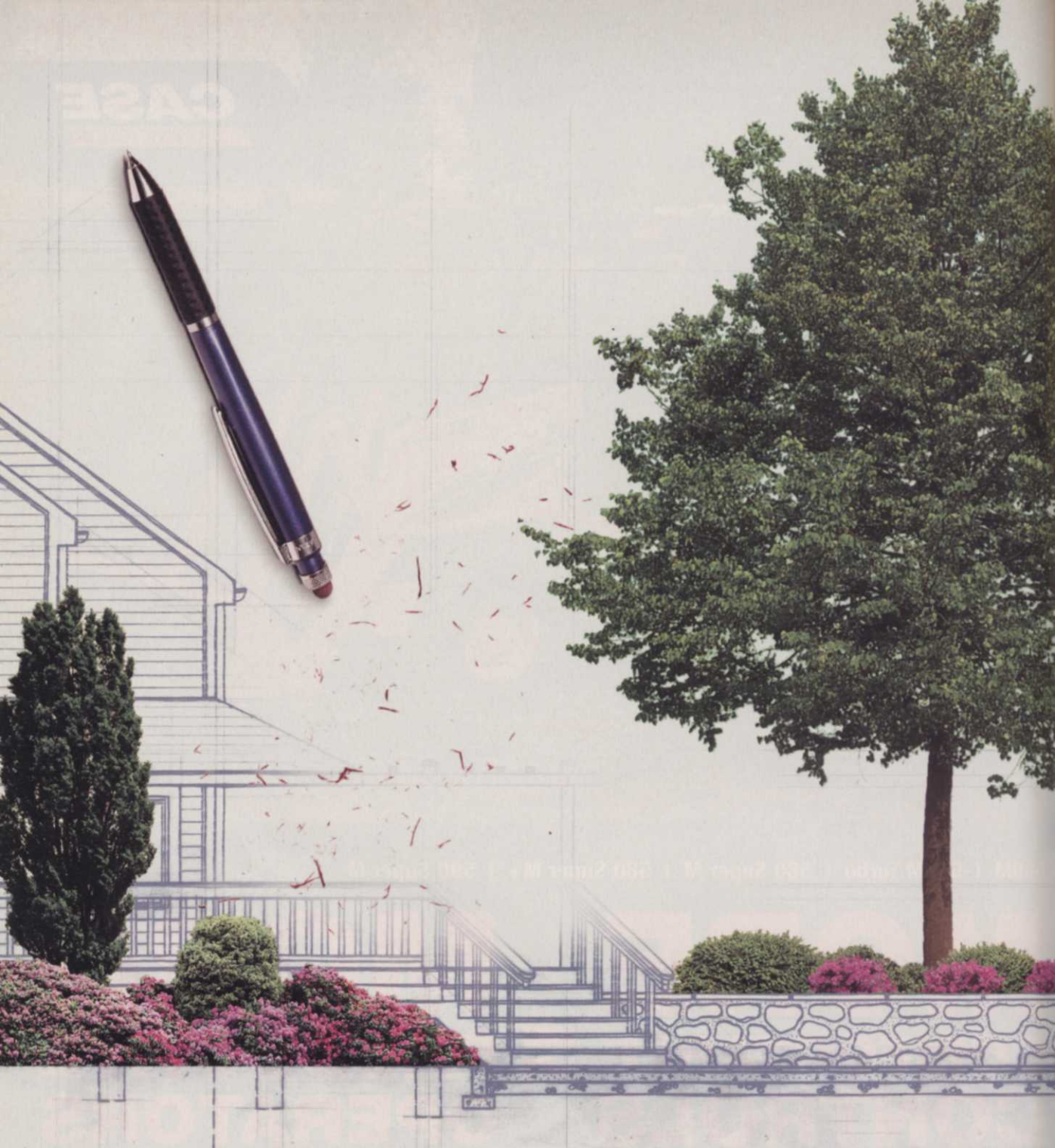
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>> Green Industry executives desire freedom from the confines of the cubicle. They long for fresh air and sunshine, and the irony is the more successful they are in endeavors, the less they revel in the outdoors.

Your Green Industry guide to running a better company

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS / MANAGING EDITOR

Entrepreneurs are a different breed. I remember the first time I heard a business owner use the phrase —“I’ve never had a job in my life.”

It struck me as odd way of describing a career. And I’ve heard that phrase, in some iteration or another, uttered by so many others. That didn’t mean he didn’t work hard. Entrepreneurs, by definition, are among the hardest working people out there – even ones that fail. Hard work is no guarantee of success. But it’s fairly certain that any one who is a success has worked pretty hard.

But I digress.

I’ve thought a lot about the concept of never “having a job.” And by job I think those entrepreneurs mean they’ve never worked for anybody else, they’ve never had a regular – guaranteed – paycheck, and they certainly didn’t start out sitting behind a desk, though, ironically, that is often where they end up. And many others may have started out working for someone else only to realize their true calling was not in answering to someone else.

While entrepreneurs in any industry balk at the idea of answering to someone else or the regimentation of a nine to five life, Green Industry execs take their rebellion one step further. They desire freedom from the confines of the cubicle, longing for fresh air and sunshine. The bittersweet result is, the more successful they are in business, the less they’re able to revel in the outdoors. Someone’s got to make sure payroll is covered, customer complaints are handled, empty positions are filled and the word gets out about the company’s services.

It’s a cliché, but like most clichés, there is an element of truth – you’ve gone from working in your business to working on your business. You’re not riding a mower; you’re not installing plants or pavers; you’re not spraying weeds. You’re sitting behind a desk answering the phone, responding to emails, juggling finances, and dealing with customers, employee and vendors, managing inventory, hiring, planning, and the list goes on. And you could use some help.

That’s where *Landscape Management’s* 2008 business planner comes in. On the following pages we’ve collected the wisdom of some of the industry’s experts, some of them your peers. The Business Planner is conveniently divided into the four sections that you’ve told us represent some of your biggest challenges – operations, branding, customers and employees.

No, it’s not the only information you’ll ever need to run your company. No guide could (or should) ever claim to be that. Business is too fluid. But we do offer insights on how to deal with these challenges.

Every day we talk with business owners running companies large and small. The problems they face are universal. The only difference is the scale. *Landscape Management’s* 2008 Business Planner serves as a resource in dealing with these challenges.

Within the pages of this special section you will find information that will make you a better owner, a better manager and a better businessperson. It’s about continuous improvement, making your business, and yourself, a little bit better every day.



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Challenger Industries manufactures EnvyLawn® artificial grass for applications that include landscaping, playgrounds, putting greens, daycares and more.
> CIRCLE # 180 > AD PG 127 > PROFILE PG 151

CONSULTING

Rich Arlington & Associates is a consulting and expert witness practice with 20 years of experience, working to better serve you and the industry.
> CIRCLE # 117 > AD PG 43 > PROFILE PG 143

FENCING

Ameristar® has been manufacturing quality fence products since 1982. With national distribution through installation partners and stocking distributors, Ameristar has become the benchmark for ornamental steel, aluminum and Montage® fusion-welded E-coated all-terrain fences for residential, commercial, industrial and high-security applications.
> CIRCLE # 179 > AD PG 125 > PROFILE PG 141

FRANCHISING

US Lawns is a franchise commercial landscape maintenance company with more than 150 offices open across the United States.
> CIRCLE # 165 > AD PG 101 > PROFILE PG 205

IRRIGATION PRODUCTS

DIG Corporation offers a full line of drip irrigation products and accessories. In addition we strive to provide the industry with the most state-of-the-art, alternative power controllers including our ambient light powered, LEIT controllers.
> CIRCLE # 166 > AD PG 103 > PROFILE PG 156

Hunter Industries is among the world's leading manufacturers of irrigation equipment for turf, landscape and golf. Hunter produces water efficient products for residential and commercial use, including pop-up gear driven rotors, spray sprinklers, valves, controllers, central controllers and weather sensors.
> CIRCLE # 123 > AD PG 53 > PROFILE PG 175

As the leading manufacturer of irrigation products and services, **Rain Bird** offers the industry's broadest range of irrigation products for farms, golf courses, sports arenas, public parks, commercial developments and homes in more than 130 countries.
> CIRCLE # 136 > AD PG 67 > PROFILE PG 195

MOWERS & EQUIPMENT

Agri-Fab has been the leader in the lawn and garden attachment business for over 25 years. A few of our core products include lawn spreaders, aerators, de-thatchers, carts and sweepers.
> CIRCLE # 139 > AD PG 71 > PROFILE PG 140

Case Construction Equipment sells and supports the world's No. 1 loader/backhoes, excavators, wheel loaders, crawler dozers, skid steers, compact track loaders, rough-terrain forklifts, motor graders, compaction rollers and articulated trucks. Through Case dealers, customers have access to a true professional partner.
> CIRCLE # 110 > AD PG 19 > PROFILE PG 149

Caterpillar offers for sale and rental through dealers and The Cat Rental Store a complete line of compact machines for landscape construction — skid steer

loaders, compact track loaders, mini excavators, compact wheel loaders, small dozers and more.
> CIRCLE # 112 > AD PG 23 > PROFILE PG 150

Chemical Containers Inc. is the largest and most diverse manufacturer/distributor in the southeast United States for all liquid handling product and equipment.
> CIRCLE # 127 > AD PG 58 > PROFILE PG 152

Corona Clipper Inc. is the premier provider of forged quality pruning and long handle tools for the retail, consumer and professional markets. Corona's legendary reputation is built on classic design, handcrafted forged quality, and superior customer service.
> CIRCLE # 138 > AD PG 69 > PROFILE PG 153

Cub Cadet Commercial dominates turf challenges with its proven lineup of premium outdoor power equipment. From commercial riding and walk-behind mowers, turf application and maintenance products, handheld equipment, compact utility tractors and utility vehicles, Cub Cadet Commercial has engineered your total solution.
> CIRCLE # 159 > AD PG 91 > PROFILE PG 154

Dimex LLC is one of the leading manufacturers in North America for professional-grade landscape edging and paver restraint systems. All of our products are manufactured from high quality materials that are compounded in-house to the most stringent specifications.
> CIRCLE # 182 > AD PG 131 > PROFILE PG 157

continued on page 28

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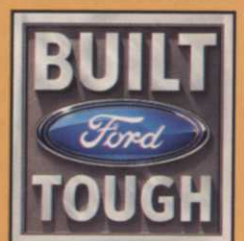


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E-Z TRENCH has been manufacturing walk behind trenchers since 1982. We are family owned and operated. E-Z TRENCH machines are manufactured in the U.S. and engineered for quality and durability.

> CIRCLE # 115 > AD PG 39 > PROFILE PG 160

Emak USA, manufacturer of Efco power equipment is located in Wooster, OH. Manufactured in Northern Italy, Efco power equipment demonstrates the highest standards when it comes to quality, durability and design, and is backed by the industry-leading consumer warranty.

> CIRCLE # 162 > AD PG 97 > PROFILE PG 161

Engrave-A-Crete is the world's premier manufacturer of decorative concrete cutting equipment. We offer the tools and resources for you to easily learn the art of concrete engraving.

> CIRCLE # 190 > AD PG 219 > PROFILE PG 162

Ferris Industries' extensive commercial mower line promises a perfect fit with a wide range of rugged walk-behinds, reliable three-wheel riders and innovative zero-turn mowers ranging from 44- to 72-in. Our exclusive suspension systems paired with powerful engines achieve maximum productivity.

> CIRCLE # 148 > AD PG 81 > PROFILE PG 166

The **Finn Corporation** is a leading manufacturer of lawn, landscape and erosion control development work, with products lines including HydroSeeders, Bark Blowers, Straw Blowers and the Finn Hydroseeding Consumable Products.

> CIRCLE # 177 > AD PG 121 > PROFILE PG 167

GMC engineers continue to craft smart, powerful vehicles—like the Sierra and

Savana—designed with your business needs in mind.

> PROFILE PG 168

The Grasshopper Co. manufactures a complete line of FrontMount and MidMount True ZeroTurn mowers. The company's products are engineered for comfort, speed and durability while delivering a manicured cut. Turf renovation and snow removal implements turn these mowers into year-round grounds maintenance machines.

> CIRCLE # 146 > AD PG 79 > PROFILE PG 170

Mulch Mule by **Green Industry Innovators** offers a variety of Mules for your mulching and material transport and distribution needs. The Mule can double or triple your current mulching capabilities without increasing personnel.

> CIRCLE # 119, 186 > AD PG 47, 136 > PROFILE PG 171

International Truck and Engine is a leading producer of medium trucks, heavy trucks, severe service vehicles, mid-range diesel engines, parts and service. Our products, parts and services are sold through a network of nearly 1,000 dealer outlets in the United States, Canada, Brazil, and Mexico and more than 60 dealers in 90 countries throughout the world.

> CIRCLE # 101 > AD PG CV2 > PROFILE PG 176

The John Deere Worldwide Commercial & Consumer Equipment Division

manufactures and distributes a full line of lawn care products for residential, commercial, and golf and turf applications.

> CIRCLE # 199 > AD PG CV4 > PROFILE PG 177

Kawasaki is a manufacturer of commercial grade engines primarily used in the landscape industry. In addition Kawasaki manufactures and sells commercial grade

handheld power equipment through our dealer network.

> CIRCLE # 189 > AD PG 217 > PROFILE PG 178

KIOTI Tractor specializes in the sales and service of quality compact and utility tractors, attachments and implements.

> CIRCLE # 152 > AD PG 85 > PROFILE PG 180

LT Rich Products manufactures stand-on fertilizer/spray systems, aerators and turf renovators for the commercial lawn care industry. All units are zero-turn and feature a pump/wheel motor transmission. Sprayers feature all stainless-steel construction with large fertilizer and liquid spraying capacity.

> CIRCLE # 185 > AD PG 135 > PROFILE PG 181

Marsan Turf & Irrigation Supply Inc. offers a complete line of wholesale turf and irrigation products — everything you need to get the job done right, at the most competitive prices.

> CIRCLE # 122, 135 > AD PG 52, 66 > PROFILE PG 184

New Holland Construction is a global, full-line construction equipment brand. The company brings together the strength and resources of its worldwide commercial, industrial and finance organizations.

> CIRCLE # 121 > AD PG 51 > PROFILE PG 188

Rack'em Mfg. is dedicated to providing the highest quality accessory products to the landscape industry, including open and enclosed equipment racks, grass catchers, sully, Magnum wheel lock, the new Double Barrel tailgate assist and more.

> CIRCLE # 137 > AD PG 68 > PROFILE PG 194

Shindaiwa Inc. markets its full line of handheld power equipment around the world. Shindaiwa products meet the

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highest industry standards for quality and performance, typically with more engine power and less weight than other comparable units.

> CIRCLE # 109, 191, 197 > AD PG 12, 220, 224
> PROFILE PG 199

TAS Industries Inc. provides the most efficient means of trimming grass away from sprinkler heads and valve box covers with 10 models of the TAS Trimmer.

> CIRCLE # 147, 164 > AD PG 80, 100 > PROFILE PG 202

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> CIRCLE # 156 > AD PG 89 > PROFILE PG 204

Vermeer Manufacturing Co. manufactures a full line of horizontal directional drilling systems, compact excavators, mini skid-steer loaders, pneumatic boring systems, track and utility trenchers, tub and horizontal grinders, tree equipment and agricultural products.

> CIRCLE # 144 > AD PG 75 > PROFILE PG 206

Walker Manufacturing is an independent, family-owned company producing commercial-grade riding mowers since 1980.

> CIRCLE # 114, 195 > AD PG 37, 224 > PROFILE PG 210

Since 1981, **Wright Manufacturing** has been manufacturing mowers designed by lawn care professionals for lawn care professionals. With a wide range of models, a Wright's just right for every job.

> CIRCLE # 149 > AD PG 83 > PROFILE PG 213

OFFICE EQUIPMENT

OfficeMax is a leader in both business-to-business and retail office products distribution.

> AD PG 33-34 > PROFILE PG 190

RETAINING WALL SYSTEMS

After over 20 years, **Keystone Retaining Wall Systems Inc.** continues to set the standard for excellence and innovation within the segmental retaining wall industry. Symbolizing cutting-edge design, performance and aesthetics, Keystone provides complete site solutions for all applications.

> CIRCLE # 184 > AD PG 133 > PROFILE PG 179

Tensar International Corp. improves property values by providing technology-driven site solutions for common development problems such as grade changes requiring retaining walls, and poor soil conditions affecting the cost of roadways, parking lots, and building structures.

> CIRCLE # 188 > AD PG 138 > PROFILE PG 203

VERSA-LOK is the original solid, pinned segmental retaining wall system. With seven versatile systems from which to choose — Standard, Cobble, Accent, Mosaic, Square Foot, Brute and Bronco — if you can design it, you can build it with VERSA-LOK.

> CIRCLE # 172 > AD PG 111 > PROFILE PG 207

SEED

Oregon Fine Fescue and Tall Fescue

Commissions promote quality Oregon-grown turf and seed through advertising and trade shows, and conducts research on behalf of Oregon fine fescue and tall fescue seed growers.

> CIRCLE # 102 > AD PG 1 > PROFILE PG 191

SNOW & ICE EQUIPMENT

THE BOSS Snowplow has made snowplowing efficient and easy with products that set new industry standards. All products are manufactured in an approved ISO 9001:2000-registered facility and are available through a nationwide network of distributors.

> CIRCLE # 171 > AD PG 109 > PROFILE PG 148

Curtis Industries LLC is a designer and manufacturer of snow & ice equipment, including snowplows for pickup trucks, tractors and skid steer loaders, and a full line of salt and sand spreaders.

> CIRCLE # 187 / AD PG 137 / PROFILE PG 155

Meyer Products is a leading manufacturer of highly reliable snow and ice control systems. Meyer's product innovations and industry knowledge have been making transportation in America safer and more convenient since the day we invented snowplows more than 80 years ago.

> CIRCLE # 176 > AD PG 119 > PROFILE PG 185

Pro-Tech Manufacturing & Distribution has been the nation's leader in commercial snow removal attachments for over 10 years. We have a commitment and focus on researching and developing products that will continually make you more profitable and efficient in your snow contracting business.

> CIRCLE # 134, 157 > AD PG 65, 112 > PROFILE PG 193

SOFTWARE

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> CIRCLE # 193 > AD PG 223 > PROFILE PG 159

QXpress by **Alocet Inc.** is the scheduling software of choice for field service companies using QuickBooks.

> PROFILE PG 173

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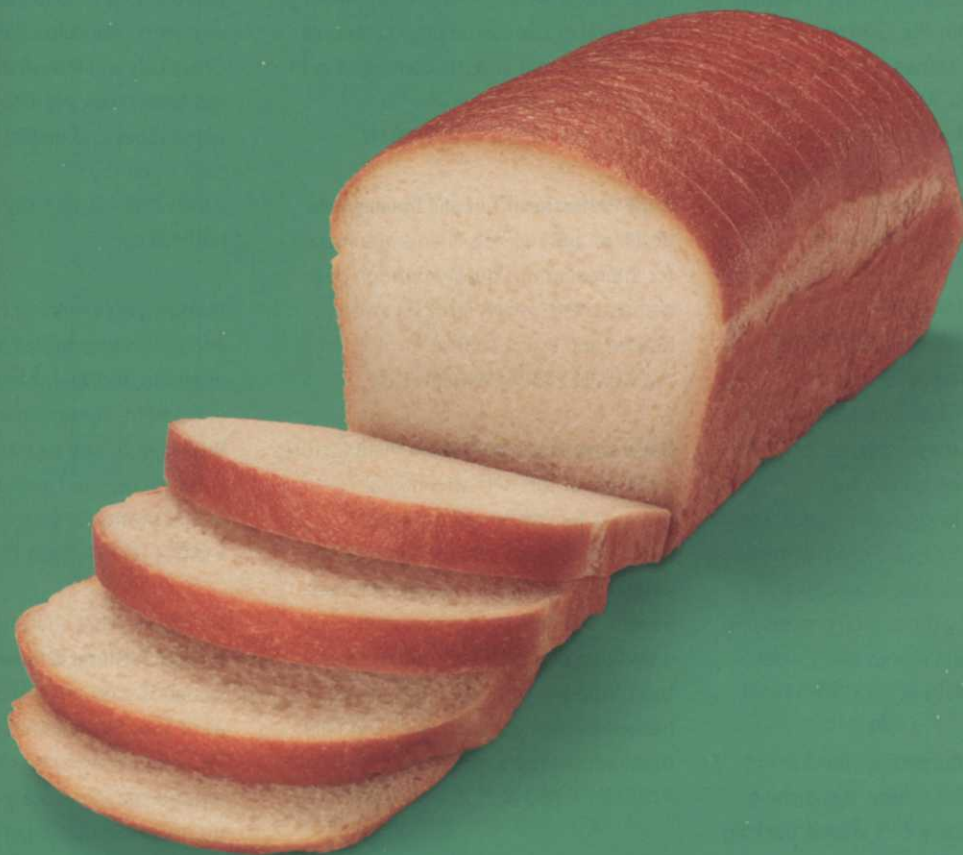
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continued from page 30

Communicate with your clients efficiently and effectively with the EARTHSCAPES landscape design software. **Visual Impact Imaging's** EARTHSCAPES software offers high-resolution photo imaging, site plan designer, diverse plant library, estimator and FREE technical support.

> CIRCLE # 174 > AD PG 115 > PROFILE PG 208

TIME & ATTENDANCE / FLEET MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Exaktime eliminated inaccurate handwritten timecards with the portable, weatherproof, battery-powered JobClock System designed exclusively for the construction and landscaping trades. The award-winning JobClock System provides you with 100% accurate attendance reports, simplifying the payroll process and saving you time and money every week.

> CIRCLE # 118, 196 > AD PG 15, 224 > PROFILE PG 163

Increase your accountability, productivity, efficiency, customer service, dispatching and profitability using GPS vehicle tracking systems. **GPS Fleet Solutions** specializes in consulting with customers to match GPS fleet tracking technology to client needs.

> CIRCLE # 160 > AD PG 93 > PROFILE PG 169

Modeco Systems LLC is a Midwest-based firm and a developer of business efficiency systems. The latest product, TimeScope™, is designed for gathering employee and job time as a mobile time tracking system. Paper timesheets and manual data entry are both eliminated. "It's about time!"

> CIRCLE # 175 > AD PG 117 > PROFILE PG 187

TURF & PEST MANAGEMENT PRODUCTS

Arysta LifeScience North America turf & ornamentals seeks to provide the green industry with continuous innovation and

the development of superior turfgrass product technology and service. Our focus and growth is founded on meeting the needs of our customers, our people, the environment and the communities in which we live and work.

> CIRCLE # 126 > AD PG 57 > PROFILE PG 144

BASF Professional Turf and Ornamentals develops and markets chemical solutions for improving turf quality through pest management, which includes weed, disease and insect control.

> CIRCLE # 103 > AD PG 2 > PROFILE PG 145

Bayer Environmental Science manufactures a full line of turf and ornamental products for use on golf courses, home lawns, sports fields, commercial landscapes, nurseries and greenhouses. Bayer Environmental Science continues a tradition of innovative research and top-of-the-line professional products, backed by highly trained sales and field development representatives.

> CIRCLE # 111, 155 > AD PG 20, 87 > PROFILE PG 146

Bell Labs is a world leader in pest control products and manufacturer of Talpid and Rodent Rid. From initial product inception and development to manufacturing and subsequent support in product use, Bell focuses on quality, functionality and innovation.

> CIRCLE # 104, 105, 120 > AD PG 5, 8, 48-49 > PROFILE PG 147

Dow AgroSciences' professional turf, ornamental and technical products for golf courses, lawn care and landscape contracting, include specialty herbicides such as Dimension, Gallery, Snapshot and Spotlight; specialty insecticides such as Dursban; and specialty fungicides such as Eagle 20EW.

> AD PG 29, 31 > PROFILE PG 158

FMC Corporation is a global, diversified chemical company that employs approximately 5,000 people in three segments: Agricultural Products, Specialty Chemicals and Industrial Chemicals. FMC has been providing innovative solutions, applications and quality products for more than a century.

> CIRCLE # 128, 130, 132 > AD PG 59A, 61A, 63A > PROFILE PG 164

Horizon has everything for the landscape and golf course professional including irrigation, fertilizer, landscape, erosion, equipment, lighting, ponds and more. Buying from one supplier saves time, reduces costs and increases efficiency for higher profits for your company.

> CIRCLE # 163 > AD PG 99 > PROFILE PG 172

No matter what challenges you face, **Howard Fertilizer & Chemical Co.** has solutions. You can rely on Howard for all of your fertilizer and chemical needs. Our proprietary, state-of-the art, heat-infused coating process assures that our products are always perfectly blended for maximum performance and economy. After 75 years in the Southeast, no one knows the land and climate dynamics better than Howard.

> CIRCLE # 167 > AD PG 104A-105B > PROFILE PG 174

With extensive product selections and new state-of-the-art nitrogen sources, **LebanonTurf** offers the professional turf manager a product for almost every situation.

> PROFILE PG 182

The **Liquid Fence Company** makes earth- and family-friendly animal and insect repellents, and plant growth accelerators. The effective and economical product

continued on page 35

continued from page 32

line includes Liquid Fence Deer & Rabbit Repellent, Liquid Fence Mole & Vole Repellent, Liquid Fence Goose Repellent, Liquid Fence Snake Repellent and Speedy Grow Plant Growth Accelerator.

> CIRCLE # 181 > AD PG 129 > PROFILE PG 183

Nufarm Turf & Specialty manufactures and formulates leading plant protection products for weed and disease control. Dedicated to the professional turf market, Nufarm serves the golf, residential and commercial turf, forestry, aquatic and vegetation management markets.

> CIRCLE # 108 > AD PG 11 > PROFILE PG 189

PBI/Gordon Corp. is a national leader in specialty pest management products services, including SpeedZone, Surge and Q4 herbicides, Trimec herbicides, Embark and Atrimmec plant growth regulators, and Azatrol EC insecticide.

> CIRCLE # 113 > AD PG 25 > PROFILE PG 192

Quali-Pro professional turf and ornamental products feature post-patent herbicides, fungicides, insecticides and plant growth regulators.

> CIRCLE # 124, 125 > AD PG 54, 55 > PROFILE PG 165

The **Scotts** Landscaper PRO series was developed exclusively for the professional landscape market and provides landscapers with a highly reliable and cost in use source of turf and ornamental nutrition, all backed by Scotts' heritage of plant nutrition experience.

> CIRCLE # 145 > AD PG 77 > PROFILE PG 197

SePRO Corp. is an industry leading, specialty agrichemical company headquartered in Carmel, IN. It provides plant protection and plant management products and services that fit specialized

niche markets, such as aquatic vegetation management, ornamental and turf management and tree growth regulation.

> CIRCLE # 141 > AD PG 73 > PROFILE PG 198

For lawn care operators, **Syngenta** offers industry-leading products for weed and disease prevention and control, and growth regulators to help manage turf. Syngenta also offers lawn-care operators a variety of resources and services to help them manage their operations more efficiently and profitably.

> CIRCLE # 116 > AD PG 40-41 > PROFILE PG 200

Target Specialty Products is the West's leading wholesale distributor of pest management products, fertilizers, application equipment, safety equipment, services and education. Target is headquartered in Santa Fe Springs, CA, with multiple branch offices in Arizona, California, Nevada and Oregon.

> CIRCLE # 173 > AD PG 113 > PROFILE PG 201

SUPERthrive is a proprietary formulated invention by the **Vitamin Institute**. This formula is a highly concentrated liquid

which is understood to have normalizing effects that bring out maximum potentials of any kind of plant.

> CIRCLE # 192 > AD PG 221 > PROFILE PG 209

TRADE SHOW

Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show, scheduled for January 2008, at Chicago's McCormick Place, features equipment, products, and services from nearly 600 exhibitors, educational conferences before and during the show and more.

> CIRCLE # 178 > AD PG 123 > PROFILE PG 186

WATER FEATURES

Aquascape's full product line includes ecosystem ponds, Pondless® Waterfalls, decorative water features and wetland/environmental systems.

> CIRCLE # 151, 169 > AD PG 84, 107 > PROFILE PG 142

Rock & Water Creations is the United States' largest manufacturer and wholesaler of GFRC reinforced concrete replicated boulders and rock cliff panels to the pool, spa, landscaping and general construction trades.

> CIRCLE # 140 > AD PG 72 > PROFILE PG 196

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Merger success: Start with the people

The merger of two growing NC-based companies into emerging regional power Ecoscape Solutions shows that two Type-A personalities can partner **BY SUE BROKAW GUARD**

FIND
OUT

The first steps
in the merger
process

Why it's vital
to assess
personalities

How to prepare
your teams for
change

Merging two successful landscape companies that serve essentially the same geographical markets offers great opportunity. This is especially true when they serve different segments of the industry. But mergers are risky for a lot of reasons, not the least being that the resulting company always takes on a new personality. An equally large challenge arises when the owners of the two merging companies possess dynamic, hands-on, entrepreneurial personalities.

Tony Pope and Chip Eleazer confess to being blessed (or cursed) with Type-A personalities. Fortunate for them they don't

share identical business obsessions. Pope is the acknowledged visionary and Eleazer the structured, detail-oriented partner.

"It's a good thing if you can make it work," says Eleazer of the successful launch and subsequent growth of Ecoscape Solutions Group, headquartered in Charlotte, NC. The 2-year-old company resulted from the partnership that he and Pope agreed upon when the two men merged their respective companies — Pope's Countryside with Eleazer's Greenlawn Landscape & Irrigation. They joined forces in a drive to become one of the major landscape services providers in the U.S. Southeast.

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TONY POPE, LEFT, AND CHIP ELEAZER JOINED THEIR COMPANIES IN 2005 TO FORM ECOSCAPE SOLUTIONS, HEADQUARTERED IN CHARLOTTE. AND THEY HAVEN'T LOOKED BACK SINCE.



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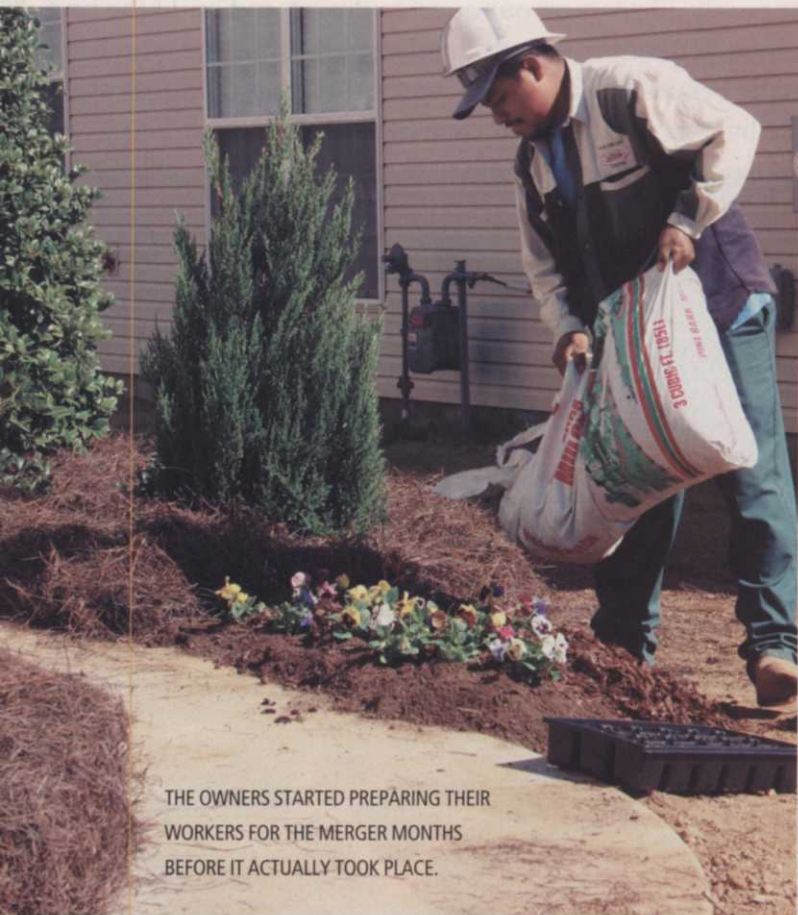


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Circle 114



THE OWNERS STARTED PREPARING THEIR WORKERS FOR THE MERGER MONTHS BEFORE IT ACTUALLY TOOK PLACE.

continued from page 36

Today, Ecoscape Solutions Group has locations in Charlotte, NC (corporate), Fort Mill and Hilton Head, SC, two locations in Atlanta and yet another opening soon in Raleigh, NC. With about 400 full-time employees it is planning to finish the '07 season with about \$34 million in revenues.

"The biggest challenge in bringing the two companies together was making sure that the Tony and I complemented each other," recalls Eleazer. "We had to determine if we could get along first. Then we began the process of laying out each of our responsibilities within the new company. Obviously we didn't want any overlapping of responsibilities. Finally, we needed to assure each other that our long-term plans were the same."

The two men met for the first time in 1995. It wasn't a hugfest.

After one of Pope's neighbors hired Eleazer's

company for an irrigation project (instead of hiring Pope's company) a Greenlawn employee damaged a utility line leading onto Pope's property. Eleazer wasted no time. He saw to it that damage was fixed pronto. That impressed Pope. Soon the two men began communicating on more friendly terms.

"We'd meet frequently over breakfast or lunch to discuss our respective business challenges," says Eleazer. "One day in 2004 we agreed that sharing notes and experiences could better serve our customers if we became partners and formed one company."

By any measure, it was an ambitious plan. The two companies shared little in common apart from their commitment to providing clients with quality service.

Pope's Countryside specialized in production grading and landscape construction for national and regional builders. By contrast Greenlawn Landscape & Irrigation specialized in irrigation and high-end custom landscaping and hardscapes.

After informally agreeing to merge in 2004, the two men began preparing their respective companies for the change.

"It became a process of learning each other's culture and how each company did things. We also began identifying the good things that each company did that we could keep for the new company," explains Eleazer. "Then we had to make sure that we put the management of each company into the right places in the new company."

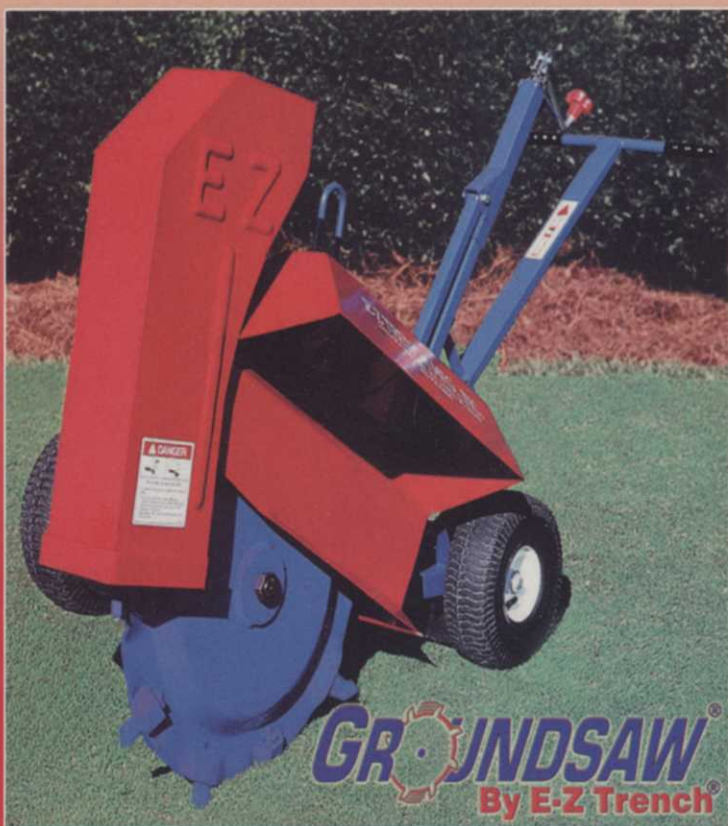
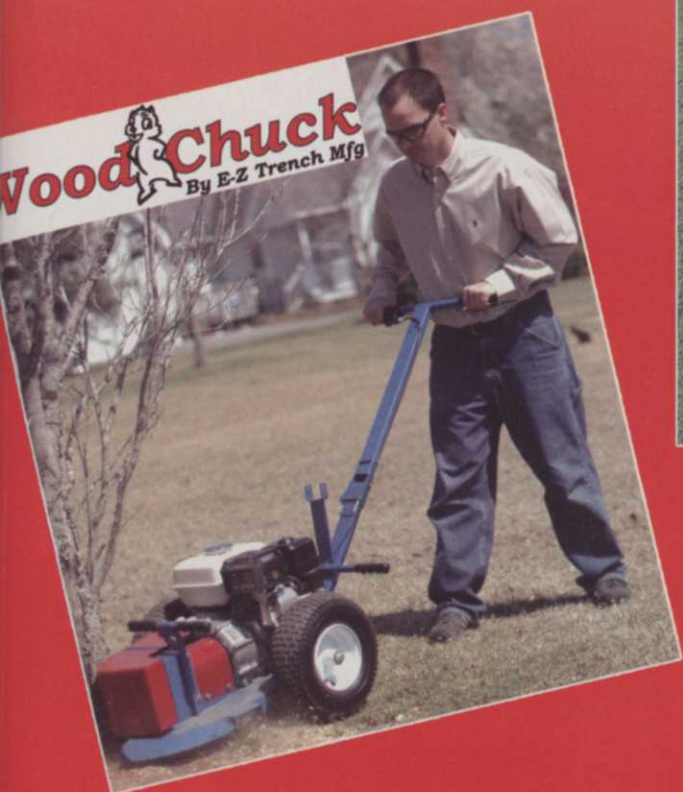
He says the acclimation process took a full six months and continued even after the companies officially merged in January 2005.

Forging the two companies, and their complimentary services, into a single entity not only formed a platform to streamline operations (one of the goals of the merger), but it also gave clients access to a broader range of landscape services, with a new emphasis on landscape design/build, irrigation, turf maintenance and landscape lighting.

With significant operations in three states — North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia — the partners admittedly have their hands full. And it keeps them on the move. In fact, both men hold pilots licenses, and both men love to spend time in the air. Eleazer captains his 4-passenger Cirrus SR22

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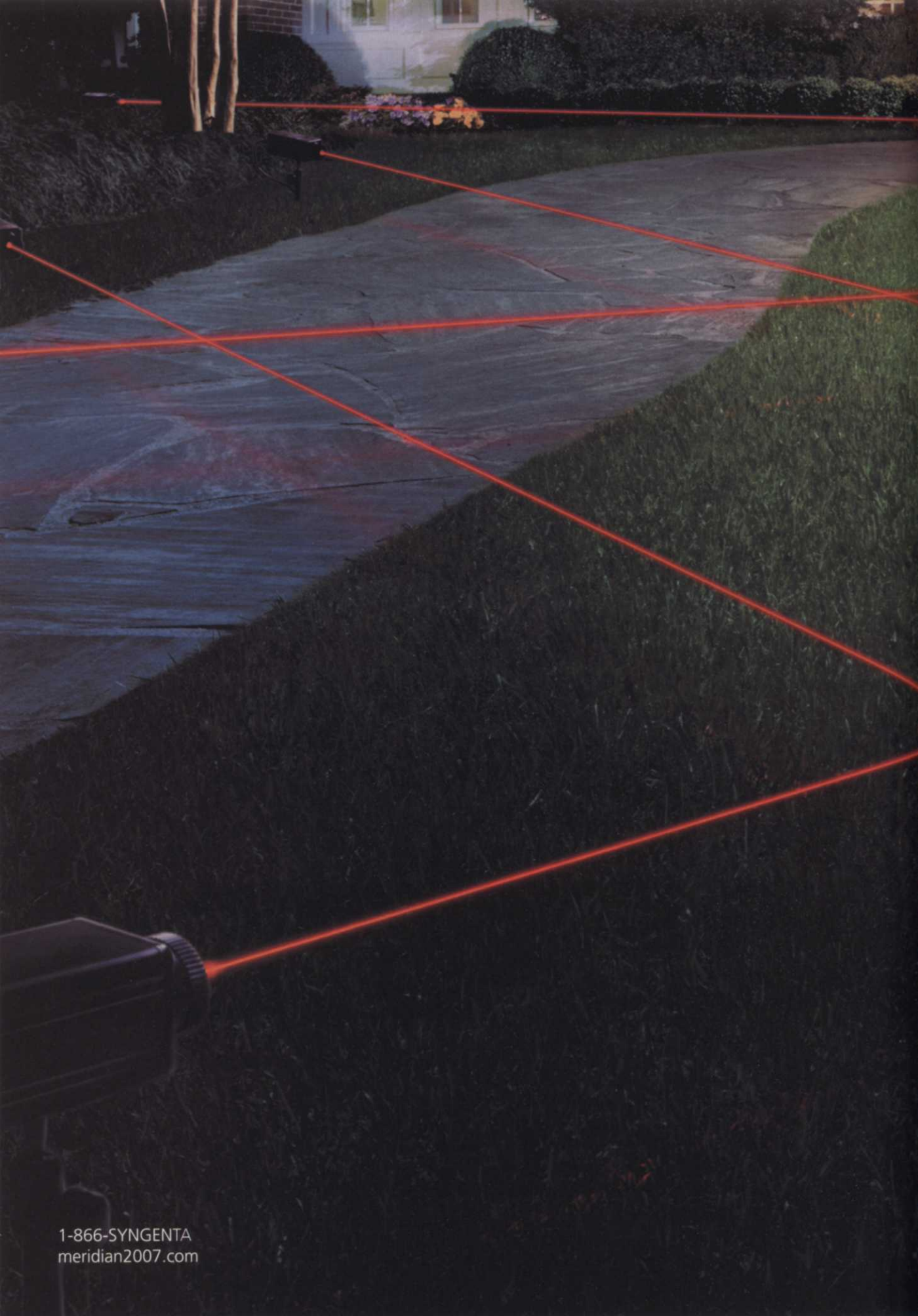
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continued from page 38

at least once a week to locations outside of Charlotte to keep track of operations at its several sites.

"I can get to Atlanta (from Charlotte) in about an hour and 15 minutes," he says. "That saves me eight to 10 hours a week in driving time."

The partners rely upon a non-stop flow of information from their widespread operations, and they continually monitor a stream of regionalized data — everything from housing and commercial construction starts to regional occupancy rates.

"Every crew leader and company officer has a hand-held, wireless Blackberry. The client can key in or email us for fast resolution, be it a service problem

or a question on the project, no matter the time of day," says Eleazer. It also allows managers to communicate more easily with other supervisors and company officers, allowing management to promptly respond to any customer concerns, shifts in their markets. Or, just as importantly, to take advantage of any trends or opportunities that develop.

Pope and Eleazer don't rely solely upon their knowledge to stay on top of operations. They have formed an owners' advisory team comprised of professional advisors and top senior managers to join them in the decision making. They meet for about four hours every two weeks to review company financials and discuss its various markets.

"If the advisory team as a whole disagree with Tony's decision or my decision, we go with the team's vote," says Eleazer.

The owners are convinced that the growth and continued success of their company lies in the quality of the people it employs. The company hires for specific personalities and skill sets — and very carefully. Each prospective manager must take a

THE MERGER OF COUNTRYSIDE AND GREENLAWN LANDSCAPE AND IRRIGATION IN RESULTED IN A MUCH LARGER COMPANY WITH A BROADER RANGE OF LANDSCAPE EXPERTISE AND SERVICE OFFERINGS.



personality test to gauge his or her aptitude for the position he or she is seeking.

"The test shows their strong points, and we certainly expect employees who work with clients to possess understanding and possess the right attitude in working with our office and on site," explains Eleazer.

Once on the company "team" employees are given latitude to work cooperatively, both in helping meet and solve each department or project's challenges, and in celebrating each group's success. Employees are also urged serve on committees, a Customer Relations committee, for example. Each committee seeks better, more efficient ways to accomplish company's goals as well as their own. They are focused as much on continuous improvement as they are on problem solving.

In addition, Ecoscape instituted a Hispanic leadership team for its large non-native labor force. Participants meet monthly discuss to common concerns. A bilingual consultant aids and guides them.

"Our employees are our greatest asset. They're the lifeblood of our company," insists Eleazer, adding, "don't be afraid to hire the best and treat them well, even if you pay them a little more. This man or woman is a bigger and better investment than equipment or any other part of the business."

"We have growing pains, just as most big companies do," says Eleazer. "But we find the challenges and their solutions energizing. We meet frequently with the heads of each division and discuss finding and keeping good people and buying equipment. We provide a stringent orientation program for new employees and thoroughly train them for their jobs."

Eleazer says the quality of their employees and their ability to attract and incorporate new talent will determine the ultimate success of the merger of

companies that formed Ecoscape Solutions Group.

It's all about the people, he emphasizes. ■

The author is a freelance writer who lives and works in Cleveland, OH. Contact her at neebrokaw@yahoo.com.



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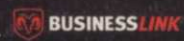
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FIND
OUT

Why you
must change
and adapt
to changing
markets

Four customized
business models

How models
should fit
an owner's
personality

Select the right business model

To be successful (and balanced) one expert says you have to create a business model that reflects your personality

BY RON HALL / EDITOR IN CHIEF

The single biggest challenge for owners of small businesses is creating a business model that works specifically for them.

Sounds self-evident doesn't it?

Apparently, it's not that easy, and it's the reason why people like Greg Wittstock, founder and CEO of AquaScape Inc., based in St. Charles, IL, command such a presence within the contractor market.

His success in building the \$65-million water feature supply company in a little more than 10 years, serves as an example and, perhaps, an object of envy to contractors who rely upon his pond supplies and installation/maintenance systems to serve their customers.

Wittstock, who marches to the beat of his own business drum, grabbed the attention of the 1,000-plus contractors at his company's week-long Pondemonium this past July. His keynote address to the pond builders involved Wittstock acting as equal parts showman, pitchman and business consultant.

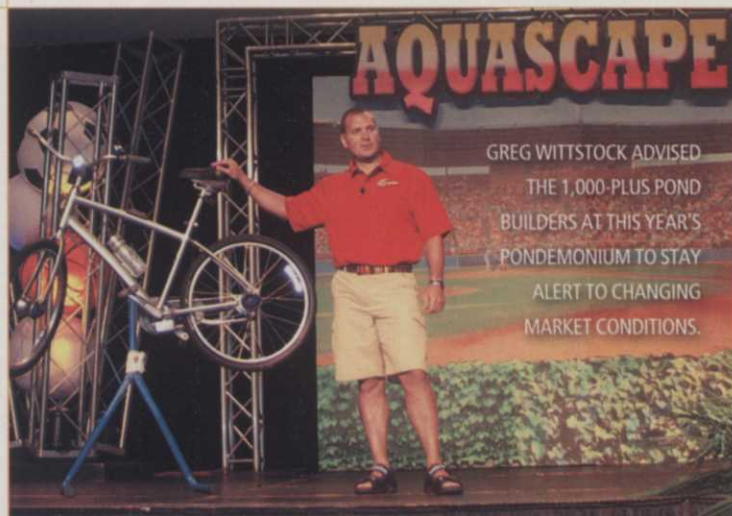
He prefaced his presentation by riding a bicycle to the front stage at the cavernous MegaCenter at the Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, then doing a couple of neat turns in front of the tables jammed with pumped-up pond builders.

The bicycle, a new cruiser-type model, served as the young CEO's metaphor for the need to have your antennae up and tuned to ever-changing market conditions. He pointed out how some bicycle manufacturers foresaw a fundamental shift in that market — fewer hard core enthusiasts and more people just wanting to enjoy neighborhood jaunts — and responded with simpler, easier-to-ride and easier-to-maintain bicycles. He said that bike suppliers are responding to the new "sweet spot" in the market by manufacturing simple "coaster-type" bikes to fit the lifestyle of today's leisure-loving consumers.

They realize that they're selling "the lifestyle" and not just products, a lesson that landscape contractors should take to heart, as well. His core message was that each owner — to be successful and happy in business — must create the particular type of business model that suits him or her.

He gave four examples of typical business models, none of which is inherently better than any other. What's important is that the owner selects one that suits his or her personality.

1 The "hands-on" model is where the owner does just about everything, including much of the production. Its advantages are that there are few people to manage, little overhead and



lots of control over each job. Its main disadvantage is that it's basically limited to what the owner can accomplish with his own two hands.

2 The "working with others" model. Your company has some employees; it's bigger than you and a couple buddies, but it's smaller than most others in your market. The owner still wears many hats, including handling accounting and other administrative tasks, or they're handled by his spouse.

3 The "systems-based" approach. The owner sets up the company to run by processes with managers assigned to each department. The owner focuses on marketing and sales, and makes sure that employees are trained and follow the processes.

4 The "strategic" model. The owner has a specific idea of the company's direction, and is very results driven. The owner or management team is always looking for what's next, always reviewing and analyzing the market.

"If you don't design your business, your business will, by default, have a design, and it will be the wrong design," Wittstock says.

Creating a particular business model to fit an owner's personality, abilities and that will provide balance in the owner's life is a much better way to become a successful contractor rather than piling up sales or work just to be adding to the numbers. In other words, concentrate on net profit.

"When I talk to contractors about their businesses, they talk about how many ponds they build or how much they sell," says Wittstock, adding that a much better indication of how they're doing is "how much they will net."

Wittstock says that regardless of the business model or the business climate, contractors can count on one thing never changing — problems.

"All business is," says The Pond Guy, "is overcoming problems." ■

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Circle 119



Wabash Valley Family Sports Center

Vigo Landscaping Scores Big with Mole Business



MARTY HENDRICKS, who with childhood friend Mike Stoffer owns Vigo Landscaping in Terre Haute, Ind., has spent a lifetime in landscaping: Both men did lawn work on the side while Hendricks was working in a plastics factory and Stoffer was a school teacher. They

founded the business eight years ago when they realized they were making more on their “side job Saturdays” than they did all through the week.

Through the years, moles were occasionally an issue for their accounts, but their attitude was that nothing on the market worked — and they were simply too busy to bother investigating any further. However, last year the Vigo crew attended an industry seminar in Evansville, Ind. There, they were introduced to Talpirid Mole Bait from Bell Laboratories.

“At first I thought it was just another gimmick,” Hendricks admits. But his Tenbarge Distributors representative, Andy Oedin, talked him into at least giving it

a try.

“We decided to try it out on a longtime customer, who might give us heck if it didn’t work out, but we knew we wouldn’t lose them,” Stoffer recalls. “We used it, and had great success.”

That happy customer was only the beginning, as Vigo Landscaping “jumped in with both feet” in 2007. Now mole treatment is an important part of the company’s repertoire of services.

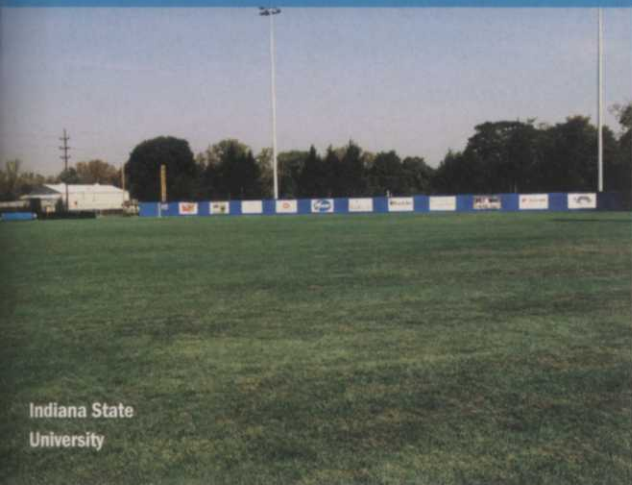
Marketing Wisely

Hendricks notes that one way Vigo Landscaping has built up a mole-customer database was at the Terre Haute Home Builders Association Show in March, which drew about 100,000 attendees. The firm gave away a free mole treatment as a door prize.

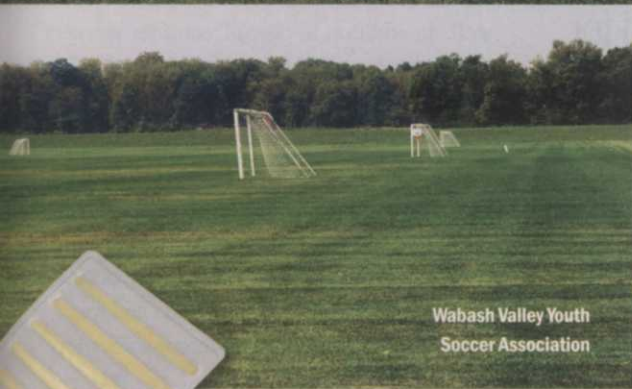
“We put it on display in the booth, and just got inquiry after inquiry,” Hendricks says. “Everyone asked ‘Does that really work?’ We were able to say ‘Yes’ with confidence.

“A lot of our residential base is a result of the new





Indiana State University



Wabash Valley Youth Soccer Association

construction going on in our area," he adds. "People buy homes, but they're working a lot and don't have the time to take care of a problem like this. We do."

In addition to gaining new mole customers (who in turn often become loyal landscape customers), Vigo Landscaping offers mole service to the 370 existing fertilizing accounts it treats four times a year.

"Everyone gets a paper jacket advertising our mole service on their invoice, as well as door hangers describing the service," Hendricks explains, noting both marketing items are pre-addressed if customers want to call or mail for more information. "It doesn't cost us

any extra to mail, yet we get lot of response that way."

Vigo Landscaping extends the service to commercial accounts, as well as to customers of Stoffer's greenhouse, which is owned and operated by Vigo Landscaping. The facility, which is open to the public, maintains a front-window display that explains how Talpirid can save gardens from troublesome mole damage.

The Sport's the Thing

While serving both residential and traditional commercial customers, Vigo Landscaping has built a special reputation for doing athletic fields — everything from area high school baseball diamonds to football stadiums. Among the business' athletic field accounts are the Wabash Valley Family Sports Center, which hosts numerous regional and national cross-country championships; the Indiana State University's two soccer fields, two softball fields and one baseball field; and the soccer fields for the Wabash Valley Youth Soccer Association.

"It's a big account, lots of acreage," Hendricks says of the last account. "We do the caretaking of the fields, which includes about 46 acres of soccer fields — for which we do all the seeding and fertilizing."

All three accounts developed mole problems, leaving behind unsightly mounds.

"They can tunnel 30 or 40 feet a day," Hendricks says. "And they can really dig up the turf. You don't want to have another team come over to play ball and see mole holes. Plus, the tunneling leaves behind a soft area, which is a potential liability: It could throw off a baseball pitch, or one of the runners could twist an ankle."

The Vigo crew was up to the challenge, using Talpirid treatment in every instance. They also did complete renovation work, fertilizing, reseeding and basically erasing all traces of the infestations.

Five-Man Landscape Band

Vigo Landscaping consists of co-owners Marty Hendricks and Mike Stoffer, as well as Brandon Mattox, 21, and retirees Mike Holes and Barry Nicoson. Holes, a former loan officer, had always wanted to work outdoors, while Nicoson had been a factory worker for 41 years and was completely bored two weeks after retiring. Both men learned the ropes quickly; Hendricks notes that his crew is tight-knit and he wouldn't change a thing.

"Other than the mandatory AARP meetings we have once a month being a bit of a pain," he teases, "I may never hire under 55 again!"



4 great labor-saving tips

Adding more workers is not the way to solve your labor problems. Here are strategies to reduce your need for people BY JODY SHILAN

FIND OUT

How every hour spent on job prep saves labor

Why you should mechanize operations

How subcontractors can help

We're all acutely aware of the labor shortage facing our industry, which has been exacerbated by the limitations being placed on the H-2B seasonal guest worker program. This is a real problem for the Green Industry, but one that can be minimized if we approach it from new directions.

There's no relief in sight, at least in the short term. Therefore, wouldn't it be prudent to evaluate our business practices and procedures? Wouldn't it be smart to start exploring ways to make our companies less labor intensive?

As business owners, we're always looking to improve our bottom lines, perhaps by controlling costs, raising prices, developing efficiencies or some combination of the three. What do all

of these factors have in common? They're all linked, in one way or another, to labor.

Labor is the hardest factor in our businesses to estimate, manage and control. It's a very real cost of doing business and an expensive one as well. In addition to payroll, consider workers' compensation, disability insurance and FICA. Additionally, our employees need vehicles, which must be insured, fueled and maintained. That's assuming that we can find legally licensed drivers to transport everyone to work and then to the jobsite.

What if, by changing a few simple business practices, we could minimize the need for extra laborers and make our companies more efficient?

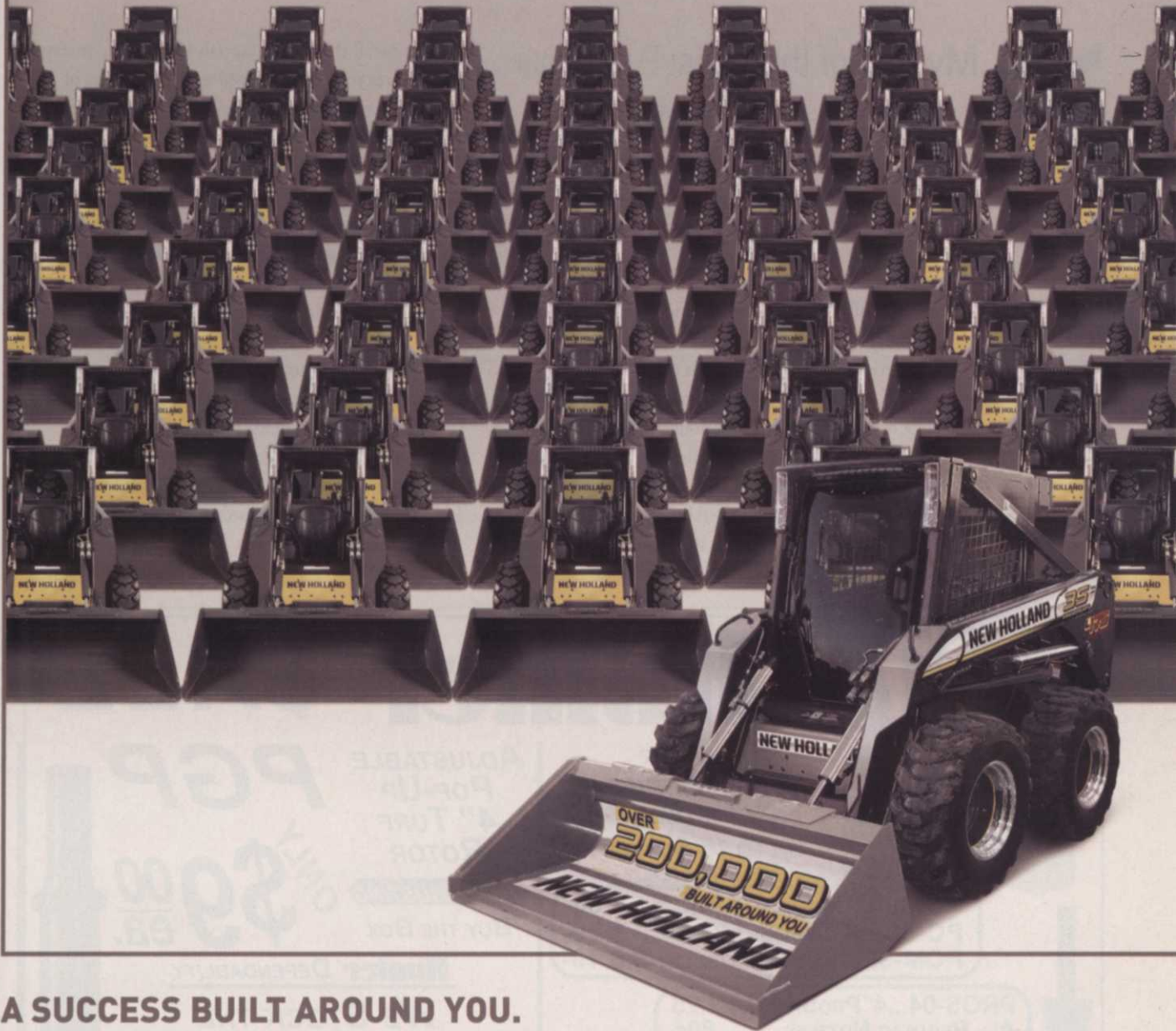
When I ran my design build company 15 years ago, I had a rack truck and trailer, a skid steer with a bucket, pallet forks and a backhoe attachment. I also had just one employee, Mike, who had never worked in the landscape industry before and who did not have a driver's license. Sound familiar?

With some training and proper project planning, Mike soon learned to perform the

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BUILT AROUND YOU



My rule of thumb is: Every hour I spend planning a project saves a minimum of eight hours in the field

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majority of a landscape installation completely by himself. He could demo the site, rip out and remove any hardscape or existing plant material (including stumps) and load everything into the appropriate truck or container. After demolition, he could excavate for new patios, walks, walls or drainage work. He would then import or export any quantity of fill or topsoil, which was trucked by an independent trucking company. Between loads he would rough grade the site and stockpile soil as needed. Next, he

would install the base materials (3/4 clean, quarry process, recycle, etc.) and place all the pallets of pavers or wallstone within an arm's length of their future location.

All materials were delivered by the quarry or mason supply yard. Finally, he would excavate the planting holes, offload the plant material delivered by the nursery and place the plants at appropriate locations in preparation for planting.

One properly trained man performed all of these tasks. There was no secret to how he did it. The job had been planned and materials specified and ordered prior to him arriving on the jobsite.

Another huge benefit to Mike being self-sufficient was that I could meet with new clients, focus on designs and proposals, sell more install work, keep the current project properly staged and manage the business.

continued on page 55

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SURVIVING A LABOR SHORTAGE

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Naturally, there was still plenty of manual labor required to install the pavers, walls drains and plantings, but we always used the skid steer to help. Whether it was to move a pallet over a few feet, backfill our walls and trenches or help us position and plant larger trees, one of us was usually in the machine — typically Mike.

When the project was near completion, we had subcontractors install the irrigation and lighting, blow in the mulch and install the sod. We did a little fine grading here and there and were on our way to the next project.

What can you do to use your labor more effectively? Following are some suggestions.

1 **Have all materials delivered to the site.** Delivery charges are typically minimal, especially compared with the cost of sending a truck with one or two men to pick up materials. Deliveries keep your employees at the jobsite (and not the deli). You can also factor the delivery charges into your estimates and recoup the expense.

2 **Carefully plan and prepare installations.** When possible, meet on the site with the foreman, sales person, designer and homeowner a few days before the job begins. This is often the most productive meeting of the project. My personal rule of thumb is: every hour I spend planning a project saves a minimum of eight hours in the field.

3 **As often as possible, use your equipment to cut down on the number of workers on a job.** You pay for equipment, whether used or not, so why not use it? Unlike labor, your equipment is a relatively fixed cost, so the more you use it the less it actually costs. If your skid steer payment is \$600 a month

and you use it for 15 hours, your cost to own it is \$40 an hour. If you use it more intensely, say 60 hours a month, it is only costing you \$10 an hour.

4 **Use reliable subcontractors.** Depending upon the task, subcontractors often can perform the same work as you more efficiently and for less money. You can still add 10% or 15% to your prices and remain competitive. Another added benefit to using subs is that you aren't using your employees to do labor-intensive, low-profit tasks, such as mulching or sodding. Instead, your employees could be installing a small, one-day planting job that is much more profitable.

Take a hard look at how your company manages labor. Focus more company resources on employee training, education and certification programs. Implement in-house and on-the-job training to improve your company's efficiencies dramatically.

Talk to your equipment suppliers, vendors, employees and industry professionals to see how they can help you better manage this problem. Most will be eager to offer suggestions on what has and has not worked for them.

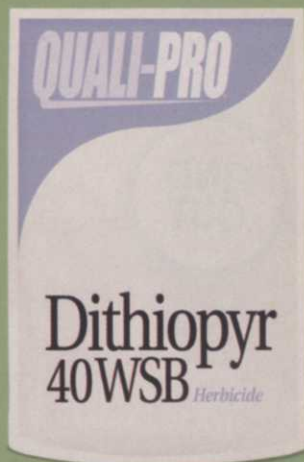
Get involved with the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) and with your local or state trade associations. And finally, support the H-2B program, because no matter how efficient you may become, there will always be a need for qualified laborers. ■



Jody Shilan, who lives in Wyckoff, NJ, is a former landscape contractor and provides design, sales and consulting services for the design/build industry.

Contact him at jshilan@optonline.net. Visit the Web site at www.jodyshilan.com.

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Software selection considerations

There's software to streamline just about every aspect of your business. This overview will guide you to making the best choices. BY WILLIAM FELDMAN

FIND OUT

The full range of software possibilities

Tips to make selection easier

When you might need a dedicated person

Landscape contractors can boost efficiencies and enhance productivity with software solutions that gather, organize, analyze and distribute information generated in the office or in the field.

Using presentation software that quickly and easily generates professional looking full-color plans of proposed work for landscape, garden, deck and patio projects will position your company as competent and professional.

Easy-to-use 2D and 3D CAD-like drawing and presentation programs often include numerous templates to help you develop sketches, general plans and working documentation for artificial and natural landscape and garden designs. Typically, they may include a database of ready-made graphics, growth zones, hardiness maps, plant search and the

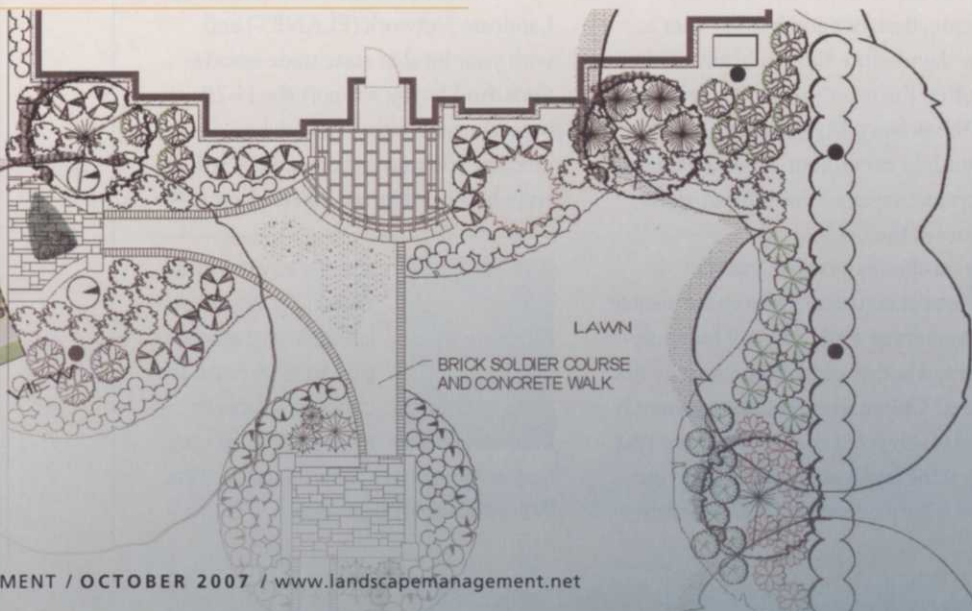
ability to show layers. Working up a project and printing a layout or even a few prospective layouts can help your client understand the scope and the possibilities as well as the benefits of your proposal. Some programs feature "smart" objects that show the projected response to influences of the environment such as shadows and growth patterns and display viewpoints from different angles.

Single-data entry

For back office and field software, landscape contractors can select from programs aimed at service businesses of all types or vertical solutions that target field service businesses or even, in particular, landscape contractors.

Some programs are stand-alone and come

continued on page 58



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TECH SMARTS

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pre-packaged with all the functionalities for a single area of discipline included. Suites of programs combine applications, each addressing a key functionality, and typically feature single-data entry, which enables data entered once to be shared in all. Single-data entry eliminates keyboarding errors and assures that everyone is working with the latest information. Modular solutions allow users to add programs as needs evolve or commitment to computerization grows and also enable the developer to easily add new capabilities.

Many software packages are more full featured than most small businesses initially might want. This is not necessarily a problem. Starting with the core functions is often a good idea because success will build confidence in the program and in the results. And, as you master those parts of the program, you will likely gravitate to adding those functionalities that flow logically and can help your business even more.

One way to maximize productivity from a heavy-duty, heavy-use program, such as estimating, scheduling, accounting or vehicle tracking is to assign dedicated personnel to use it. It is also good policy not to rely on one specialist because if that person leaves the company, there is no backup to immediately pick up the slack, and you can lose continuity.

Take the training

Many developers of vertical market or niche programs offer extensive training options online through tutorials or individually accessed classes or through periodically scheduled interactive classes. Some developers also offer training classes held off-site.

Many software developers offer online demo versions or a fixed trial period during which the user can try the software for free. Take advantage. Once you buy, no matter how daunting a software solution, don't procrastinate in getting started and working out the kinks because many companies offer free assistance only for a limited period of time after activation or purchase.

If your field personnel are equipped with laptops or handheld computing devices, make sure any software solution with applications that can be helpful in the field come with integrated mobile computing capabilities. Some software solutions can share real-time data from the office with other desktops, laptops, personal digital assistants and even cell phones in the field. Others must be synced at the beginning or end of the day, back in the office.

continued on page 60



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continued from page 58

User-supplied data

Bidding and estimating software can enable easy compiling of estimates using up-to-date material and labor pricing and job-specific factors (e.g. location, working conditions, knowledge of the client and other fudge factors), ensuring accuracy of the numbers and the resulting calculations. Many programs allow user-supplied databases, and support easy revision of any component. Look for a program that either includes a database specific to landscape work or is capable of importing one.

Some handy features include the ability to handle change orders, the ability to re-use sections of previous estimates for similar projects, the capability of viewing side-by-side comparisons of quotes from multiple vendors in order to get the best pricing, and an automatic alert when the cost or labor of an item is missing.

When first starting with electronic estimating, it's a good idea to work parallel estimates (manual and computer) as a check to make sure you're doing it right. Estimating solutions that work on handheld devices allow contractors in the field to truly estimate, rather than guesstimate, small projects right on the spot.

Project management

Project management software is an efficient way to schedule projects and manipulate time frames, labor, equipment, materials and, sometimes, budget in the most effective way possible. It is available as either a desktop program or as a subscription Web-based solution hosted by a third-party provider, with information entered, worked with, edited and stored online available to any authorized user with a Web browser 24/7.

Typically, project management software uses charts and diagrams to visually represent not only the start and finish dates of the projects and the various tasks involved but also the dependencies of any of the resources used in the projects. The software can help with modifications of scheduling when a project's real-life progress does not match pre-conceived planning. Some handy functionalities to look for include drag-and-drop planning and scheduling,

the ability to play out what-ifs, the availability of customizable templates for reports, and the ability to integrate with accounting, inventory, purchasing and payroll programs.

In addition to streamlining a field worker's rounds, scheduling software can also provide up-to-date customer service and equipment history to the personnel on site.

Dispatch software enables the office to keep in touch with field crews and make any adjustments to their work schedules that can enhance productivity.

Taking advantage of GPS devices in each vehicle, vehicle-tracking software tells management where your trucks are at all times. Equipment tracking software keeps tabs on service history and warranties so personnel can confidently charge for all work that deserves billing.

Consider an accounting program

For offices not running a full-time bookkeeper, accounting programs can be an economical and convenient solution. For many landscape contractors, there are several popular accounting programs aimed especially at small service businesses and that include customizable features. Often, the programs are easy to learn and include many set-up wizards and other perks that make it possible for personnel not versed in accountancy terminology to maintain the records. And, if a company outgrows that kind of basic solution, it is easy enough to find a fuller featured accounting program that can import data from them.

And if you don't yet have a Web site, here's a suggestion that can get you up and running in cyberspace quickly and easily. Take advantage of Microsoft Office Live, a basic version of which is free to small businesses. Not only will it provide domain name registration and host your Web site for you, gratis, but it will walk you through the set up and explain how to populate it with content (including project photos) and how to enable online contact from potential customers. ■

The author is a freelance writer and columnist who lives and works in Chappaqua, NY. Contact him at billfeldman@verizon.net.



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Start building an exit strategy now

This plan will help you secure a fair price for all the hours and hard work you've spent building your landscape or lawn care company BY ERIN HOLLIS, AVA, SM&AA, CBC, MBA

FIND
OUT

Benefits of pre-planning exit strategy

What comprises intangible value

Importance of business valuation assessment

Business owners often spend 10 hours per day, six days a week getting their businesses to the point where they can provide a measure of financial security and comfort for their futures. One day, control of their businesses will be transferred to either a known or unrelated third-party. It is clear the departure of an owner can be devastating for a closely held company and for the owner's surviving relatives. A well-structured exit strategy that anticipates timely and untimely triggering events can compensate for that loss.

What's an exit strategy?

For the closely held business owner, an exit strategy is a pre-mapped plan narrating how an owner will leave the company. It is a tactical road map that proactively prepares an owner

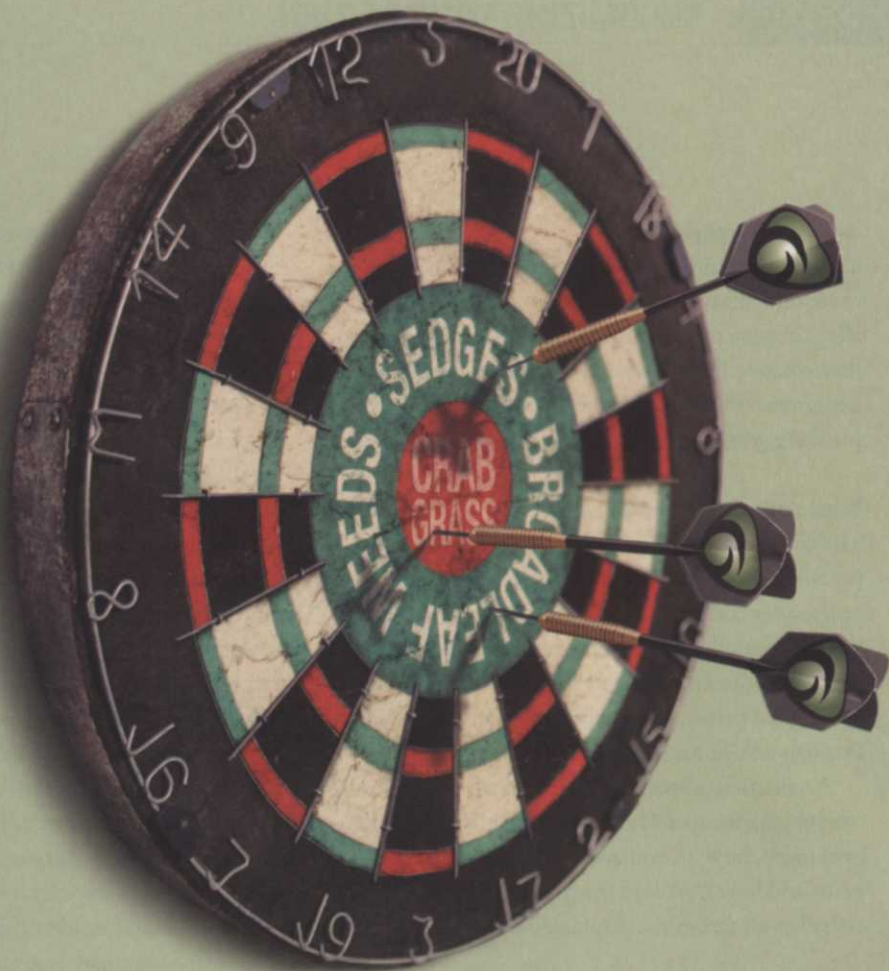
for life's events, including the eight "Ds": death, disability, dissolution (of business), dissention (disagreement between co-owners), decline of market, debt overload (bankruptcy), divorce, departure (retirement, transfer or third-party sale). Hence, the exit strategy maps the business' and the owner's futures.

Of the eight "Ds", only one is within an owner's control — departure. This is true whether the business is owned by one or by several individuals.

Pre-planning for the exit versus reacting to it can mean the difference, for example, between bankruptcy and a lucrative retirement fund. Planning for foreseen and unforeseen life events allows an owner to manage and orchestrate the future no matter what happens. Different methods of ownership transfer exist,

continued on page 64





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and many require years to implement. Some are more difficult to implement than others, and some allow owners to relinquish control over time versus immediately. Regardless of the transfer channel used, a business valuation is the first step to realizing exit-planning goals.

Your company's worth

The share value of publicly traded companies is easily accessed by locating stock tables in the newspaper and multiplying the closing price by the number of shares owned. However, no convenient tables discern privately held companies' share value. That value can only be accurately determined through a business valuation.

A valuation assesses the worth of a business from several perspectives. It examines the business on its own merit, how it compares with industry participants and how it rates in the market. A valuation considers all tangible and intangible assets.

operations are unlike they were eight years ago. An owner must assess the current return on the initial investment or, to put it more pointedly, how much the investment has grown since the original purchase, or since the inception of the business.

If owners desire to sell their businesses to a third-party and use the sale proceeds to fund retirement, regular valuations are vital in benchmarking the value toward the planned exit's goal. In these cases, key questions must be addressed, such as:

- > How much money will be needed to adequately fund retirement?
- > After consideration of other retirement funding vehicles, how can a determination be made to calculate how much more will be needed for retirement if the business' current value is unknown?

Owners who plan to sell their enterprise to an outside third-party must differentiate it from other market participants. Recognizing a company's underlying intangible value can help sellers obtain a better deal price, including identifying strategic buyers. As is the case with many landscaping companies, the intangible value of the business is far more valuable than its tangible value.

For acquisition purposes, intangible value means the difference between an attractive, lucrative investment and a profit for the seller; and an asset purchase and a break-even, or loss, for the seller.

There are certain "intangible value drivers" that make a company a desirable investment; however, owners must also examine those that decrease value. For all closely held entities, key person dependence must be examined because dependence lowers a company's value. A business is considered more "saleable" if variables that generate profit and success are transferable and not contingent upon the owner's existence.

For a landscape services company, intangible value is included in:

- > **Bonding:** The federal government and municipalities regularly engage private landscape firms and self-employed architects for projects, and, in some cases, the firm must be bonded to qualify for the job.
- > **Certification of personnel:** A total of 46 states require landscape architects to be licensed or regis-

>> Pre-planning for the exit can make the difference between bankruptcy and a lucrative retirement.

Selling the business

For many closely held business owners, a substantial percentage of their own personal net worth is tied up in their business. Approximately 75% of business owners invest their own net worth in the business, and many never see the materialization of the full investment again. As one of the largest assets in the owner's estate, the business should be valued regularly to gauge the return on investment (ROI) or to assess how much the value of the business has grown relative to the original purchase price.

For example, a business purchased eight years ago grossing approximately \$1.5 million in annual sales now has sales of more than \$3.5 million. Clearly

continued on page 66

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continued from page 64

tered. National and state industry associations also offer certifications in various professions and skill sets. Having certified employees demonstrates a certain level of competency by a company, and boosts its potential value to a purchaser.

> **Repeat clientele and diversity:** Repeat clientele drives value, and a high volume of referred clientele signals efficient operations management and a core position within the community and industry at large. According to a 2005 industry report on buying trends, referrals accounted for 55% of consumer decision-

making when choosing a landscape professional. A diverse revenue base also enhances intangible value, as witnessed by many major architectural and engineering firms that see the benefit in diversification and now offer services internally.

> **Competition:** The lawn and landscape services industry is highly competitive with thousands of look-alikes. Owners need to consider, "what differentiates my company from the competition?"

> **Employee retention:** Though most landscape architects remain in private firms, an increasing number are migrating to large-scale design firms that offer landscape-planning services. Additionally, more than 80% of all firms in the industry have fewer than four employees; therefore, employee retention is crucial for profitability and client satisfaction.

A business valuation can also quantify intangible value derived from established operational history,

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continued from page 66

successful bidding history, cutting-edge knowledge or the latest applications in landscape/lawn care technology and established market share and reputation. Sometimes referred to as goodwill or "blue sky," these factors enhance value and attract buyers. Conversely, litigation, union disputes, workers' compensation claims and bonding troubles deflate goodwill value.

Start planning now

When is the best time to plan the exit strategy? Before the doors open for business. Prior to investing in the business, an owner must consider what it is he or she ultimately wants from the business.

Nevertheless, if a plan doesn't exist, it's never too late to begin. Start with a business valuation assessment. Then use the valuation in conjunction with a strategic plan that dictates goals, for example, accelerate growth (or continue growth) or help execute

a lucrative shareholder exit. Knowing the value of your business enables you to construct an effective, proactive plan and to implement strategies to assure a desired result.

A strategic exit plan is essential if the business owner ever hopes to receive an attractive price upon the sale of the business or a successful transfer to related parties. Together with qualified professionals, map the company's worth, execute the plan, monitor the results achieved and continually modify the plan (as necessary) while charting the course to sale or transfer. ■



The author is director of valuation services, Accountancy Associates, LLC, a related company of International Profit Associates and Integrated Business Analysis (IPA-IBA). For further information, call (847) 495-6786 or visit www.ipa-iba.com.

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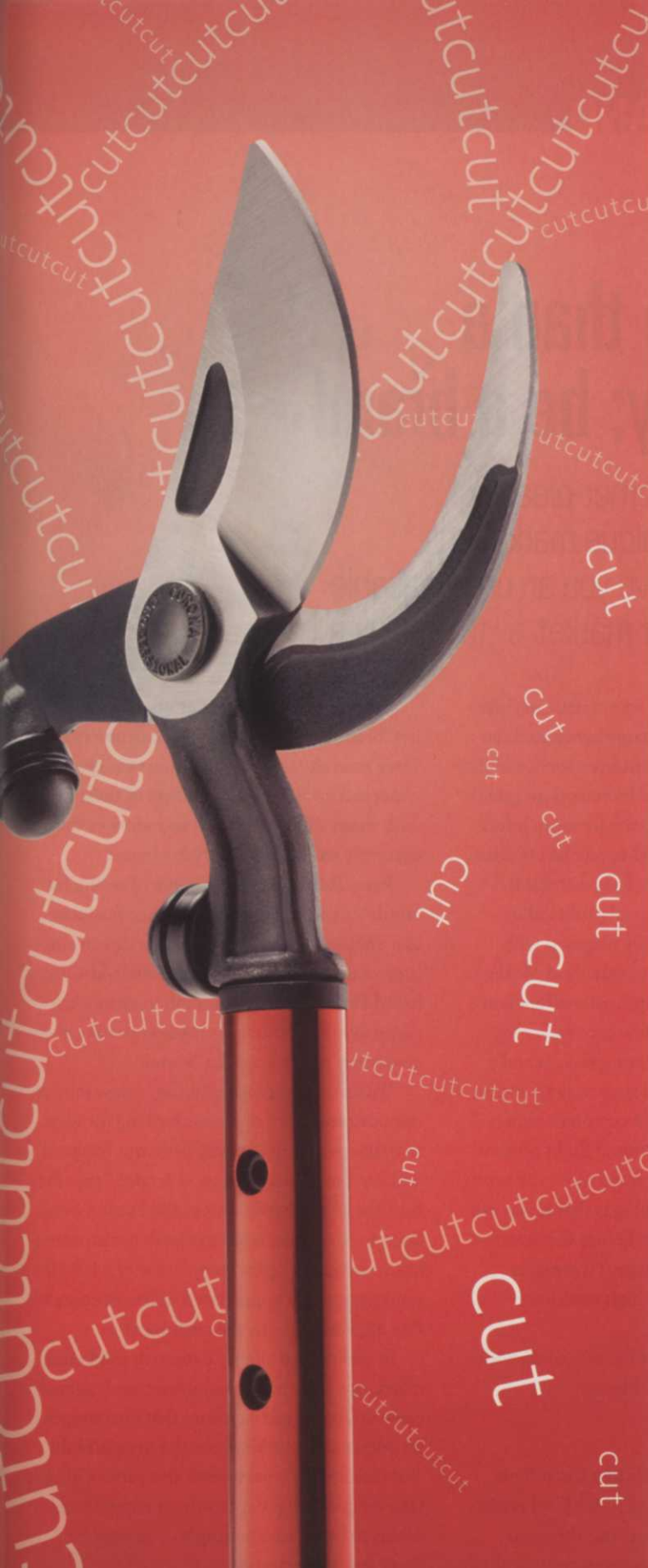
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The importance of "consistency"

How to be known as a solutions-provider

An editorial in a recent issue of *Advertising Age* magazine bemoaned the sorry state of customer service in the airline industry. From such nagging problems as lost luggage to the far more infuriating trend of cancelled flights, one fact is abundantly clear — airlines have long disregarded their customers in the name of profitability, and have become chronically obsessed with pointing the finger of blame, usually at Mother Nature or unforeseen equipment malfunctions.

With rare exceptions, few carriers seem all that interested in preserving their brand's reputation by going out of their way to ensure even a hint of a memorable customer experience. Overbooked seats, limited flight options and a bag of stale peanuts seem more the norm these days. The startling thing is that it was not all that long ago (ironically before the government deregulated the industry) the major carriers enjoyed relatively high consumer confidence.

So, you may ask, "What has this to do with my landscaping business?" Plenty.

Open your ears

Powerful, successful brands like Coca-Cola, Toyota and Apple (to name just a few) create fiercely loyal followings because they continually listen to their customers, respect their opinions and form new and compelling ways to connect with them.

Whether you realize it or not, your business is a "brand" in the eyes of your customers too. They hold the same types of impressions and expectations from your business as they would with many of the products and services they currently use in their everyday lives.

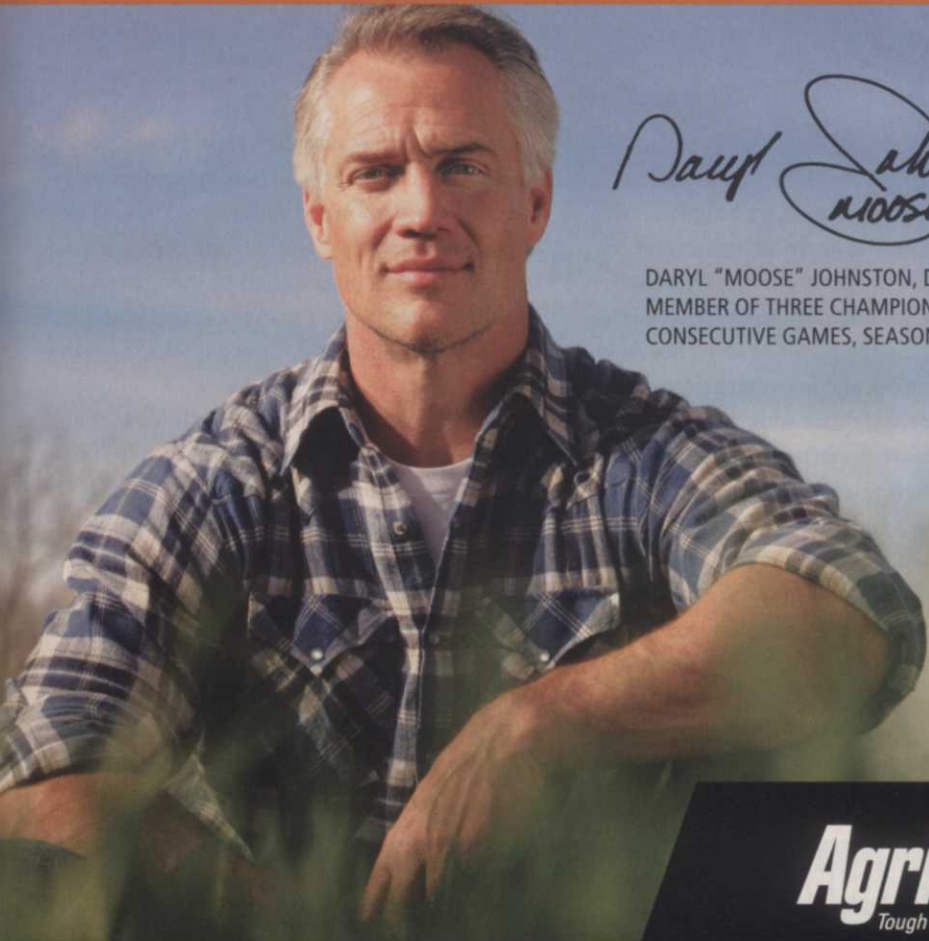
Jonas Pattie knows the value of seeing his family's design/build/maintenance business as a unique, compelling brand. As director of project development for the Cleveland-Ohio based Pattie Group, it's his job to ensure the company stays true to its mission to have their customers experience the "wow."

"From our employees to the community to our customers, we're always looking for ways to make people walk away from our business and say 'wow,' that was good service," says Pattie. One of the "wow" things the Pattie Group does, for example, is always wash a customer's house windows upon completion of a job. "It's unexpected. It's appreciated. It leaves an indelible impression with the customer."

In addition to a fairly extensive marketing effort, one-year plant guarantees, professional crew uniforms and a culture that encourages an open exchange between the design/build and maintenance personnel, the Pattie Group's take on creating great customer experiences seems to be relatively simple — always be there for the customer.

continued on page 72

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Follow-up matters

"For every design/build job we do, we assign a service coordinator. That person visits the site seven and 30 days after completion, then every spring after that. If there's a problem, we want him in the customer's yard before we hang up the phone. It all comes down to how well you respond, and how quickly you respond to the customer," Pattie adds.

Becoming, and more importantly, remaining a great brand means having a heightened sense of your customers' needs and desires. Put yourself in their shoes. If you're like most successful landscaping companies these days, your most lucrative revenue stream is from a reasonably affluent consumer base that's not shy about spending for the services you provide.

However, just because they can afford long-term maintenance agreements (for example), the stakes

are often raised because they expect more from the experience. These status-driven consumers are increasingly well informed and seek to know as much as possible about the features and benefits of your services. Never be intimidated by them. In fact, they could very well be your best ally as you position your business as a genuine solutions provider that values their opinions.

Aside from training your staff to listen to the needs of the customer and devise relevant solutions for them, never forget that consistency is one of the hallmarks of an outstanding customer experience.

Good service over and over

Bob Andrews of The Greenskeeper in Carmel, IN, has operated his company for 26 years with this philosophy.

"There's no secret to good customer service.

continued on page 74

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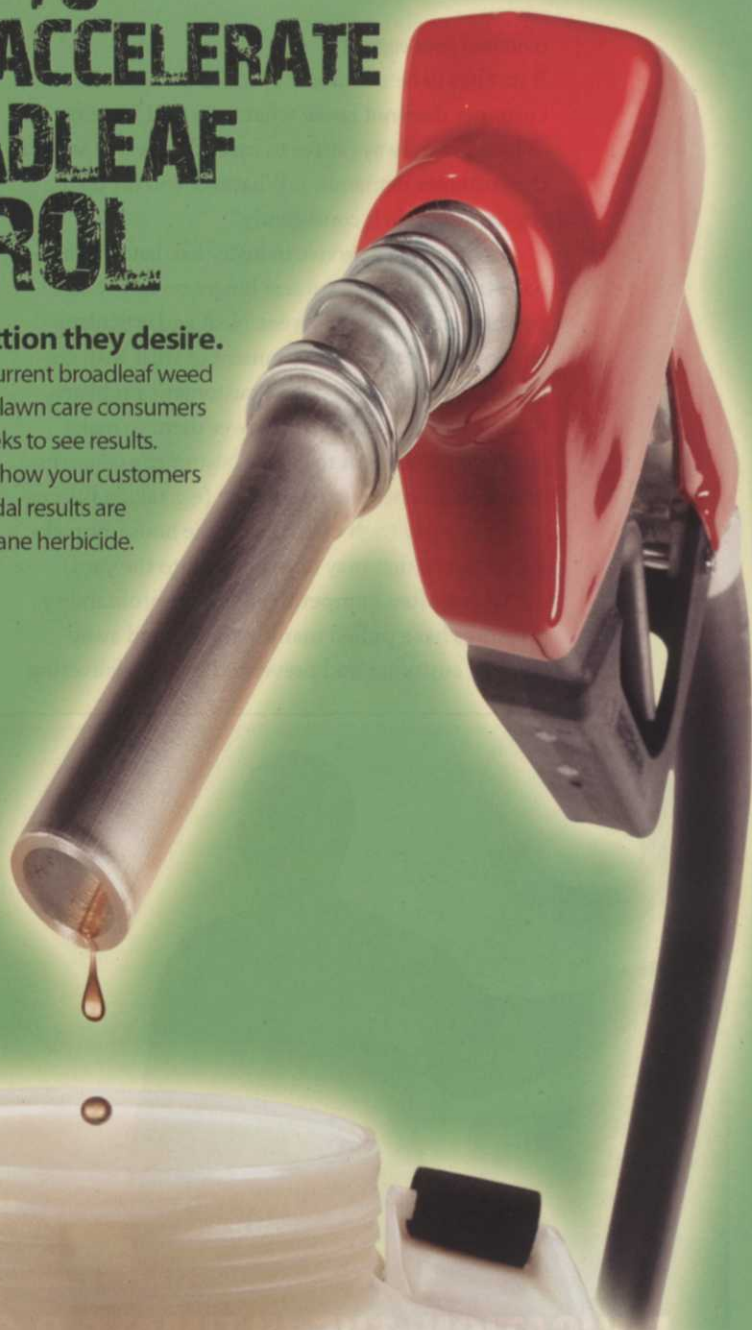


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continued from page 72

It just has to be consistent. A lot of the time the customer does not know what to expect," he says. "Though we always strive to meet the level of service the customer demands. . . Whatever you do, do it regularly and do it consistently."

As anyone in a service industry like landscaping will attest, long-term success hinges on how well you hire and train employees. Neat and articulate employees create an environment of trust with customers. Train them to solve a customer's problems, not just to sell a service. Empower them to make decisions on the spot to calm a customer's concerns or deliver an unexpected surprise (e.g. taking the customer's empty trash cans back to the house, or picking up debris that may have blown into the yard).

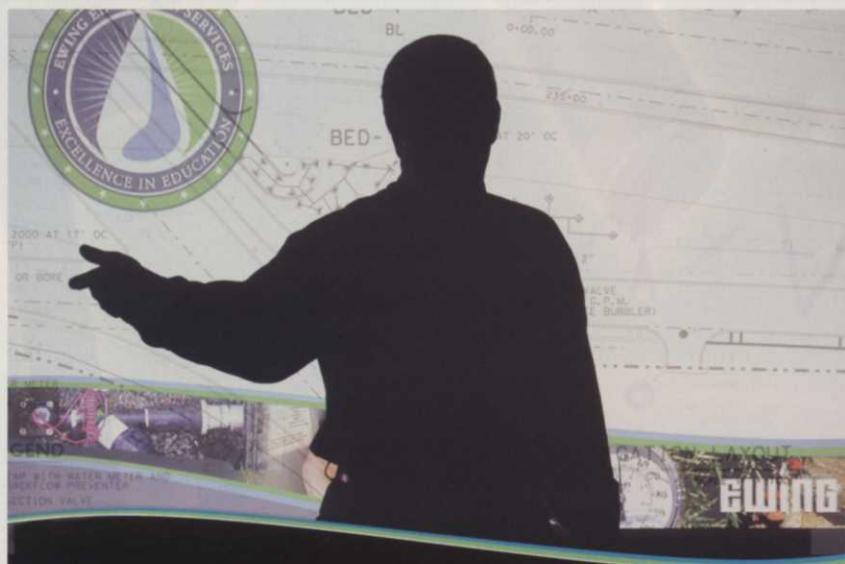
All too often competitiveness and profitability pressures have pulled many a great brand away from its customer and prevented it from delivering

memorable, loyalty-building experiences. Many times poor management is to blame for a brand's slow, painful demise. In either case, when this happens, the brand often becomes a commodity — and commodities fail to capture the hearts and minds of consumers.

Strive to always keep your customers front and center. Create relevant services that keep them engaged. Empower your staff to always surprise and delight them. And, never lose sight of the fact that your long-term success is permanently linked to their confidence in you and your brand. ■



Tom Mentzer is a Kansas City-based public relations consultant and writer. He has extensive experience advising a variety of companies, including many in the Green Industry. Contact him at tmentzer@mprg.biz.



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There are many ways to build and use an effective direct mail marketing campaign, but in many instances it's often best to hire a professional graphic designer or a marketing agency to design your direct mail campaigns. You've surely seen prospective clients attempt to do a landscape design themselves, hoping to save money; don't follow their lead with a do-it-yourself advertisement. Your business must look professional. Your direct mail device must convey the message that you want to get across.

Direct mail can be facilitated independ-

ently with direct mail houses and through local printers as well as through nationally recognized direct mail resources available in most major communities, such as *Clipper Magazine*, a full-color direct mail advertising publication. Steve Zuckerman, president of *Clipper Magazine* suggests the following guidelines and strategies to help ensure your future direct mail marketing campaigns are more successful:

> **"FREE" always works great!** Nothing beats 'FREE' and it can surely help to persuade customers to try new services and products as well as to get prospects to try you for the first time. Consider offering a complimentary lawn service or upgrade with an annual agreement purchase of your services.

> **Use dollars off, not percentages.** Your lawn care and landscaping customers will react better to strong dollars off discounts and incentives. Percentage discounts aren't perceived to be as strong, especially if they are only 10% to 20% off. Unless you use 50% off or higher percentages, they will be perceived as weak offers and ignored.

> **Use care with disclaimers.** Avoid excessive disclaimers and rules for what is not included in these varied offers. Keep special offers simple with words like, "No Double Discounts. Expires 00/00/07." Use expiration dates of no more than 60 to 90 days to keep offers timely.

Safety in numbers

If you're going to use the solo direct mail route, send over-sized, colorful direct mail postcards,

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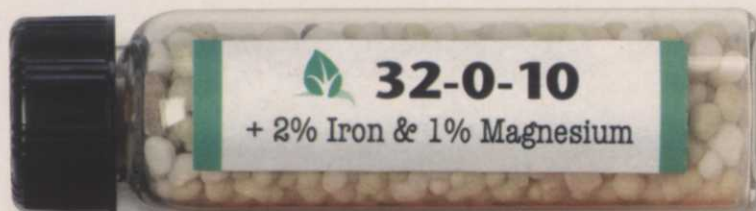


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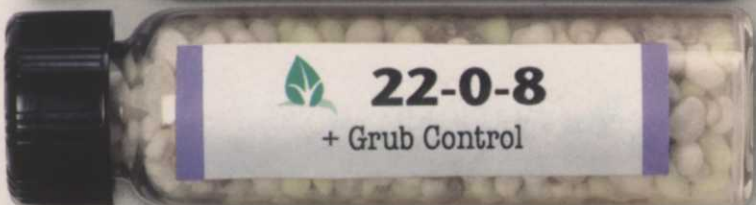
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fliers and personalized letters. The postage is less expensive than standard mail with postcards, and unlike envelopes, they don't have to be opened for the prospect to immediately see your offer. Use a high quality paper stock. It's more durable and it's more appealing to the recipient. For solo direct mail, you will need to write the copy, create the artwork, determine your targeted markets and hire a local direct mail house to facilitate the mailing. Put beautifully manicured lawns and gardens on your postcards, fliers and letters.

Regardless of your landscaping services, you will need an on-going direct mail campaign to drive the point home.

>> Regardless of your landscaping specialties, you will need an on-going direct mail campaign to drive the point home.

Consider aligning with a professional equipment manufacturer or product supplier to increase your visibility and still stay true to your advertising budget. Manufacturers often offer quality advertising templates that allow you to insert your message and contact information. The work is practically done for you. In addition to providing boilerplate advertising templates, many product manufacturers will work with you to present their products in a pleasing manner in relation to your services. Like many products on the market, manufacturers offer a unique point-of-purchase display that will not only accent your décor, but create client curiosity.

Cost effective route

As you investigate the price of a solo direct mail campaign, you may discover the financial and creative benefits of national direct mail resources like *Clipper Magazine*, *Savvy Shopper*, *Mint Magazine*, *Val Pak*, *Money Mailer* and others that are available in

your local community. The cost of cooperative and magazine format direct mail is usually only three to four cents per home as opposed to solo direct mail campaigns, which will usually cost between 50 cents to \$1 per home.

Add up the costs of artwork, printing, mailing labels and postage to determine if there is an advantage to using colorful and upscale direct mail magazines, cooperative direct mail or a combination of both. Some direct mail programs will offer complimentary marketing consultations, artwork and the use of professional photographs, mailing lists, printing and postage all in one simple package. Plus, their marketing consultants can share examples of other successful landscaping advertisers from around the country. You will be able to review a small library of photographs, offers and special promotions that work. If needed, they can supply testimonials and telephone numbers from others in similar businesses to yours, so you can also call them for advice.

Mike Carbillano of M. Carbillano Landscaping & Masonry, Westchester Market, NY, is a witness to the success that a service, such as *Clipper Magazine* can offer a landscaping business. "We have advertised in this magazine for over a year and have received five times the response from this magazine compared to other media. From each ad we place, we usually receive an average of 100 calls for estimates and get four jobs totalling \$30,000," he said. "Our best response to date was when we received over 100 calls and eight jobs totalling more than \$100,000 — with two weeks left to go."

No matter what form of radio, TV, newspaper, magazine or direct mail marketing you plan to use, ask your advertising sales representatives to share examples of what has worked well for other similar landscapers and lawn care business owners. Generally their sales representatives will help you plan the most effective annual direct mail marketing campaigns with customized advertising solutions for your business.

Let's be realistic

Direct mail advertising really works, especially with strong offers and ongoing campaigns. Special offers, coupons and gift certificates are easy to track. Like

continued on page 80

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any advertising, promotion and marketing, it takes a long-term investment to successfully market your landscaping or lawn care business.

It isn't just about getting dozens of new first-time clients from each advertisement. A few new big clients will make it pay off handsomely. Plus, most annual agreement clients will repeat year after year, once they are on board and happy with your first year of landscaping or lawn care services. One new client may result in several thousands of service sales dollars per year – so as few as five, 10 or 20 new clients from any one advertisement needs to be considered a big success.

To determine the statistical effectiveness of your direct mail advertising campaigns, ask every new client how they first heard about you. Many clients will call or bring in their coupons and gift certificates. Some will still ask their friends, neighbors and co-workers

for a referral or recommendation after seeing your direct mail advertisement, so the combination will be a winner for you. You will also need to measure your total sales volume each month or season, especially on the annualized maintenance or lawn care services that you are promoting with your direct mail efforts.

You worked hard on your vision. You offer the best of yourself, your landscaping or lawn care services and the best quality products around. Why stop short of a perfect marketing plan to build it up? Like the purchase of an exotic flower or a beautiful new tree to accent a perfectly manicured lawn, every dollar counts and getting the most of your marketing dollars can begin with cooperative direct mail. ■

The author is a marketing coordinator for Marketing Solutions, Inc., a full-service marketing, advertising and PR agency. For more information, contact 703-359-6000, visit www.MktgSols.com or send an email to MktgSols@MktgSols.com.



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How to partner
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How to
maximize client
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Out of this world referrals

How real estate agents and other successful pros can give you the best opportunity to land the most profitable new accounts BY JEFFREY SCOTT



Professional referrals are your best business resource. The American Management Association says referrals given by professional advisors are more likely to bear fruit than client referrals.

Advisors are paid to know what they're talking about, therefore their referrals must be as good as their advice. You look to your advisors for advice; and referrals are a form of advice.

When I rejoined my family's business 12 years ago, real estate agents referred about \$50,000 of business a year to our firm, Glen Gate Pool & Property. Over the next five to eight years, by fostering relationships with real estate agents, I raised their contribution to \$1 million, and one year to \$1.5 million. On average, referral sales from real estate agents have grown by a whopping 2,000%.

When I share this story, I am usually bombarded with questions, some examples of which I've included in this article.

Real estate agents

Why do real estate agents refer me? It is because I perform a service for them.

My business builds swimming pools and landscapes. My company provides two services regarding swimming pools: —inspections for homes with pools and feasibility studies for properties without pools.

Real estate agents refer my company over others because they like me, they understand my business, I make them look good and I keep a top-of-mind presence with them. These are the basics of referral marketing.

I get in front of these real estate agents often. I visit their offices and sometimes bring bagels or Starbucks' muffins. I bring them valuable information, such as updated permit-application data for swimming pools. I bring and mail them my brochures.

I stay in touch with the real estate agents, including those who already use me, and those who should use me, building relationships with them one at a time.

Great referrals

Any time an agent uses me to help them sell a home, or any time they hand out my name to one of their clients, that qualifies as a good referral. I want to be on their short list. Agents are as busy as we are (if not busier), so I have to make my value proposition clear.

Why are referrals from real estate agents so valuable. Consider that their is to meet as many people as possible and to develop prospects every day with homeowners and home buyers. So, in terms of numbers, I am better off having one agent be my advocate than one client (although I love those referrals, too). The fact is, most clients are so busy they can only refer a few people in their work or weekend sphere. Other professionals are busy too, but this is good for my business.

What is great about real estate agents is that they don't want a referral fee, which is

continued on page 84



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against their code of ethics. They just want to make sure you do a professional job and don't tarnish their reputation.

Widen your circle

Real estate agents aren't the only professionals with whom you should seek partnerships. Mortgage brokers, lawyers, builders, architects, retail store owners, anyone who meets many people in their line of work may become valuable referral partners. Professional referring relationships are beneficial in that you don't need hundreds of them to make your business fly. Generally, anywhere from 10 to 50 referring relationships will generate all the business you want.

But there can be down sides. What happens when the professional you're connected with begins to do less business or becomes less professional?

Real estate is suffering in many parts of the coun-

try right now. Since many of them are struggling, the number of leads they can provide will drop too. This is where the marketing mix is important. Don't become too dependent on any one source of referrals. If you only depend on real estate, then your business could be going through some wild swings. Since they only make up one of my eight major sources, I can weather the real estate hiccup.

Regarding the concept of "less professional," be careful with whom you associate your name. Take time to get to know the professional, any professional, before you partner with them.

And never forget, there is such a thing as "bad leads." They usually fall into one of three categories:

1. Someone who is shopping around for the best price.
2. Someone who doesn't understand what we do.
3. Someone who isn't pre-sold on my company and is entertaining five bids.

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run ahead of the pack

continued from page 84

Start now

Begin building your referral relationships now. Actively seek out referrals. As far as seasonal impact, real estate agents are really busy in the spring, maybe even too busy to talk to you. Nevertheless it's a great time to put your name in front of them. This is when their clients need your services. They, like you, slow down a bit in the winter and have more free time but fewer clients. This is also a good time, because they have time to build relationships with you.

Thus far, I've emphasized professional referrals, and have glossed over client referrals. However, the client referrals to our businesses, as well. Client satisfaction and referrals comprise one leg of my 3-legged marketing stool. Community relationships make up the second leg. Traditional advertising/direct mail/job signs entail the third leg.

You'll want to do everything you can to retain the goodwill of your clients and encourage them to spread the word about your company's excellent service. As with your professional partners, this requires you to be proactive, build relationships and thank and ask them for referrals.

But your most effective source of referrals, if you cultivate them, will be your professional partners.

Look back at who gave you referrals in the past six months, and reach out to them. Start now, while their memory of you is still fresh. ■



Jeffrey Scott is co-owner of Glen Gate Pool & Property. He assists Green Industry companies on captivating clients, building their brands and growing their businesses. For a free report on the "10 most costly mistakes to avoid when building your referral base," email him at Jeff@jeffreyscottbiz.

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Tips for press
releases

When you've got crews to manage, jobs to get done and the paperwork is calling, public relations (PR) may seem like the last thing you need or have time to consider. The sharp landscaper knows, however, PR is so accessible, inexpensive and profitable, you can't afford not to consider it.

In an average U.S. media market, eight to 15 primary media contacts are all you need to make. In reality, about 10 relationships, often fewer, are likely to be all you need to be recognized as "the" local landscaping resource for print, television and radio in your area.

Your local phone book has the numbers of your regional media outlets. Call and ask for the person who produces or reports on home and garden stories (even if you don't do a lot of garden work). Plan to make one call per week and one follow-up call every other week.

As for what to say, consider that you are sitting on a mound of media assets or potential stories and probably don't even realize it. Following is a list of credible story opportunities for your landscaping company. Consider a few for starters:

- > Seasonal stories (winter preparation, spring planting)
- > Hot plantings and landscaping trends,
- > "How To" landscaping tips
- > Holiday exhibits (company and community involvement with area holiday decorations)
- > Large-scale landscape design, installations and service contracts
- > "How to hire a qualified landscape contractor"

What next? Get busy with your message. Expand the two or three items you selected from the list. A press release is the standard format for delivering information to the press.

However, if you're considering a feature story, keep calling or get an email address and write exactly why you think that feature may be of interest in your community, and always add the expertise you bring to the story — you've been in business locally for 10 years, you're a member of local groups or professional associations and any other information that qualifies you as knowledgeable on the subject you're pitching.

Don't worry about being super polished. A professional, clear note about your story idea will do the trick.

If you elect to do the press release, open with a strong headline to grab the reader's attention. The headline, along with your opening paragraph or two, should be straightforward and clarify what the article is about. This is essential to keeping the reader's interest.

Stick to the facts. Make it interesting, but avoid embellishments. Also, when giving the details of your press release, illustrate the story to your reader. Use real-life examples that the reader can relate to or visualize. Landscapers

continued on page 90



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Share your good news

Compile a list of some of the good "news" involving your company. Then find someone with good communication skills (perhaps one of your young managers) to write a concise, active news release.

Know that not every newspaper, local television affiliate, radio station or other regional publication will run every bit of news you send them.

But some will, and you will find some local media glad to work with you in getting your announcements out to the public. This is especially true if you advertise with them.

Finally, don't overlook the weekly "shopper" publications in your neighborhood. Most are looking for quick little articles about the good things happening in the communities in which they're distributed.

You would be surprised at how much they're read, especially if they offer specials from local vendors.

What is considered news? Following are some suggestions:

- > Openings
- > Company (or employee) awards
- > Newsworthy speaking engagements
- > New industry supportive research findings
- > New hires
- > New services (including new online services/Web site)
- > Relocations/expansions
- > Community activities (career days, chamber of commerce events, charity events)
- > Acquisition of new area company as client
- > Cross-promotion projects (media tie-in contests, sponsorship of local events)
- > Teaching/educational posts in local schools and colleges
- > Upcoming or recent television appearances

Finally, take pictures of the projects and people featured in your news releases. Include the pictures with your news releases. You never know when an editor has space to fill, and a nice image of a beautiful landscape, a ribbon cutting or a smiling award winner makes a nice page filler. — MJ

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have an edge in that they are in a visual profession. Include photographs with the press release or feature. They'll help your pitch.

Finally, be concise and grammatically correct. Avoid fluff words that distract from the true meaning of your press release. Don't include clichés and landscaping jargon that may not be understood by the general reader. Make sure that you have permis-

sion to use any quotes or inside information. This prevents conflicts that may result in your press release being pulled.

Be sure to check your release for punctuation and grammatical errors.

High visibility in local media will position your landscaping company as an industry and community leader. Local reporters are constantly searching for material. They appreciate, need and will use well-informed, interesting story leads. Once you actually begin this process, you will soon become inspired to take your local media image to the next level. ■

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Mary Jane Gilhooley is president of Gilhooley Consulting Inc., Cincinnati, a consulting and public relations firm that provides services to the Green Industry and other related trade groups. Contact her at mjg@gilhooleyconsulting.com or visit the Web site www.gilhooleyconsulting.com.

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7 can't-miss marketing tips

Landscape pro and consultant Marty Grunder shares great promotional strategies that have worked for him

BY RON HALL / EDITOR IN CHIEF

FIND
OUT

How to build a
bigger image

The importance
of jobsite signs

How to keep
your brand in
front of clients

How does a guy that, by his own admission, bears a resemblance to Howdy Doody and parlayed gentlemen's "Cs" to a business degree at the University of Dayton, become one of the landscape industry's most sought after speakers and marketing gurus? Marty Grunder does it with humor mixed with a little self-deprecation and a whole lot of common sense.

When Marty Grunder speaks we listen.

Grunder, who owns and operates a profitable landscape company in Dayton, OH, offered these seven sure-fire marketing tips at a Bayer Healthy Lawns /Healthy Business Summit held in Cleveland earlier this year.

Incorporate them into your marketing program. What do you have to lose?

1 Always do a great job. OK, that probably should go without saying, but when you keep that notion foremost (and you live it), you get great word-of-mouth referrals, not to mention more excited and committed employees.

2 Clean trucks lettered on all four sides. "Put your logo on everything," said Grunder. "Image is everything." He contracts to have his service vehicles washed regularly and has them detailed three times a year. Here's something else Grunder is fond of saying (he says it has worked well for his

company) — "Act bigger than you are."

3 Newsletters keep your company in customers' minds. Don't go crazy. They just need to be one sheet, front and back. His newsletters feature a short, friendly column that he writes, a profile of a "team member" and testimonials from customers. He sends it to clients four times annually.

4 Postcards are inexpensive and effective. They're also a great way to get your company's name to prospects. Target neighborhoods where you want more customers. (Check with your Bayer rep. The company offers some great marketing material, including postcards. Hey, it was their Summit, right?)

5 Post jobsite signs. "Keep them up as long as customers let you," said Grunder. Don't be afraid to have a little fun. "During the fall election season, he gets some his customers to allow him to put "Grunder for Landscaping" signs on their properties. Hmm, it's that time of year again, right?

6 Target prospects that fit your profit "sweet spot." Don't waste your time chasing every new homeowner in your market. Target those new homeowners that fit your most profitable customer profile, perhaps homes costing \$200,000 or more, for example. Visit the Web site www.newpros.com.

7 Do a little more than asked. It doesn't have to be a big deal, just some little favor, some little property improvement outside the normal scope of your duties. Of course, it doesn't hurt to let your customer know what you did. "If you want your customers to help you out, you have to help them out," said Grunder. ■




MARTY GRUNDER'S INSIGHTS HAVE ENTERTAINED AND EDUCATED A HOST OF GREEN INDUSTRY EXECUTIVES.



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Keep poor performers from poisoning your culture

Build an employee performance management system to get 'below-standard' employees heading in the right direction . . . or out the door BY JENNIFER FORGIE

All leaders are familiar with employees who exhibit "below standard" performance. They don't all look alike, but you know them when you see them. Maybe yours is the salesperson with inconsistent numbers (dynamite one month, sluggish the next), or the assistant manager who's out with a "headache" every other (non-payday) Friday, or the receptionist who gets along well with coworkers but sometimes takes a surly tone with customers.

Here's the thing: these people aren't terrible employees; they're just not doing what they should be doing. You're not ready to fire them — not yet, anyway. But if you don't do something, their performance

FIND
OUT

What constitutes a poor performer

Why you have to take immediate action

How to evaluate your performance management system

Why periodic employees matter

The importance of keeping good records

issues will escalate until they become full-blown problems.

This is a problem faced by many leaders. They're hesitant to deal with performance issues, so they send indirect messages and subtle signals, or simply avoid the situation hoping it will go away. As a result, the people who are doing the full job — and whose behavior is consistent with company values — become more and more resentful of co-workers who appear to be getting away with bad behavior or not doing their fair share of the work.

Ducking the problem

Ultimately, the leader's reticence to deal with the below-standard-performing employee leads to another problem. When it comes to the point where the person's performance or behavior can no longer be tolerated, and the poor performer is told he must improve, it often comes as a shock because this is the first he is hearing of a problem.

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Consider a recent *BusinessWeek* article, "Fear of Firing" written by Michael Orey. It painted a grim picture of corporate leaders held hostage by underperforming employees who are all too willing to play the litigation card. Even if it's justified, few employers want to run the risk of being taken to court by a disgruntled ex-employee. Clearly, it's best to intervene with "pre-problem" employees before they reach the point of no return.

So why don't some managers deal with performance issues early on? It appears that many leaders don't think of their performance management systems as a tool to manage the business and aren't addressing performance issues within that context.

This is a pervasive problem: a recent survey done by OnPoint Consulting involving 115 HR professionals

>>>> Paint a clear picture of what good performance looks like.

Translate that into specific behaviors and outcomes, and then share that with the employee.

and 441 line managers found that more than half of the respondents have a negative view of their companies' performance management systems. The survey found that only 44% of the line managers and 45% of the HR professionals believe their companies' performance management systems deliver value to the business.

Widespread failure

OnPoint's survey also found that only about half of respondents believe that their rating systems facilitate the delivery of feedback during the performance review, and only 45% believe their rating scales enable managers to accurately differentiate levels of performance. It's not unusual for a manager to check the 'meets expectations' box year after year, even if an employee actually isn't meeting them. The paper

trail shows that, by all indications, the employee doesn't have a problem. And it's hard to suddenly confront someone for behaviors that he's exhibited for a long time — and more to the point, gotten away with it for a long time.

So, back to your poor-but-does-not-yet-need-to-be-fired performers: What can you do, right now, to keep their below-standard performance from snowballing out of control?

Take a hard look at the performance management system and determine whether it's really serving you. But here are more specific tips for giving your "below standards" a performance boost.

Paint a clear picture of what good performance looks like. Translate that into specific behaviors and outcomes. Then you have to share those behaviors and outcomes with employees.

It's not enough to simply say, "Joe, you need to be more proactive." Well, what does that really look like? Perhaps Joe isn't taking the initiative to share information with team members. Or he isn't anticipating problems that may impact his project plans, or he isn't informing clients of key decisions. Or maybe it's all of the above.

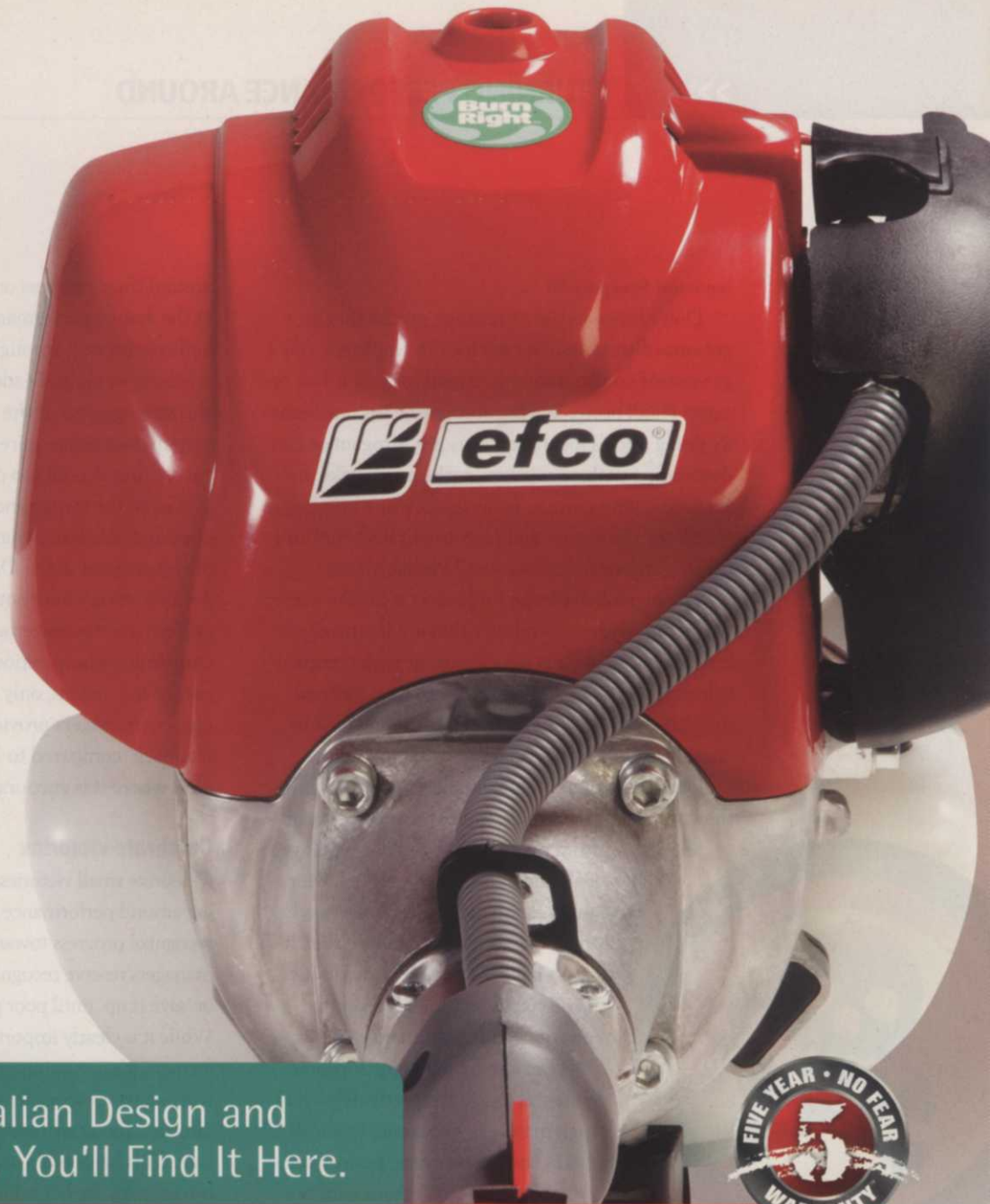
Spell it out

Until you can articulate specific behaviors and outcomes, it's very difficult to communicate when standards are, or are not, being met.

Communicate your expectations in plain English. Make sure employees understand and agree to them. You must make sure your "Joes" know what's expected of them. It's not fair to hit them with corrective feedback or a bad review if you haven't made your expectations crystal clear.

When you're setting goals, clearly state, "Here's what meeting expectations looks like, and here's what exceeding expectations would look like." The performance expectations should be set for what needs to be accomplished as well as for the behaviors people are expected to use with direct reports, colleagues and customers. Clear and agreed upon expectations provide a solid foundation upon which to provide recognition and reinforcement as well as guidance and corrective feedback.

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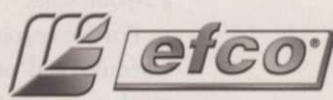
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Legendary Italian Design and Performance™

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Don't let expertise or revenue production be a get-out-of-trouble-free card for the employee. (Or a get-out-of-confrontation-free card for you.) Just because Frank brings in a big account he isn't necessarily doing a good job. If he's brusque, arrogant or condescending with co-workers, make no mistake: he's poisoning your culture. Is the money he's bringing in worth the disruption and resentment his behavior is causing among his co-workers? Probably not.

The biggest challenge for leaders is to take corrective action with an employee that is a top producer but whose behavior is not consistent with company values. If the espoused values are to have any real meaning then 'how' something gets done must be considered just as important as 'what' gets done.

Don't delay. Raise performance concerns while they're fresh. It's the only way to prevent performance issues from becoming a problem employee.

When goals and expectations for behavior have been clearly described and agreed to, these conversations can be easier. It doesn't have to get ugly if you focus the discussion on the agreed upon behaviors and performance targets.

It can also be tempting for some managers to avoid directly delivering tough messages by waiting to check off boxes in their companies' performance review forms. In fact, OnPoint's survey found that 46% of respondents believe that "managers give more time and attention to filling out review forms than they do planning the meeting and discussion with their employees."

Be a coach

Helping Elliot understand that he needs to be prepared and on time to meetings is far more important for behavior change and performance improvement than telling her that he is, for example, rated a '2' on a 5-point scale.

Provide ongoing coaching and feedback, both scheduled and "on the spot." Behavior change is much more successful when efforts are regularly reinforced. That means giving individual feedback (both positive and constructive) to employees

around their progress on goals not just once a year at the annual performance review, but periodically and consistently, through scheduled meetings and on-the-spot chats. Leaders should stay on top of this strategy, even if the performance management system does not require it — which, as OnPoint's survey found, is all too often the case.

Given the importance of ongoing feedback and coaching, it is somewhat surprising to find that 42% of respondents in the OnPoint study reported that periodic reviews are not a formalized part of their performance management system. And in those companies where periodic meetings are not a formal part of the system, only 43% provided positive ratings on 'managers provide effective coaching and feedback' compared to 71% where it is required, and 62% where it is encouraged.

Celebrate victories

Celebrate small victories. Another key in turning around performance problems is to be sure to recognize progress toward improvement. Too often, managers reserve recognition for their top performers or 'save it up' until poor performers get up to standard. While it is clearly important to recognize high performers, it's just as important to recognize all positive behavior, especially when it's a step in the right direction for an employee who has a performance issue. This helps build momentum and confidence. It reinforces the behaviors that are needed for this person to turn around.

Goal setting and coaching don't just magically happen. Make sure managers are trained for competence in these skills. Without these fundamental skills, no performance management system — no rating scale, no technology, no form — can turn performance problems around. The majority of companies in OnPoint's study, 62%, provide managers with training to conduct effective performance evaluations. Yet fewer organizations — only 53% — provide the skill training related to setting goals and coaching and feedback.

So often, manager training is the missing link in a company's quest to correct performance issues. It's easy to say, "Okay, get out there and make everyone on your team an 'A' player!" But if you don't

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teach them the relevant skills, it's just not a realistic request. It's far less painful to properly train managers than to let pre-problem employees fester into full-blown culture poisoners.

Dealing with pre-problem employees in a deliberate, structured way can stop their downward spiral. But if it doesn't, at least you will have the all-important paper trail that enables you to support your rationale for letting them go and minimize the worry about legal retaliation.

Keep good records

Companies must be able to prove, in court, that an employee has been fired for legitimate reasons. That is a scary reality for HR people, and as the *BusinessWeek* article said, it keeps many substandard employees on payroll long after serious damage has been done to morale. Adopting and using a good

performance management system as it was intended to be used is a far better solution.

When managers understand that the performance management system is about achieving business results and not just an administrative task mandated by HR, they take their PM systems seriously, they start providing coaching and feedback on a regular basis and they stop rubber-stamping year-end reviews.

Think of it as preventive medicine that keeps your organization strong and healthy. It's the right thing to do and it does not have to be that difficult. ■

The author is managing partner at OnPoint Consulting, an organizational and leadership consulting firm that specializes in helping companies close the gap between the creation and communication of their vision and strategy and the achievement of their business objectives. Contact the author at jforgie@onpointconsultingllc.com or visit the Web site www.onpointconsultingllc.com



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How to hire the best hourly employees

Follow this plan and you'll end up with more winners on your production crews and fewer problems and headaches **BY MEL KLEIMAN**

FIND OUT

Red flags to watch out for

How to make an employee "shopping list"

How to interview correctly

Finding reliable, quality, hourly employees can be the business equivalent of trying to climb Mount Fuji in flip-flops.

With government statistics showing that more than 50% of new employees leave their employers within six months, the hiring process is often an ongoing source of aggravation that wastes time, energy and money. The Labor Department reports that just one bad hourly hire can cost a business \$5,000 to \$7,000, and hiring bad managers or professionals at least 1½ times their annual salary. Now, more than ever, attracting, hiring and keeping the right people is critical to success and yet, studies show that more than 75% of hiring managers and business owners have little, if any, training in the skills and tools needed to do it right.

Here are some solutions for finding and hiring the best possible employees.

1 Develop your system — Before you hire someone, ask yourself, "Is there another way to do this job?" With unemployment low in many parts of the country, consider another way to solve the problem because applicants

are getting harder to come by, and great applicants are almost impossible to find.

So ask yourself, can you automate all or part of the job? Could you divide up the job's duties among several people who only want to work part-time?

2 Write it down — Make an itemized list of what you need. If you go shopping for a new employee without a list, it's the same as going to the grocery store without a list. You don't get what you need, it takes more time, you spend more money, and, in the end, you just have to go back to get what you really needed to start with. An employee shopping list includes the person's duties and responsibilities, as well as the capacities, attitudes, personality traits and skills needed for the job.

The basic requirements are the physical and mental capacities required. How strong do they need to be, can they be at work every day on time? How smart do they need to be?

Anyone with the right capacities and attitudes can be taught the required skills. It's easier to teach someone to operate a riding mower, handle chemicals or lay sprinkler pipe than it is to teach them to be a reliable team player.

continued on page 106



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If you have the time to train them, don't turn away applicants just because they don't have the skills.

Don't neglect listing attitudes, such as dependability and safety-mindedness. Think about the two or three most desired attitudes the ideal candidate would have and seek those.

The more you move up through the ranks, the more important personality becomes. But remember, everyone has certain personality drivers. And the closer the applicant's personality fits the job, the manager and the company, the more likely it is the person will be successful.

3 **Newspaper want ads?** — The classifieds are probably at the bottom of my list of recommendations. Pay attention to your headline if you use them. It's got to speak to the person you've identified in the job description and convey a benefit. "Come grow with us!" appeals to entry-level employees who want a future. Something like "Fun in the sun" appeals to outdoor types.

Set up a 24-hour job hotline the reader can call. Make it easy for the applicant to connect with you. Most of the good people who want to work are already working and can't respond when it's convenient for you. Your hotline can be a sophisticated, interactive voice interview, pre-screening system or a simple answering machine that captures the person's name and number and the best time to call them back.

Be careful putting out "Now Hiring" signs. They convey two negative messages. They tell your customers you're shorthanded, and they imply just about any warm body will do.

4 **Part-time or full-time?** — The job description you write will tell you if you need part- or full-time help. Then you position your recruiting efforts to appeal to the person you've described. A sign for full-time, entry-level work might read: "Your career starts here," while a sign recruiting part-timers might read: "The best of both worlds."

Also, if you need a part-time person and have a good applicant who wants full-time, consider the

possibility of sharing the employee with another employer. If you need full time, but your most promising applicants want part-time, see if they're interested in job sharing.

5 **Great overlooked sources** — There are two applicant sources that produce the best results. The first is all the good people who have left you. On average, employers find that about 20% of the former employees they call will come back.

Second best is an employee referral award program. If you can create some enthusiasm and fun around it, it will help employee retention too. Cash awards given at meetings on the new hire's first day and again six months later give you a lot of bang for your buck.

6 **Reduce paperwork** — With the labor pool shrinking rapidly it's vital to make it easy for people to apply. Asking people to do a lot of lengthy paperwork for a job they may or may not get will only put them off. Develop a short-form application that tells you if the person meets your basic minimum requirements. Capture name, contact info, whether they have reliable transportation, can work the hours needed and why they're interested in the job.

7 **Hiring red flags** — Do the person's capacities and attitudes match what is needed to do the job. If you hire an applicant who doesn't have the physical and mental capacities required, you'll end up paying unemployment compensation. Not having the necessary capacities is not a valid reason for termination.

If you need someone to start at 5:30 a.m., schedule the pre-screening tests for 5:30 a.m. If they don't make it on time, what does that tell you? If you need a good driver, have the person take you out for a spin. If you need someone who can lift 25 pounds repeatedly throughout the day, ask the person to demonstrate this ability. True/false, pencil and paper tests are a time-saving tool to accurately pinpoint attitudes like dependability and honesty.

Have the applicant complete these tests before you spend any time on an interview. And, remember, what you see in the interview is better than anything you'll ever see from that person again. If they give you cause for doubt while they're on their best behavior, heed the warning.

continued on page 108



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8 Job interview success — Conduct an interview in private and without interruption. This isn't just a courtesy. This tells the pre-screened, qualified applicant that the job is important and that you take

hiring seriously. (It also makes most applicants more interested in landing the job because it's human nature to want what appears to be hard to get.)

Then position each applicant to tell you the unvarnished truth by saying something like: "I am going to be open and honest with you about this job and our company, and I want you to be open and honest with me. If you've had any kind of trouble on previous jobs, let's talk about it, and I can take it into consideration. However, if you don't tell me about it, and I find out when we do our reference and background checks, I will not be able to hire you. Do you understand what it is I want?"

After the interview, check references. If you aren't concerned about negligent hiring lawsuits, you should be. Employers are routinely being held liable for the acts of their employees. Verify the information given on the application and in the interview. Even if you get a "no comment" from a former employer, make a record of it. In a negligent hiring suit, it will show you did try to check.

All offers of employment should always be contingent on the outcome of reference, background and credit checks. If the employee will be driving on the job, check motor vehicles records too.

9 Hiring services — The smaller a business is, the more important it is to hire right. If you have five employees and one is a bad hire, that person represents 20% of your workforce. You probably already know that the most expensive person you'll ever hire is the one you have to fire. Expert help can design a customized system that will ensure you hire more efficiently and effectively. ■

The author is a consultant and speaker/trainer on strategies for finding and keeping the best hourly employees. He is the president of Humetrics and the author of five books. For more information, visit www.kleimanhr.com or call 713/771-4401.

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merge

Your guide to avoiding an ICE raid — and keeping your workers busy on your clients' properties **BY CARL HAMPE**

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is promising a vigorous enforcement of U.S. immigration laws. That could mean problems for landscape contractors employing illegal workers. ICE uses criminal and civil enforcement tools, and can inflict serious economic damage on companies, even when the company violated no laws. Attention to the following Top 10 items is critical for Green Industry enterprises.

1 Industry profile — Are you an employer of large numbers of unskilled or low-skilled workers? If so, ICE has an interest in you for I-9 compliance audits — and possible worksite enforcement action (Note: Form I-9 Compli-

ance is a method of responding to the federal Immigration Reform and Control Act and enables employers to conduct legal right-to-work Form I-9 employment verifications on new employees). If large numbers of your unskilled or low-skilled employees work in the same location, or in a concentrated location, then you are even more vulnerable to an ICE worksite enforcement action.

2 I-9 rules — Do you follow the I-9 rules and retain the required paper work in the proper fashion? Almost every client of ours answers, "yes" to this question, yet, when we review their documents, we discover problems and, sometimes, legal liability. It makes sense to retain a third party to periodically audit your I-9 files, to ensure compliance.

3 SSA no-match letters — Have you received Social Security Administration no-match letters in the past? If so, did you attempt

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to reconcile the discrepancies? A new ICE rule, effective September 14, 2007, sets forth required employer responses to such letters, and the time frames in which such responses must occur. If an employer follows these rules, then the company avoids being found to have "constructive knowledge" that employees who are the subject of an SSA no-match letter are unauthorized aliens.

4 Housing and transportation — Do you provide housing or transportation to your employees? Transportation would include transfers between facilities or simply a ride to work every day. If so, a review of these policies is necessary, because these are common bases of an ICE criminal investigation.

5 Use and provision of contract labor — Do you use contract workers to supplement your work force? If so, what assurances do you have that the supplier of labor complies with I-9 rules? Alternatively, if you provide contract labor to other companies, what representations are you making regarding the integrity of your own I-9 procedures? Liability extends to all parties involved in a labor contract if ICE can show that the parties knew that the workers being provided were unauthorized.

6 Response to an ICE I-9 audit — Have you been the subject of an I-9 audit by ICE, or even been subject to a worksite enforcement action? If so, to what extent did you cooperate with ICE? If not handled properly, this situation can lead to initiation of a criminal investigation if ICE believes the employer knew of further unlawful behavior but took actions to hide it.

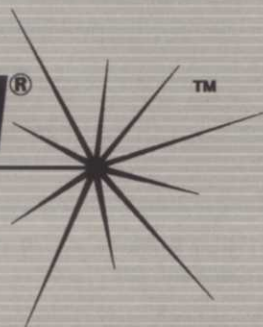
7 Use of the SSA Web site verification system — Have you used the SSA's Web site to confirm the social security numbers of your employees? While this can be a helpful tool to reduce exposure to employers' sanctions penalties and to ICE worksite enforcement, it has limitations and should be compared to use of Basic Pilot (the Department of Homeland Security's electronic employee verification system).

8 Use of Basic Pilot — Have you enrolled in the Department of Homeland Security's electronic employee verification system, known as Basic Pilot or "E-Verify"? This program provides employers with immunity from civil or criminal liability for good faith reliance on the status of any new employee who is confirmed by this system. Some experts question whether smaller companies who are not otherwise known to ICE should join the program, and recommend using the SSA Verification instead.

9 The ICE IMAGE program — Have you considered joining ICE's "IMAGE" program? Few companies have because of the extensive information that ICE requires be shared with it as a condition of program membership. But the promise of cooperation with the key immigration law enforcement agency should not be disregarded entirely and may be worthy of consideration by some companies.

10 Acquisitions and corporate change — Have you recently acquired another company, in either a stock purchase or asset acquisition? Typically, stock purchases involve the acquisition of all of the predecessor company's assets and liabilities, including legal liability for poor I-9 compliance. Diligence on a target company's I-9 practices is important to properly value the company. In addition, the time period shortly after acquisition closes is a critical opportunity to take certain immigration compliance actions regarding all of the acquired company's employees that is unavailable in the non-acquisition context. ■

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The author is a partner with Baker & McKenzie in Washington, DC. He can be reached at carl.hampe@bakernet.com.

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FIND OUT

Why you need a financial watchdog

How to select a CPA you're comfortable with

The qualities you should be seeking

Scott Miller needed to find a reliable certified public accountant who could crunch numbers for his company, Mainscape Landscape Maintenance Services, so he took his request straight to the bank.

"To find valuable advisers, I pick the brains of people I already know," says Miller, president of the Fishers, IN-based company. "We wanted a reputable firm that could interact well with banks in town and work on a national level because we knew we wanted to expand."

Miller had a bit of an advantage when searching for a CPA — his background isn't the norm for most landscape company owners. Actually, Miller left a prestigious job as an

accountant for a capital firm in Indianapolis to fill Mainscape's CFO position. Essentially, he went to work for his former client.

This perspective shapes the way Miller approaches advisory partnerships. A valuable accountant will steer your company in the right direction — or cost you money in taxes and lost business opportunities.

Most contractors need an outside adviser who can serve as a financial watchdog, adds Bill Hildebolt, founder of Nature's Select Premium Turf Services based in Winston-Salem, NC. While hiring an accountant certainly doesn't excuse you from responsibly managing the books, a CPA will provide peace of mind.

"By bringing on an accountant, you can focus on what you do best: the creative aspects of business development, providing service, training employees and motivating your team," Hildebolt says.

Filling a gap

Before you begin a search for an accountant, identify your needs. CPAs, by trade, focus on tax and accounting issues. They analyze historical financial data and assist in critical tax planning.

"But they are not necessarily good advisers when you're considering taking risks," points out Douglas Freer, president of Lawn Lad in Cleveland Heights, OH. "Realize that your professional service providers have limitations and areas of expertise," he emphasizes.

Hildebolt admits he is sometimes tempted to ask his CPA opinions on investments or

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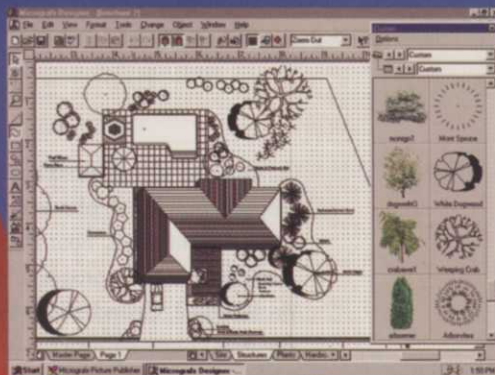
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other strategies. "They are not always in the position to give you advice, so by asking, you are infringing on their goodwill," he says.

If your goal is to bring on a CPA who can offer advice beyond tax law, be sure to explain your expectations as you interview several candidates. When Marty Grunder was seeking a new accountant to help grow his business to the next level, he knew that he required a CPA with financial planning experience — someone could double as a business consultant.

"We wanted someone who understood the operations end of our company," says Grunder, president of Grunder Landscaping in Miamisburg, OH.

Ask the Tough Questions

"It is easy to be impressed by someone's fancy office," remarks Marty Grunder, president, Grunder Landscaping in Miamisburg, OH. But does your CPA prioritize your business, and how well does he or she understand your operations?

Consider these points when interviewing a CPA:

- > Does the CPA have clients with businesses similar to yours?
- > Who will manage your account — the professional you meet or someone else in the firm?
- > How often is the CPA willing to meet with you?
- > Does the CPA ask you questions that make you think?
- > How well does the CPA understand your business — your industry?

— KO

Grunder also needed an accountant who would respond quickly to phone calls, serve as a member of his informal "board" and offer feedback on strategic works-in-progress. When describing this professional, Grunder uses the term "visionary." He suggests constructing a list of characteristics you expect in an accountant.

Not every CPA is equipped to play this role. This is why business owners need a team of specialists they can rely on separately for legal, financial planning, investment and tax advice, Miller says.

"An accountant should do two things," Miller states. "One, he or she should keep you in compli-

ance with the bank and help you hit the financial ratios banks need to loan you money. Two, an accountant should keep you out of trouble with taxes."

Find the right fit

Once you decide what services you expect from a CPA — and be realistic — network with your customers, business colleagues, community members, anyone who works with a CPA who can provide a quality referral.

While Miller asks his banker for suggestions, Hildebolt found his CPA through a landscape customer. Industry associations like the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) and local business groups like chambers of commerce are also great resources for locating CPA candidates, he says.

Once you collect a few reputable names, interview each CPA.

"Accounting is an intimate thing to a lot of people," Grunder points out. The information shared during private meetings is the stuff you probably wouldn't want your neighbor or someone off the street to know.

Hildebolt eventually chose an independent CPA as opposed to working with a large firm that maintained many large clients. "I felt like we were a small fish in a big ocean and the firm didn't focus on what we needed," he describes.

When one of the firm's CPAs started her own business, Hildebolt was quick to contact her for services. "It has been the best working relationship on a business and personal level," he describes.

Business decisions like choosing a CPA are personal for owners because their companies are most often their greatest assets. So take the time to carefully outline your goals, what role you expect your CPA to play in your advisory "team," and then take time to interview candidates so you find the right fit.

"Remember, you get what you pay for," Freer adds. "Demand value, use your advisers wisely and keep your eyes open for new and additional advisers that can provide a different perspective if required." ■

The author is a Cleveland based freelance writer. She can be reached at info@landscapemanagement.com.

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In the public eye

Moore Landscapes' experiences working for the Chicago Park District highlight the challenges (and rewards) of contracting for a city department **BY ERIN WARD**

Chicago mainstays like Lollapalooza, Taste of Chicago, *ER* and the Daley dynasty rarely influence most local companies' business strategies and operations. But for Northbrook-IL-based Moore Landscapes Inc., accommodating the city's demands throughout the Chicago Park District is all in a day's work.

Moore Landscapes' 12-year relationship with the Chicago Park District has produced some of the company's most acclaimed, albeit challenging, work as it maintains the city's

beauty amid rock concerts, TV shoots, press conferences and thousands of annual visitors.

In fact, Moore executives say these challenges have resulted in one of the most fulfilling relationships they've embarked upon in the company's nearly 60-year history, and provide vast opportunities for the firm's 200 employees.

"While we get the prestige of saying the Chicago Park District is our client, it goes beyond bragging rights," said Victor Moore, CEO of Moore Landscapes, who with his brother Eric

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THE CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT HAS BEEN UNDER THE CARE OF MOORE LANDSCAPES FOR A DOZEN YEARS.



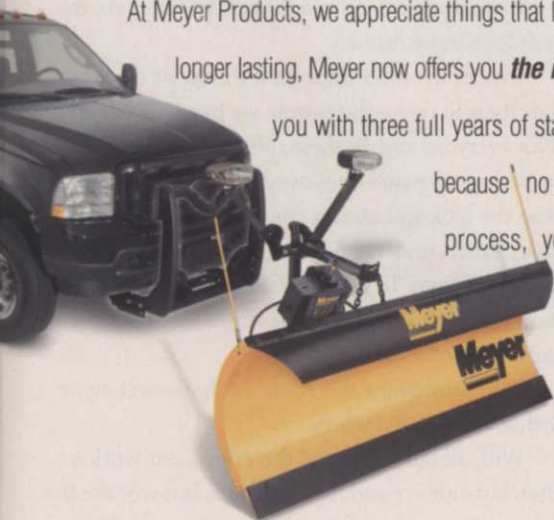
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Moore is a second-generation company owner. "We literally bring to life Mayor Daley's vision of a 'city in a garden,' which is Chicago's motto. We believe landscaping helps air quality; it cools the city; and it attracts tourists. I know it sounds lofty, but we believe our landscaping truly improves the city's civilization."

The relationship begins

Family-owned and -operated since 1948, the company's relationship with the city originated in the 1960s but didn't take off until 1995 when a landscape architect asked Victor Moore to bid on one of Chicago's first medians the mayor wanted to install in front of City Hall. Moore won the bid, and a mutually rewarding relationship began to form. At the same time, the park district was installing the median along Lake Shore Drive, which became one of the first landscape maintenance projects the Chicago Park District ever privatized.

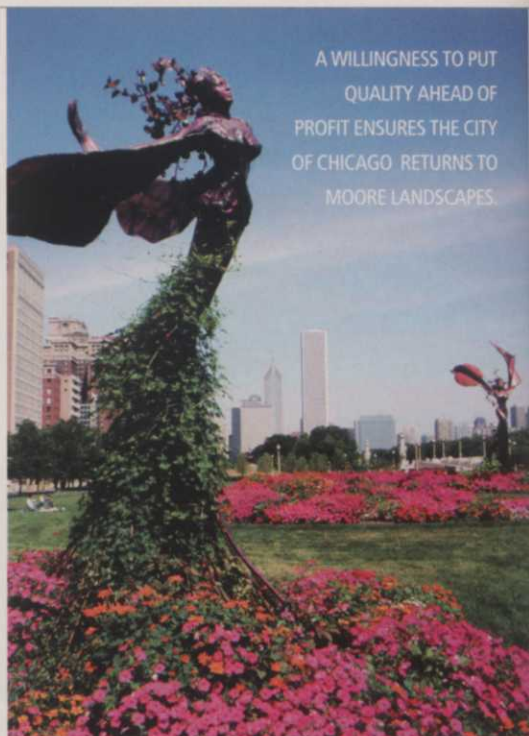
"When we started in 1995, they CPD wanted to raise the bar district-wide and achieve a much higher level of quality," Moore said. "And although they've taken back some of the work they originally contracted to private companies, they continue to employ us more than a decade later."

The most high-profile examples of Moore's work with the Chicago Park District are the floral gardens in the famed Grant Park, just east of the Chicago Loop; Lincoln Park on the city's North Side; and the median down Lake Shore Drive.

Moore Landscapes plants and maintains the Lake Shore Drive median along with approximately 1,200 hanging baskets throughout the city, and maintains 53 miles of medians throughout Chicago. Overall, the company plants nearly 250,000 flowers spanning over 214 square miles throughout the city's parks.

Since the mid-'90s, Moore Landscapes has continued to successfully bid on the Lake Shore Drive median and won the contract for the Chicago Park District floral gardens, due in part to an extreme attention to detail and a willingness to prioritize quality over profit, quality that has not gone unnoticed.

Earlier this year, the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association (ILCA) gave the nod to Moore for its work on the park district's floral gardens by



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honoring the company with a Gold Award. Moore also won a national award from the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET).

Only the best

"No matter what, we make sure the job is done correctly," said Jim Pearson, vice president of maintenance, who oversees the company's contract with the Chicago Park District. "We purchase only the best products and plant materials. We don't jeopardize a floral garden's quality to make a profit, even if that means spending a little extra on a specific fertilizer or a less common flower type to make the beds look more distinct.

"One of the most important things we do to serve the city is to retain the people we have," he added. "Not everyone can do these difficult projects, but we've had the same employees for years. That helps keep the look and quality consistent. The Chicago Park District understands that, and our experience speaks volumes. To us, the work on the CPD comes second-nature, but some other firms wouldn't even know where to start."

Still, maintaining this relationship doesn't come without occasional worry.

"With all the traffic and the events, our work is often last-minute and high-pressure, but we take the time to respect the city's priorities," Pearson said.

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"We understand that the beauty of a 'city in a garden' is Chicago's calling card. It's got to look beautiful 24/7. This spring, there was a television shoot for ER in Grant Park, and we had to move some planters. Even though something seemingly small like that wasn't in our original landscaping schedule, we reworked the schedule on short notice to accommodate the shoot."

Quick on their feet

Pearson joked that these anecdotes could fill a book.

"One time, we learned Mayor Daley was doing a press conference on the South Side, and that we needed to clean up Lake Shore Drive," he said. "His staff called at 8 p.m. for a 10 p.m. event. Another time we needed to reschedule our trucks to deliver 100 yards of mulch in the park because the Mayor was speaking the next day."

Recently, Hilary Clinton, Barack Obama and other Democratic presidential hopefuls appeared at Soldier Field, and the city entrusted Moore Landscapes with cleaning up Lake Shore Drive for the many visitors the political event would attract.

"Requests like that happens about once a week, but we're happy to accommodate," Pearson said.

"If anything, the challenge is more the environment we work in than the relationship itself," Moore concurred. "For instance, the median down Lake Shore Drive has raised planters in a harsh environment, right next to Lake Michigan and inundated with road salts in the winter. It's not exactly a plant-friendly environment."

Moore added that the relationship with the Chicago Park District has become more of a partnership over the past 12 years, as those overseeing the city's parks have become increasingly entrusting of an outside company.

Earned respect

"Our company's track record since 1948 naturally builds credibility, but we don't rest on our laurels," he argued. "A history of service is important, but answering everyday needs is vital. When the park district asks us to do something, we do it immediately."

Overall, Moore Landscapes executives emphasize that the relationship is mutually beneficial. While the city benefits from employing trained horticulturists and landscaping experts at Moore Landscapes, some of whom have worked at the company nearly three decades, the relationship has also produced new opportunities for Moore Landscapes.

For Moore, the inception of a minority- and women-owned business mentoring program has been among the most fulfilling results of working closely with a large public entity like the city.

Through a program called MBE/WBE Participation, Moore Landscapes has mentored minority- and women-owned firms, and taught business and horticultural procedures to help those companies grow.

One beneficiary was Christy Webber Landscapes, a company that started out as a small contractor and currently brings in \$15 million a year.

"We've learned that you have to have large resources and be patient to work for a big public entity like the city of Chicago's park district, but we get so much more back in new opportunities that 20 years ago we couldn't even imagine." ■



The author is a graduate of Northwestern University and now works with the Taylor Johnson Agency. She can be contacted at eward@taylorjohnson.com.



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Circle 178

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Break from the pack

The key to getting ahead is communicating with customers

BY RON HALL / EDITOR IN CHIEF

Consumers often wonder (usually just before buying on price) what differentiates one mowing company or one lawn care company from another.

It's impossible for the competition to treat your clients as you do, says Marty Grunder, landscape company owner, speaker and industry consultant.

He says this while company owners, the people who provide the services, often go to great lengths to get clients and prospects to view their companies more positively than competitors — clean trucks, employees in uniforms, 4-color marketing material — many owners still don't get it. They struggle to separate their companies from the pack in what, from the perspective of many consumers, is largely a services commodities market.

The short answer to setting your company apart in the crowded market is you, the owner.

"It's not as hard to differentiate yourself from your competition as you might think," adds Grunder, who spoke at the Bayer Healthy Lawn/Healthy Business Summit in Cleveland earlier this year.

Key to getting ahead, he says, is communicating with customers.

Grunder says that by establishing open communications with customers, owners get to really know what consumers want and expect in the way of services.

Start that process, at least

FIND
OUT

What
customers
want

What sets your
company apart

Benefit of client
partnerships

regarding lawn care, by building a partnership with clients. This means defining what your company will do to make clients' properties beautiful but also what they're expected to do, Grunder says — for

example, irrigation. Then, keep the communication alive with newsletters, customer surveys (two weeks after sending an invoice is the best time to survey) and, on occasion, phone calls to inquire about customers' satisfaction.

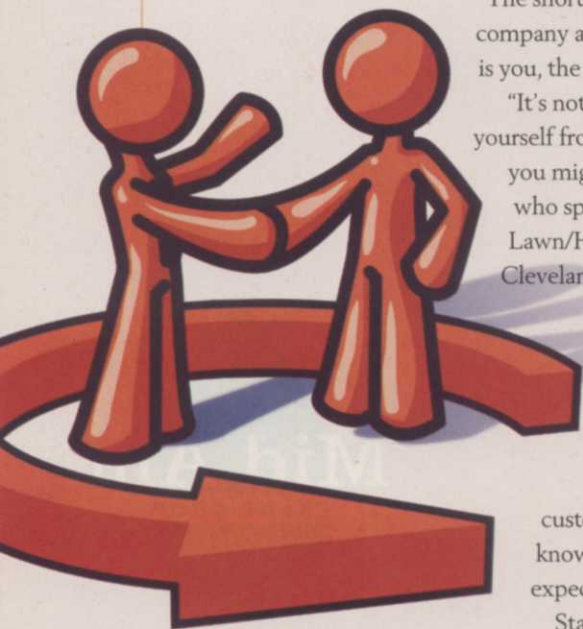
"Develop ways to get feedback," Grunder says. Always ask questions, including: 1. What should we keep doing? 2. What should we start doing? 3. What should we stop doing?

Then listen.

The responsibility (and pleasure) of getting to know clients and their particular needs and expectations doesn't have to and shouldn't fall solely upon the owner. Train and empower your technicians and other employees to ask your customers what they like or what additional services they desire.

"It's almost impossible for your competitor to duplicate how you treat your customers," says Grunder.

By the way, if you've read this far, check out Grunder's Web site, www.martygrunder.com, and click on "Resources" in the Quick Links pulldown menu on the left side of the homepage to locate Marty's "Free Stuff" and his Customer Survey. You're welcome to download, customize and use the survey in your business, he says. ■



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FIND
OUT

About "tire
kicker" jobs

Questions for
prospects

Why to aim for
40% rate

Qualify prospects for bigger profits

Recently, while working on improving field operations with the owner of a Denver-area landscape company, his cell phone rang. He answered it, and we dropped what we were doing to run over to a "great" landscape job prospect. At this point he knew nothing about the job's scope but thought he had a promising potential customer.

We arrived only to find the guy just wanted to replace 200 feet of sod and was looking for the best price he could get. Was he a "qualified" prospective customer? Not for my client, it turned out.

In our profession this happens all the time. We waste time running here and there only to

Five magic questions to ask to separate price shoppers from the customers that will grow your business

BY BILL PHAGAN

find "tire kickers" and price shoppers. I used to do the same thing until I realized I had to find a way to make sure the caller wanted the services that I offered, and at my price. The operative words here are "my price."

Bad prospects and suspects are like wipers on headlights: You don't need 'em.

If this scenario sounds familiar, consider asking yourself and prospective customers some questions. Start, of course, by asking yourself: What is my time worth every hour of my working day?

We don't always realize the value that callers and what we regard (sometimes erroneously) as prospects gain picking our brain and getting our expertise for free.

It's important to start realizing your time is money, and

continued on page 130



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Circle 181

5 questions you must ask

A good marketing strategy should generate calls for your services, but what should you do to qualify the callers? Ask these five questions, and if the prospect answers them to your satisfaction, you will be on your way to another profitable job:

- 1. "How did you happen to call us?"** The prospect may have gotten your name from the Yellow Pages or online, or he/she might be a referral from a great customer of yours. That's good news because it's likely the prospect has received a positive report about your work and probably has some idea of how much your services cost. Report and track prospects' responses so that you can evaluate your marketing efforts and better spend your marketing dollars.
- 2. "What services do you want us to perform?"** Establish the type and scope of the job. Is it something you do well, that's in your market and at an acceptable profit level? Maybe you don't have the expertise or the right equipment to do it well or profitably. Then it may be better to decline the work and suggest someone who can do it well.
- 3. "When do you want us to start the job?"** Some people brag about "turning away business because I'm so busy." You just may be turning down the most profitable job of the year while killing yourself with unprofitable maintenance or other services. Don't turn down work that would be profitable and continue to carry jobs that are low-profit or no-profit. Companies evolve, and the customers that you started with may not fit your profit picture as you grow.
- 4. "How much are you thinking of investing in this project, or what is your monthly budget?"** This question may relate to design/build, irrigation systems, construction, maintenance or mulch. Do you have minimum pricing on the services you provide? Can you afford to take that little sod job? Consider your labor and equipment costs, and don't forget overhead? If the prospect's budget for the services don't fit your minimums, refer the prospect to someone else.
- 5. "What is a convenient time to meet with you and discuss the work?"** If you feel this is a qualified prospect, arrange a meeting with them at the job site. I get a bad feeling if the prospect won't make time or if they ask you to go look at it by yourself and "give me your opinion" or "fax or e-mail me something." Face-to-face time is the time to show your expertise and professionalism.

The more questions you ask about the job — its size, scope and deadlines — the better feel you will have for the prospect. But start with the five that I've suggested.

Train your sales people or whomever takes calls from prospects to ask these questions. This will provide better leads and save lots of wasted time and money chasing business.

continued from page 126

that you've earned your expertise through hard work and hard knocks. Write down what you figure you're worth per working hour. Look at it from time to time to remind yourself not to waste your time, gas and money chasing every bid or prospect.

How many deals do I close if I talk to 10 prospects? Some people are proud to close eight out of every 10 pitches. Sounds good, right? But how many of these closes are at your price and as potentially profitable as you'd like?

What is a good close rate and how do you determine it? Since you want people calling you for your services, you definitely need to get them to call to grow your company. That's called marketing. A rule of thumb is that marketing expenses should run about 5% of your gross income.

Finally, you may ask what is an acceptable closing rate?

I'm really happy with a 40% rate. If 10 people call asking about services, my experience has been that at least five won't qualify due to the job or money they want to spend. Or they're getting 10 quotes. Or maybe their responses to your questions send alarms that they have the potential to be a "customer from hell." That leaves you five people you want to do business with who will spend what it takes and want the type of job that will ensure a profit for you.

Once you give them your proposal (and not a bid) probably one will fall out, or you'll take them out, leaving you with four profitable jobs that you want and where the prospect wants you.

Remember, not every prospect represents a profitable opportunity. Develop your own system to qualify prospects, usually with some simple and easy-to-ask questions, and you'll begin identifying and selling to the types of customers who fit your company's profit sweet spots. ■



Bill Phagan is a Green Industry business operations and financial consultant, who lives in Tampa, and was a longtime former landscape company owner. Contact him at 813-310-1108, e-mail bphagan@tampabay.rr.com or visit his

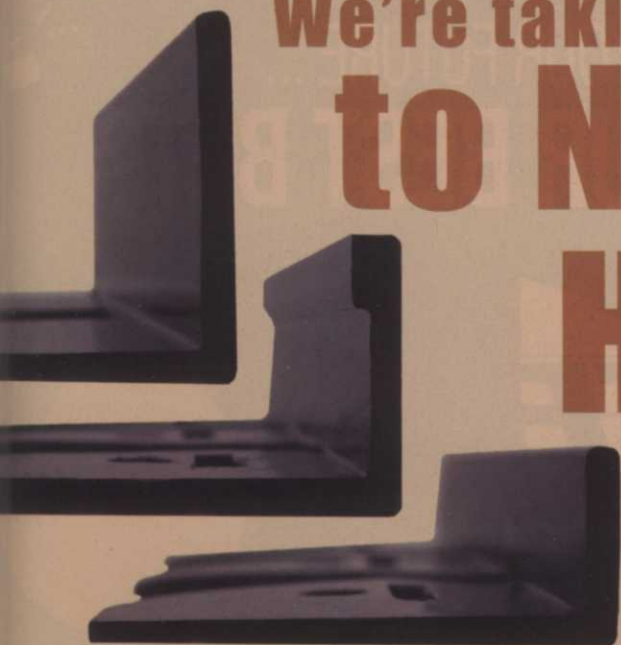
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Circle 184

When customers complain

Handle calls from unhappy lawn care clients one at a time . . .
and diplomatically BY BRAD ANDREWS

FIND OUT

Why education
is better than
confrontation

A strategy for
rewarding long-
term clients

Why you must
plan before
promising a
new service

A customer calls to complain about a dead patch in his lawn; it's grubs. What do you do? You call that customer back pronto, right? Next question. What do you do when he stops you before you barely get your name out and tells you he doesn't understand why he has grubs, because he has a fence? (Yes, it happened.)

Then there's the little old lady with the tiny yard. She's a neighbor and one of your first customers. She's calling and questioning, in her sweet way, the price increases she's received the past few years . . . above what you started her at 15 years ago!

And how about the client that is considering dropping you because you don't mow or do simple property enhancements? He wants

to get a single monthly bill for all of the work that is done on his property.

How do you deal with these customer service issues? If you answered with the single word "differently," you're on the right track.

The first one (one that you'll surely share with your staff for a good laugh) calls for a reasoned response. The second tests your resolve (i.e. backbone) to charge a fair price, a price that provides you with a reasonable profit.

The third may tempt you to get into a service you're not yet prepared to offer profitably. Or it could suggest that it's time to begin adding additional services. That's the toughest of the three to figure out.

Lets try and break down each issue, and try to get to the bottom of what may or may not be best for your company.

The first customer complaint, at a glance, seems the easiest to solve. Even so, it requires your best game face, and a huge measure of tact. Your task is to explain the reasons this lawn may or may not have grubs, and still not offend the customer. If your response is flip-pant or curt, you'll almost certainly lose the account. Why do or say something to lose a customer? Treat every request from a valued client with serious and prompt attention.

This is the time to put your skills as a diagnostician to the test. Note the time of year and environmental conditions, visit the property and examine the turf, talk about recent weather and watering practices and, if the problem does, in fact, turn out to be grubs, provide the client with some easy-to-understand literature about their life cycle and the damage they do. Or give the client a brief

continued on page 136





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continued from page 134
 explanation of how they affect lawns. An educated client is the best kind of client.

The sweet-old-lady dilemma is something that just about every company experiences. The problem is this: A client who has been with you for 10 to 15 years isn't on price control. It's not fair to you or to your other clients that some clients pay 1990s prices while others pay 20% to



assuming you've done your job and asked for satisfied clients to spread the word.

That doesn't mean that you never give them a price increase. Perhaps you

can institute a percentage-based increase pegged to the number of years they've been customers. Start at five years and work back? The longer they've been clients, the lower the price increase? You stagger it and reward their loyalty, guaranteeing, of course, you still make a fair profit.

Finally, we get to the all-in-one client. Do you graciously hand off the customer that wants more services than you presently offer to a larger, yet reputable, company? Do you try to perform the services that they're seeking although they're out of your main service offerings? Or do you find a sub-contractor that you trust to perform the service under your banner?

These are all business decisions that require more thought than a snap response. Obviously, when you add services, you increase your need for additional equipment and for more trained labor. These are all big expenses.

This is, in fact, the kind of decision that can change the fortunes of your company dramatically. These types of decisions certainly shouldn't be based upon the request of a single customer or two.

If you've established a profitable presence in your market for your lawn application business, think long and hard before stretching your service offerings to please a single, or even scattered requests, for additional services. Generally, there's a better solution to pleasing these customers short of giving up the accounts. ■



Brad Andrews, Indianapolis, is a freelance writer with 17 years in the lawn application business, working in practically every capacity, from applicator to customer service. Contact him at ansylm@al.com

>> If you've established a profitable lawn care presence in your market, think long before adding services because of a few requests.

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- Know what records you should have in case of a lawsuit.



Richard Arlington III
Owner, CSP, CLP

Mission Statement:

To change the mindset of contractors and customers one at a time.



Rich Arlington & Associates
9045 Kuhl Road
Erie, PA 16510
Phone: 866-454-0948
Fax: 814-899-4331
E-mail:
rich@arlingtonlawncare.com

Training, customer support:

Rich Arlington & Associates can provide its clients:

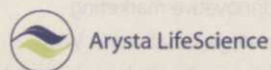
- Innovative marketing strategies that work. We help you create branding and innovative marketing material to set your company apart.
- Consulting and training, at our site or yours.

Whether you intend to grow your business or just make a higher profit, we have the knowledge to help you achieve your goals.

William Lewis
Business Unit Head,
Arysta LifeScience
North America

Mission Statement:

Arysta LifeScience North America turf & ornamentals is part of a global organization working to address your plant protection needs. We are committed to providing you with leading-edge turfgrass disease and insect protection chemicals which are easy to use and supported by independent research, so you can count on dependable solutions each time you apply them. Our products provide superior performance, broad-spectrum activity, and long-lasting control, and we will continue to invest in new technologies to meet emerging agronomic needs.



Arysta LifeScience
15401 Weston Parkway
Suite 150
Cary, NC 27513

Product literature:
Phone: 866-761-9397
Fax: 866-231-8957
Web site:
www.arystalifescience.us/turf

Arysta LifeScience North America

Product focus:

Arysta LifeScience North America turf & ornamentals aims to provide the green industry with continuous innovation and the development of superior technology. Our turfgrass fungicides, insecticides and future herbicide products are designed to be highly effective and environmentally sound for professional management use on commercial and residential landscapes, golf courses, commercial sod production, sports turf and public recreational facilities.

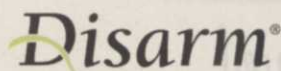
Technical support and customer service:

Technical support:
Dr. Doug Houseworth, T&O R&D Manager
e-mail: doug.houseworth@arystalifescience.com

Sales support:
Steven R. Dal Sasso,
Business Manager T&O
e-mail: steve.dalsasso@arystalifescience.com

Major product lines:

Disarm® Fungicide:
Strobilurin Disease Control That's Affordably Priced
University trials prove Disarm®



Protection From Tee To Cup™

Fungicide provides unsurpassed strobilurin disease control. And because it's priced at a more affordable cost per acre than competitive strobilurins, you can apply Disarm anywhere you need disease control. Used alone, or in combination with other non-strobilurin fungicides, Disarm controls all major turfgrass diseases, including brown patch, zoysia patch, summer patch, gray leaf spot, anthracnose and pythium. Plus, Disarm is the only strobilurin labeled for control of light-to-moderate infestations of dollar spot. And Disarm has consistently proven in university trials to provide superior turf quality ratings. The result: Top-notch control under the toughest disease conditions. Wherever you need disease control, you need Disarm.

Aloft™ Insecticide:
**The One-Two Punch.
Coming Soon***

> **One**—Control of early-season adults and surface-feeding insects.
> **Two**—Long-lasting systemic control of all white grubs.



Arysta LifeScience is developing a more powerful insecticide combination with clothianidin, the active ingredient in ARENA®, for a new product called ALOFT™ that will knock out adults, surface-feeders and grubs better than ever.



*ALOFT™ Insecticide is not available for sale and use, pending Federal label registration approval by the EPA, anticipated late 2007.



Dr. Toni Bucci
Business Manager

Mission Statement:

BASF is committed to the following values: innovation for the success of its customers; safety, health and environmental responsibility; personal and professional competence; sustainable profitable performance; mutual respect and open dialogue; and integrity.

BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals

Product focus:

Better turf comes from better science. As the world's leading chemical company, BASF invests millions in R&D each year, applying for 1,000 patents a year and literally creating innovations on a daily basis. In the last five years alone, BASF has invested more than \$1.5 billion in agricultural-products R&D, as well as several hundred million dollars in plant biotechnology. These investments eventually help lawn care operators control their customers' pests more efficiently, which

improves customer satisfaction and increases profit.

BASF Turf & Ornamentals has an innovative product portfolio with a high proportion of patent-protected products as well as a strong late-stage R&D pipeline. Its patented and post-patented product offering helps lawn care operators choose the most efficient pest management product for their customers' challenges.

Headquartered in Research Triangle Park, NC, the BASF Turf & Ornamentals business group develops and markets chemical solutions for improving

turf quality through pest management, which includes weed, disease and insect control.

Manufacturing facilities:

BASF is represented with production and sales facilities worldwide.

Major product lines:

The BASF Turf & Ornamentals portfolio includes Insignia®, Trinity® Emerald® and Curalan®, fungicides; Pendulum® AquaCap™, Image®, Drive®, Basagran® herbicides; and Amdro® Pro insecticide.



**BASF Professional
Turf & Ornamentals**
26 Davis Drive
Research Triangle Park, NC
27709

Phone: 800-545-9525
Web site: www.betterturf.com
E-mail: tom.hill@basf.com

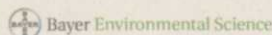




Neil Cleveland
Managing Director,
Green Business,
Bayer Environmental
Science

Mission Statement:

Our focus at Bayer Environmental Science is the development and creation of innovative technologies and solutions for the challenges our customers face every day. Field development, sales and technical representatives located throughout the country offer regionalized support for all Bayer Environmental Science products.



Bayer Environmental Science

2 T.W. Alexander Drive
Research Triangle Park,
NC 27709

Phone: 800-843-1702

Fax: 877-229-3769

Web site:

www.bayerprocentral.com

E-mail: bcs.gpcinfo@bayercropscience.com

Bayer Environmental Science

Product focus:

Bayer Environmental Science, a business division of Bayer CropScience LP, manufactures a full line of turf and ornamental products for use on golf courses, home lawns, sports fields, commercial landscapes, nurseries and greenhouses. Bayer Environmental Science continues a tradition of innovative research and top-of-the-line professional products, backed by highly trained sales and field development representatives.

Backed by Bayer™

Backed by Bayer™ is a primary focus of our organization and a way to ensure success for our lawn care customers. Backed By Bayer means you purchase more than products when you do business with Bayer—you get the confidence that you'll succeed. Our customers receive the assurance that comes from value-added programs, services and an ongoing commitment to the industry.

Backed by Bayer offers:

> **Dedication**—In terms of our field and technical representatives, our industry stewardship, and our training, research and interaction with regulatory agencies.

> **Guaranteed Satisfaction**—We stand behind every Bayer product and guarantee our customers are satisfied.

> **Superior Solutions**—

We help customers gain and maintain superior results through our training seminars, face-to-face marketing, and industry programs.

> **Added Value**—Our

Accolades program rewards customer loyalty. Our recently established Lawn Care Institute is committed to providing lawn care professionals with resources to maintain and grow their businesses, identify current and future trends, and foster the economic interest of the green business. The Lawn Care Institute aids the development, advancement and success of its members by providing the most up-to-date research information and sponsoring beneficial business seminars.

> **Vision for the Future**—

Our investment in the future gives customers tools to meet today's challenges and achieve their goals for growth.

Manufacturing facilities:

With manufacturing facilities worldwide, Bayer Environmental Science produces premier products for use in the turf and ornamental marketplace. U.S. facilities are located in Pasadena, TX; St. Louis, MO; and Kansas City, MO.

To develop and support these products, Bayer Environmental Science maintains one of the premier turf and ornamental

research facilities in the country. The Clayton, NC, Development and Training Center allows for year-round testing of innovative technologies using greenhouses and field locations. Formulations, spray techniques and the influence of rainfall/irrigation on product performance are just some of the details evaluated. Numerous turf problems can be tested under a variety of conditions. The facility also adds significant value in allowing Bayer to respond to customer questions and input promptly.

Major product lines:

From trusted standards like Merit® insecticide to newer products such as Forbid® miticide and Armada® fungicide, Bayer provides solutions to most major turf and landscape pest problems.

MERIT®

allectus®

FORBID®

Armada®

REVOLVER®

topchoice®
Fire ant control.

TopChoice is available only through professional application services.



Steve Levy
President and CEO

Mission Statement:

To be the market leader by developing, producing and marketing innovative rodent control products of uncompromising quality. To commit to excellence in customer service and to conduct our business with the highest integrity. Bell's mission can only be achieved in a stimulating work environment that supports personal growth, individual contribution and teamwork.



Bell Laboratories, Inc.
3699 Kinsman Blvd.
Madison, WI 53562

Phone: 1-800-323-6628
Fax: 1-608-241-9631
Web site: www.talpirid.com
E-mail: talpirid@belllabs.com

Bell Laboratories, Inc.

Product focus:

Bell Laboratories is a world leader in pest control products. From initial product inception and development to manufacturing and subsequent support in product use, Bell focuses on quality, functionality and innovation.

Manufacturing facility:

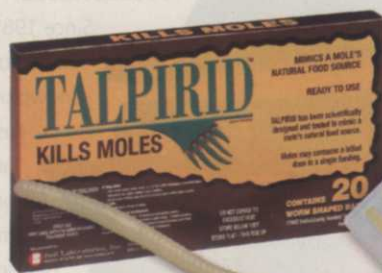
Bell is a vertically integrated manufacturing company. All of Bell's products are designed, tested and manufactured in its modern facility in Madison, WI, which houses its manufacturing operation, offices and biological and chemical testing laboratories.

Technical support:

Bell's dedicated staff is committed to providing quality pest control products and superior customer service at every stage—from product manufacturing to proper field use. This support includes internal and external technical expertise and technical reps in the field that consult on difficult control problems.

Major product lines:

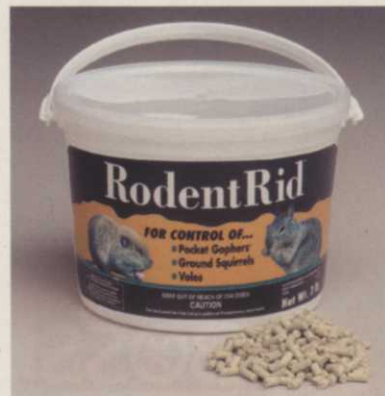
> **Talpirid Mole Bait:** Talpirid is the result of years of groundbreaking research in Bell's biology and chemistry labs and in the field. It is the first and only mole bait designed, developed and



scientifically proven to kill moles. Talpirid's optimal size, shape and feel allow the bait to be consumed in the same manner as moles consume their natural food source, the earthworm. Special enhancers help ensure immediate attraction and excellent product acceptance. The active ingredient, bromethalin, capitalizes on the mole's physiology. One worm can kill a mole in 24 hours. Talpirid is easy to use and is proven to be extremely effective.

> **Rodent Rid:** Rodent Rid controls outdoor pests, including voles, pocket gophers and ground squirrels. Its active ingredient, 2% zinc phosphide, is formulated with human food-grade ingredients for a highly palatable bait that competes well with foods in the animals' natural environment. A restricted-use pesticide, Rodent Rid has a broad label for use on lawns, golf courses, parks,

ornamental and non-bearing fruit tree plantations, nurseries and other non-crop areas. Depending upon the location, the pelleted bait can be either broadcast or hand applied. Once consumed, the bait acts quickly, killing pests in as little as 24 hours. Rodent



Rid was developed for small applications on a select number of outdoor pests. It comes in a convenient 3-lb. pail that is easy-to-carry and reseals tightly to keep bait fresh and free from odor contamination.

THE BOSS Snowplow



Product focus:

Since 1985, THE BOSS Snowplow has made snowplowing efficient and easy with innovative products for professionals and homeowners that set new industry standards for quality, reliability, craftsmanship and performance. Northern Star Industries, Inc. acquired THE

BOSS Snowplow 22 years ago and quickly became an industry leader and innovator. Using new technology and state-of-the-art engineering, the company has pioneered a number of revolutionary features and equipment additions for snowplows, setting new standards within the industry.

Manufacturing facility:

All THE BOSS Snowplows are designed, built and put to the ultimate performance test in Michigan's rugged Upper Peninsula, where winters—and deep snow—are a way of life. THE BOSS Snowplow products are designed and manufactured at the company's ISO 9001:2000-registered facility in Iron Mountain, MI.

Technical support:

THE BOSS satisfies customer needs by designing and manufacturing quality products and providing extraordinary customer service. Working as a team, the company uses the resourcefulness of its entire workforce to continuously improve its processes and products.

Major product lines:

THE BOSS Snowplow line consists of four main categories including:

- > Power-V Multiposition Plows for ½- through 2-ton trucks.
- > Straight-Blade Plows for downsized 4x4s, ½- to 2-ton trucks, and SUVs.
- > Straight-Blade Snowplows for Skid Steers.
- > Salt Spreaders for ½- to 1-ton trucks.

Company innovations:

> **SmartHitch® 2**—Changing the standard in snowplow attachment time forever, Smart-Hitch 2 allows snowplow operators to attach and detach a plow in a matter of seconds in three very simple steps. Smart-Hitch 2 represents the latest in breakthrough technology for snowplow mounting systems.



> **Power-V Multiposition Plow**—Synonymous with THE BOSS, the Power-V Plow, introduced and perfected by the company more than two decades ago, is the industry standard for multiposition snowplows.

> **SmartLight®**—Leading the way in snowplow lighting systems, the innovative BOSS Smart-Light Package provides more light output than the typical snowplow lighting system and is the first and only snowplow light package that can be upgraded to HID (High-Intensity Discharge).



> **SmartShield®**—Setting the standard in the industry for paint finishes, THE BOSS SmartShield baked-on powder-coat paint finish begins with an exclusive zinc primer before the finish coat is applied. The zinc primer adheres to the metal better providing superior corrosion resistance and gives each plow a high gloss shine that keeps your plow looking great for years to come.



THE BOSS Snowplow
P.O. Box 787
Iron Mountain, MI 49801-0787

Phone: 800-286-4155
Web site:
www.bosspow.com
E-mail: sales@bosspow.com

James Hasler
Vice President
-North America

Mission Statement:

More than a vendor, Case is the professional partner to equipment users, providing a full line of premium products, with a wide range of options and attachments, services and support, and ideas to help customers achieve business success.

Case Construction Equipment

Product focus:

More than 50 years ago, Case became the first manufacturer of a factory-integrated tractor loader/backhoe. Since then, Case has manufactured more than 500,000 loader/backhoes, a favorite among landscape contractors the world over. Case has also long offered a durable, versatile lineup of skid-steer loaders and, more recently, compact track loaders. All can accommodate a wide variety of attachments designed to provide maximum versatility.

Technical support:

Through its network of more than 350 Case dealer locations across North America, customers have access to a true professional partner —with world-class equipment and aftermarket support, industry-leading warranties and flexible financing. More information is available at www.casece.com.

Major product lines:

Case Construction Equipment sells and supports a full line of construction equipment,

including:

- > The world's No. 1 loader/backhoes
- > Skid steers
- > Compact track loaders
- > Compact excavators
- > Compact wheel loaders
- > Loader tool carriers
- > Compact crawler dozers
- > Rough-terrain forklifts

Case also offers full-sized wheel loaders, excavators and crawler dozers, as well as articulated dump trucks, motor graders and vibratory compaction rollers.



**Case Construction
Equipment**
621 State St.
Racine, WI 53404

Phone: 262-636-6011
Fax: 262-636-0876
Web site: www.casece.com

Caterpillar Inc.

Product focus:

Through its network of Caterpillar dealers and more than 450 Cat Rental Stores throughout North America, Caterpillar offers a full range of equipment for landscape construction and site preparation. All Caterpillar products are supported by local Cat Dealers, which provide superior customer service.

Caterpillar designs and manufactures 10 models of skid-steer loaders and five models of multi-terrain



Six models of mini-excavators can handle trenching and digging tasks in tight spaces. The newest models feature variable displacement hydraulic pumps for unmatched ability to dig through tough conditions. A variety of work tools equip these machines to do more than digging.

For jobs requiring high mobility, three models of Caterpillar compact wheel loaders are up to the task. Long reach and dump height make them ideal for truck loading. And for site preparation work, Caterpillar offers three models of small track-type tractors that are well suited to tough dozing on a smaller scale.

Caterpillar Financial Services can work with you to facilitate purchases and leases. The Cat AccessAccount provides the convenience of a card-less, revolving charge account that enables customers to pay for parts, service and rentals at any participating Cat Dealer in the United States.

For jobs requiring machines

for a shorter period, look to the Cat Rental Store. Cat Rental Stores are a growing network of locally owned Caterpillar Dealer stores. They have a full range of Caterpillar and other brand-name equipment along with specialized tools to meet all of your jobsite needs.

Manufacturing facilities:

Caterpillar products and components are manufactured in 50 U.S. facilities and in more than 60 locations in 23 countries around the globe.

Sales, training and customer service:

Caterpillar's global dealer network provides a key advantage—customers deal with people they know and trust. Almost all dealerships are independent and locally owned. Many have relationships with their customers that span at least two generations. Cat dealers serve equipment, service and financing needs.

Caterpillar Inc.
100 N.E. Adams St.
Peoria, IL 61629

Phone: 1-888-OWN-A-CAT
or 1-800 RENT CAT

Web site:
www.cat.com/landscaping

loaders, which feature rubber tracks. Several of the machines feature vertical lift, and several have high-flow hydraulics systems for powering high-demand tools. A diverse line of Cat Work Tools equips the machines for a wide range of jobs—buckets for every application, forks, blades, landscape rakes, tillers, augers, trenchers, backhoe attachments, hammers, stump grinders, brush cutters, mulchers, brooms and more.

Steve White
President

Mission Statement:

Challenger Industries is committed to manufacturing the highest quality materials, assuring unparalleled customer service, and offering products to fit any need. We intend to provide unmatched value to each and every customer. Challenger Industries manufactures high quality synthetic turf for landscape, golf, playground, and sports applications under the Envylawn® brand name.

Challenger Industries Inc.

Product focus:

Envylawn® is the most realistic and practical alternative to natural grass lawns ever offered. Manufactured from premium components, Envylawn® is designed specifically for landscape applications. With its natural look, Envylawn® is the perfect lawn, year round in all climates, without the maintenance hassles of natural grass. No need for irrigation, mowers, edgers, aerators or chemical treatments. And you can enjoy Envylawn® anytime. Never muddy, never soggy, never ugly. Envylawn® is perfect for hotels, casinos, condos, shopping malls, restaurants, office complexes, residences, playgrounds, schools, churches and more!

Based in Dalton, GA, Challenger Industries has been manufacturing artificial turf for over 25 years and has developed a reputation for unwavering quality, unmatched customer service, and unparalleled selection.

Challenger Industries is a family-owned and family-run business. Steve White, president of Challenger Industries, has been at the forefront of the artificial turf industry during the past two-plus decades and currently



serves on the Board of the Synthetic Turf Council.

Quality is an integral part of the product offerings of Challenger Industries and it is a commitment that is taken seriously with each roll produced and every shipment.

Challenger is devoted to the continual progress of quality assurance and the development of new and innovative products that are designed to meet the growing needs of the artificial grass industry.



by Challenger Industries Inc.
205 Boring Drive
Dalton, GA 30721

Phone: 800-334-8873

Fax: 706-278-3432

Web site:

www.envylawn.com

E-mail:

info@challengerind.com

John Motis
President and CEO

Mission Statement:

Since 1983 Chemical Containers has dedicated its business to providing the industry's highest quality containment and application equipment in support of the agriculture, forestry, aquatic, turf and pest control business. Our customer commitment is to deliver a finished product on time by the most qualified personnel available as promised.



Chemical Containers
413 ABC Road
Lake Wales, FL 33859

Phone: 800-346-7867
Fax: 863-638-1863
Web site:
www.chemicalcontainers.com
E-mail: sales@
chemicalcontainers.com

Chemical Containers

Product focus:

Chemical Containers Inc. is the largest and most diverse manufacturer/distributor in the southeast United States for all liquid handling product and equipment.

CCI distributes for a broad range of manufacturers.

Lines include: Spraying Systems Co.®, Hypro, Norwesco, Poly Processing, ACE, Udor, Flojet, Surflo, Baldor Motors, and Sotera Systems/FPP.

Technical and sales support:

Product support and sales is ensured through an experienced sales and technical staff known for innovative problem-solving capabilities.

The customer service call center is open 7 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Manufacturing facilities:

CCI's manufacturing facility



is located in Lake Wales, FL, and consists of three buildings on 16 acres, which provides 44,000-sq. ft. of warehouse/manufacturing. Additionally, the facility stocks a complete line of polyethylene tanks on

five acres. CCI also provides CAD drawing/design services and a complete fabrication facility capable of welding stainless steel, aluminum, steel and polyethylene.

Major product lines:

- > Storage mixing and dispensing systems
- > Chemical metering and injection systems
- > Equipment wash systems
- > Sprayers – Truck, trailer, skid and portable units
- > Polyethylene tanks
- > Sprayer parts and accessories

Corona Clipper

Product focus:

Corona Clipper, Inc. is the premier manufacturer of superior forged quality pruning and long handle tools for both the consumer and professional markets. Corona's legendary reputation is built on classic design, handcrafted forged quality, and superior customer service. This reputation has made Corona America's first choice for generations.

The company's product line includes hand pruners, shears, loppers, pruning saws, garden tools, shovels, rakes and wheelbarrows. In November 2007, Corona will introduce a new line of ergonomic tools designed using cutting-edge data gathered by a University of North Carolina research project.

History:

Corona Clipper was established in the late 1920s, manufacturing orange clippers. In the early 1930s, the company relocated to a larger facility and expanded the product line to include lemon clippers, grape shears, hand and pole pruners, and later, loppers, hedge shears, and grass shears. During World War II, Corona was a defense subcontractor, diverting production from garden tools to wrenches, which were

required for the war effort.

Corona's customer base includes the professional landscape, irrigation, horticultural, agricultural, forestry, construction, maintenance and public works markets, as well as the consumer retail market.

Manufacturing facility:

The company is headquartered in Corona, CA, approximately 60 miles south of Los Angeles. Corona has three manufacturing/assembly/warehouse sites in the United States and Mexico, employing approximately 200 people.

Technical support:

Top distributors and dealers rely on Corona's unparalleled expertise to manage the entire hand tool category. Corona offers comprehensive dealer/distributor support from its factory and home office. Corona field representatives provide a first line of

assistance, there to answer questions or offer valuable advice.

Major product lines:

Corona's major product lines include loppers, hand pruners, shovels, hoes and cultivators, hedge shears, rakes, hand and garden tools, striking tools, wheelbarrows, tree pruners and other accessories. Check out the full line of Corona tools and accessories today at www.coronaclipper.com.



"More than 80 years ago, Corona began forging a reputation for quality. Our constant search for innovative techniques to build increasingly superior tools has earned the respect of landscape and agricultural professionals, as well as home gardeners.

Whether you garden for pay or for pleasure, expertly crafted Corona tools will always deliver greater utility and longer service life than competing products that compromise quality features and value for a lower price. This fact is made apparent by our ongoing commitment to outstanding design, premium materials and uncompromising craftsmanship. I invite you to try one of our quality tools today, and learn why Corona has earned the trust of professionals and homeowners alike."

— Steve Erickson
President
Corona Clipper, Inc.



Corona Clipper
22440 Temescal Canyon Road
Corona, CA 92883

Phone: 1-800-847-7863

Fax: 951-737-8657

Web site:

www.coronaclipper.com

E-mail:

sales@corona.bellota.com

Mission Statement:

For more than a decade, Cub Cadet Commercial has exceeded the expectations of lawn care professionals by keeping one simple promise—to build it better. To that end, Cub Cadet Commercial continues to help professionals dominate their turf challenges with its proven lineup of premium outdoor power equipment. From commercial riding and walk-behind mowers, turf application and maintenance products, handheld equipment, compact utility tractors and utility vehicles, Cub Cadet Commercial has engineered your total solution. To learn more about its industry leading turf care products, visit your local Cub Cadet Commercial dealer or cubcadetcommercial.com.

Contact information:

Locate a dealer at cubcadetcommercial.com

National and government customer contact:

Jeff Chenevert,
National Accounts Manager
1-877-835-7841

Cub Cadet Commercial

Product focus:

Cub Cadet Commercial's premium equipment lineup gives pros a total solution for their turf maintenance needs. Major product lines include:

- > Commercial zero-turn riding mowers
- > Commercial wide-area walk-behind mowers
- > Handheld equipment
- > Turf application equipment
- > Compact utility tractors
- > Utility vehicles

New for 2008:

Cub Cadet Commercial has added application and maintenance equipment to its repertoire of products. Designed for dependability on the job, this rugged, high-quality equipment includes:

- > **80-lb. Rotary Spreader**—With its durable construction, this spreader features high-wheel design, an 80-lb. polyethylene hopper and easy rate adjustment mechanism for precise flow control.
- > **XP Spreader**—With a 125-lb. hopper, reliable 6-hp Kawasaki engine and hydrostatic drive, this rear wheel drive spreader offers increased traction, maneuverability and performance. Squeeze controls on the operator consol make application fast and easy.
- > **TR20 Turf Renovator**—This self-propelled unit can be used as a seeder, slicer or verticutter



stability, while an in-line stainless steel mesh strainer and triple-jet agitator ensure consistent quality.

Manufacturing facility:

Manufactured exclusively at its advanced-technology center in Streetsboro, OH, Cub Cadet Commercial's riding and walk-behind mowers and turf application and maintenance products lead the industry. Developed in 1996, this state-of-the-art facility pioneered many of the product innovations in turf maintenance. Additionally, with more than 500 employees committed to quality and excellence, Cub Cadet Commercial products are well-known for their durability and productivity.

Technical support, sales and training:

All Cub Cadet Commercial products come with the support and service of one of America's most trusted dealer networks. To learn more, visit your local Cub Cadet Commercial dealer at cubcadetcommercial.com.

and promotes germination by accurately dropping metered seed into soil where 40 high-carbon steel blades and two full-width brushes do their work.

- > **The TANK Spreader/Sprayer**—Apply granular product or liquids or even both in one pass with the speed and maneuverability of this TANK. This model features tough construction, operator comfort, easy-to-operate controls and a wide stance and low center of gravity.
- > **Sprayers and Sprayer Packages (50- to 200-gallon)**—These packages feature a reliable Kawasaki engine and are designed for long-lasting performance. Tanks are made of heavy-duty roto-molded polyethylene and are rectangular for improved

Curtis Industries, LLC

Product focus:

Curtis Industries, LLC is a designer and manufacturer of snow & ice equipment including snowplows for pickup trucks, tractors and skid-steer loaders. We also offer a full line of salt and sand spreaders. Our Sno Pro 3000 with the Hitch-N-Run System® is a revolutionary design in snowplow attachments and changed the way the industry

looked at the ease of taking a plow on and off the vehicle. Curtis also manufactures cab enclosures for tractors, utility vehicles and golf cars. Curtis is a significant OEM supplier to top manufacturers of tractors and utility vehicles providing cab enclosures and snowplow systems. Decades of experience and innovation have set Curtis apart and captured the choice of even the most diehard snowplow professional. Curtis snowplows are designed and manufactured in Worcester, MA.

Major product lines:

Snowplows
The patented Curtis Hitch-N-Run System is the world's fastest attaching and detaching snowplow. The semi-automatic attachment system is self-aligning and will lock itself onto the vehicle, providing the user with a no-hassle experience

installing a snowplow onto the vehicle (with no pins).

Our current Sno Pro 3000 Phase II plow features Hide-Away Hydraulics mounted out of the way in the A-frame. This offers more air flow into the vehicle's radiator and provides instant down-pressure with the added weight on the cutting edge. A ¼-in. skid plate and gasketed top covers are standard features. The Sno Pro 3000 Phase II also features a Hydraulic Jack Stand, a patented device that uses the power of hydraulics to position the plow at the exact height required for reattachment. The jack stand automatically retracts when the plow is raised, and a frame-mounted jack switch is standard for manual adjustments. The Sno Pro line of snowplows ranges from our 7-ft. Home Pro Model for light-duty pickups and SUVs to our 10-ft. Commercial Plow for medium-duty commercial trucks. All of our vehicle side mount kits are clean and professional and allow the most ground clearance of any manufacturer when the plow is removed.

Salt and sand spreaders

The Curtis Fast-Cast line of salt and sand spreaders ranges from our 3.0-cu.ft. polymer tailgate



mount spreader all the way up to a 4-yd. stainless steel model.

Curtis V-box style spreaders feature an innovative gas engine over hydraulic drive system. This hydraulic drive system removes the use of all chains and sprockets in the drive system and provides an extremely reliable, easy-to-use spreader. Our V-box spreaders feature in-cab controls, providing electric start, throttle control and conveyor adjustments. This gives our customers ultimate control at their fingertips and allows them to conserve the amount of material they use.

Curtis tailgate-style spreaders simply mount into the vehicle's Reese hitch receiver and easily spread salt, deicers and other free flowing materials. All Curtis V-box spreaders come with everything you need for installation, including wiring, mounts and tie-downs.



Curtis Industries, LLC
111 Higgins St.
Worcester, MA 01606

Phone: 800-343-7676

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Web site:
www.curtisplow.com

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David Levy
President

Mission Statement:

DIG is defined by our commitment to our customers. We strive to exceed customer expectations by embracing continuous improvement throughout our organization.

DIG Corporation

Product focus:

DIG Corporation was founded in 1981 with a commitment to developing a complete line of low-volume irrigation products for the commercial turf and landscape industry. We have expanded this vision, incorporating innovative technology to develop irrigation controls using light as a source of energy.

elimination of field wires to the valves, and an independently powered control system, the LEIT-2 possesses an array of benefits including savings in time, labor and cost. The RC-2 handset operates up to 99 controllers or 198 valves wirelessly. With multilingual, icon-based software, the LEIT-2 controller is extremely easy to use and understand.

DIG uses state-of-the-art equipment in its manufacturing processes. DIG commissioned its extrusion line facility in 2000 and produces drip tubing and drip line, using virgin 7510 polyethylene material to ensure a reliable, long-lasting product for its customers.

With over 25 years of product development, DIG Corporation has produced a comprehensive and versatile line of irrigation products and continues to excel in the creation of intelligent irrigation solutions. DIG is dedicated to the research and development of quality, environmentally conscious products that will meet the irrigation industry's needs today and in the future.

Manufacturing facility:

Located in Vista, CA, DIG owns and operates a 40,000-sq.-ft. facility where exceptional products are manufactured, assembled and thoroughly tested.



From concept to design, DIG's engineers are driving to develop technically superior products that are environmentally friendly while achieving a quality level supporting extended product life and reliability.

Light Energized Irrigation Technology (LEIT) has been developed and refined over the last 18 years with a series of protecting patents. Powered only by ambient light, LEIT Controllers operate around the clock, unlike their solar powered predecessors. Available in up to a 28-station configuration and optional remote operation (LIET XRC).

Our new LEIT-2 controller defines the term "true wireless" technology. With the



Technical support:

DIG is defined by our commitment to our customers. We strive to exceed their expectations by providing world-class customer service, embracing continuous improvement throughout our organization and proactively developing products of the highest quality that satisfy our global customer needs and use the earth's resources wisely.



DIG Corporation
1210 Activity Drive
Vista, CA 92081

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Web site: www.digcorp.com
E-mail: dig@digcorp.com

Steve Schumaker
President

Mission Statement:

To maintain our position as a leading manufacturer for professional edging and landscape products in North America, through world-class quality, service and innovation.

Dimex LLC

EdgePro® Paver Restraint
We're taking EdgePro® to New Heights

EdgePro® Professional **EdgePro® ProLip**
Define Your Planting Bed

EdgePro Ultra™
PVC Landscape Border System

Product focus:

As a leading manufacturer of professional grade edgings for landscape and hardscape applications, Dimex LLC is committed to producing high quality products engineered for rigorous conditions. In each product, you'll find unique characteristics that make it superior in convenience and reliability.

Manufacturing facility:

Dimex operates a spacious 220,000-sq.-ft. manufacturing facility in southeastern Ohio. All raw materials (Rigid PVC and Polyethylene) are compounded in-house to the most stringent specifications. As a

manufacturer, Dimex is able to keep a competitive advantage over non-manufacturing competitors with careful management of raw material supply chains and tight control over manufacturing costs. Dimex also manufactures specialized products for masonry construction, marine and OEM applications.

Technical support:

Our staff is dedicated to meeting your requirements and making it easy for your company to do business with Dimex. With large inventory levels year-round, most stock orders ship within 24-48 business hours. For custom

products or packaging configurations, we'll explore solutions that meet your business needs.

Major product lines:

The following Dimex brands are among the most recognizable names in the landscape industry, meaning installers see Dimex (or our brand names) and ask for our products by name:

- > EdgePro® Paver Restraint
- > EdgePro® Landscape Edging
- > EdgePro Ultra™ Landscape Border System
- > ProLock® Poly Chain Lock Tree Tie
- > ArborGard® Tree Trunk Protector



Dimex LLC
28305 State Route 7
Marietta, OH 45750

Phone: 800-334-3776
Fax: 740-374-2700
Web site: www.edgepro.com
E-mail: sales@dimexcorp.com



Jerome Peribere
President and CEO

Mission Statement:

All that we are and everything that we do is driven by our commitment: commitment to agricultural and specialty markets; to innovation in science and technology; to proven, reliable solutions; and to responsible stewardship. We diligently follow this series of commitments so we can fulfill our final key area of focus: our commitment to customer success. Every scientific breakthrough, every technological invention, every innovative product—they are all developed with the customer in mind. Our customers are at the core of everything we do. In fact, we believe our job is to make our customers successful.

Dow AgroSciences
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www.dowagro.com/turf
E-mail: info@dow.com

Dow AgroSciences

Product focus:

Dow AgroSciences delivers innovative technology that exceeds market needs and improves the quality of life of the world's growing population. We are a wholly owned subsidiary of The Dow Chemical Company. That strength and stability plus the passion of more than 5,500 of the industry's most talented people ensures we meet our customers' needs. We will continue to pursue innovative solutions using science and technology to meet the ever-changing needs of our customers and the demands of new marketplaces. This is clearly evident in the examples of innovative products we have recently introduced, and the several new products and technologies in our pipeline. That's our commitment to the industries we serve and most importantly, that's our commitment to you.

We have a comprehensive T&O portfolio with proven solutions for every problem.

Major product lines:

> **Dimension® specialty herbicide**—Provides premium season-long pre-emergence control of crabgrass, spurge and oxalis and other grassy weeds, along with early post-emergence control of crabgrass. Never stains and won't harm turf.



Great for use on overseeded turf. Available in several formulations and on fertilizer.

> **Gallery® specialty herbicide**—Most-effective pre-emergent herbicide for broadleaf weeds labeled for cool- and warm-season turf. Can be applied in spring or fall, and helps minimize costly callbacks due to weed breakthrough. Provides control for up to eight months.

> **LockUp™ specialty herbicide**—Broad-spectrum activity of the active ingredient, penoxsulam, allows it to be best used in combination with other herbicides to control broadleaf weeds. This granular product provides postemergence activity at low use rates and shows increased efficacy compared with other granular herbicide options. LockUp, which will be available

in formulated products, can be used on warm- and cool-season turf at at the labeled rates—generally 0.02 to 0.06 pounds ai/A. Accepted for review and registration under the U.S. EPA's Reduced Risk Pesticide Initiative.

> **Eagle® 20EW specialty fungicide**—A liquid systemic fungicide for preventive and curative control of 19 turf-destroying diseases, including dollar spot and brown patch. Available in convenient, easy-to-use containers ideal for use on home lawns and backyard fruit trees. Won't harm popular turfgrass and ornamental species.

Technical support, sales, training, customer service:

Nineteen sales representatives, three technical sales representatives, two sales managers, four product technology specialists and various product and marketing specialists provide training, stewardship and solutions to formulators, distributors, university researchers and end users nationwide. Specimen labels and MSDS are available from the Customer Information Center or online at www.dowagro.com.

*TM Trademark of Dow AgroSciences LLC
State restrictions on the sale and use of Dimension, Eagle 20EW and LockUp apply. Consult the label before purchase or use for full details.

Pete Lord
President

Mission Statement:

Our mission is to always provide the landscape professional with the most innovative, feature-rich and easy-to-use landscape design software in the marketplace.

Drafix Software

Product focus:

Take your business to the next level using PRO Landscape design software.

PRO Landscape is very easy to learn and even easier to use. Create stunning visual landscape designs including night and holiday lighting, 2D site plans and accurate estimates through three integrated modules.

PRO Landscape makes it fast and easy to sell, plan and bid your landscape designs.

> **Image Editor:** Do your customers have trouble visualizing your landscape designs? Use PRO Landscape's Image Editor to create a "life-like" before-and-after image of your proposed landscape using a digital photograph of the customer's house or building. The image library includes more than 5,000 of the industry's highest quality images of plants (by climate zones), grass, mulch, hardscapes, water features, night and holiday lighting and more. Create a design in just minutes that your customer will easily understand!

> **Planner:** Tired of drawing by hand, then spending extra time labeling your drawing and doing quantity take-offs? Use PRO Landscape's Planner

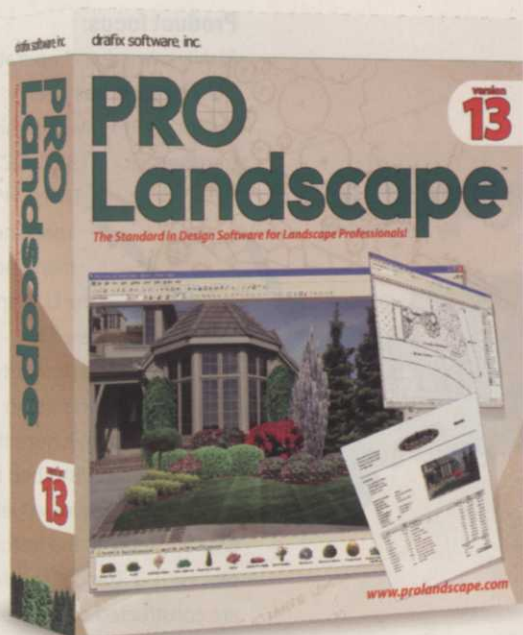
to quickly create a scaled 2D-site plan that accurately represents the installation of plantings, hardscapes, even irrigation systems. While you are drawing, Planner keeps track of all the plant materials, calculates the area of pavers and other hardscapes, and volume of materials such as mulch or rock. Even creating plant callouts or a legend is quick and easy.

> **Proposal:** Would you like to improve the professionalism of your estimates? PRO Landscape's Proposal generates an accurate bid directly from your Image Editor

or Planner file, eliminating errors and duplicated efforts. Simply put in your prices and tax rate and Proposal will do the rest. Once you create your estimate, put together a professional-looking customer presentation including the cover sheet, estimate, material list and plant information in just seconds!

Technical support:

PRO Landscape comes complete with a tutorial/training CD and free technical support. Classroom and one-on-one training is also available.



Drafix Software
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E-mail:
sales@prolandscape.com

Roger Porter
President

E-Z Trench Mfg.

Product focus:

Family owned and operated, E-Z TRENCH® has been manufacturing walk-behind trenchers since 1982. E-Z TRENCH® machines are manufactured in the U.S. and engineered for quality and durability.

E-Z Trench® specializes in machines that minimize the amount of turf disturbed by trenching. This saves valuable time and labor in the restoration process. E-Z Trench® machines are constructed of all steel and cut with carbide bits that offer high wear resistance. Features such as these and dual belt drive keep maintenance costs and down time to a minimum. Durability and dependability means less headaches and more profits for you.

Major product lines:

Trenchers

The Groundsaws are the fastest digging small trenchers on the market:

> The Groundsaw EZ9000 will trench 100 feet in approximately 5 minutes. Replaceable heavy-duty carbide bits and all steel construction make it very durable and dependable. The on-the-go depth adjustment enables the operator to dig a trench 2½-in. wide from 0- to 13-in. deep with ease.

> Groundsaw EZ9100 was built for durability and performance. It has a centrifugal clutch drive that is bathed in oil, which provides protection against extreme conditions and abuse.

> J1000 EZ-Trench® has a set depth depending on the blade size. It comes equipped with a 1½-in. wide by 7-in. depth carbide cutting blade. Other blades allow trenching ½- or 2-in. wide and 3½- or 5-in. depth.

Bed edgers

The Bedscaper is the most maneuverable bedder/trencher machine on the market. Caster steering makes cutting graceful curves easy and allows a turning radius of less than two feet. The patented blade design will cut harder soils, pulverize the



Bedscaper
By E-Z Trench®



Woodchuck
By E-Z Trench Mfg

cuttings, and bevel the bed edge to the foliage while cutting a clean well-defined vertical border. Its unique design also augers soil toward the center of the bed out of the trench. You can create a beautiful raised bed in minutes.

Stump and brush cutters

The Woodchuck can be used to grind stumps and even cut down brush. Breaking away from traditional vertical cutting blades, the Woodchuck SG65 uses a horizontal carbide blade to make grinding stumps or cutting brush easier by cutting against the wood grain.

SabreTill mini tiller

The SabreTill is a rental duty mini tiller. It digs with carbide-tipped rugged steel blades that are rotating 650 rpm. This means that the SabreTill will cut much harder soils.

GROUNDSAW
By E-Z Trench



E-Z TRENCH
OUR NAME SAYS IT ALL

E-Z Trench Mfg.
2315 Highway 701 South
Loris, SC 29569

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Emak USA, Inc.

Mission Statement:

Our mission is to create outdoor power equipment with added value to satisfy the most demanding end-users, farmers and professionals working in the landscape maintenance industry, while always focusing on product innovation, maximum competitiveness and a strong sales and service network.



Major product lines:

We offer a full line of Efco chain saws, trimmers, brushcutters, pole pruners, blowers, hedgetrimmers, earth augers, cut-off saws and accessories.

Product focus:

Efco power equipment aims to demonstrate the highest standards when it comes to quality, durability and design. Every Efco engine is equipped with a Class A (300 hour) rating for engine life, the top rating available for 2-cycle engines, and is now backed by the industry-leading "Five Year

No Fear" warranty with 5-year consumer and 2-year professional coverage.

Manufacturing facilities:

Emak has three production sites, seven branches and 120 distributors with a presence in more than 70 countries across five continents.

Technical support:

Emak USA serves, supports and distributes products to strong and established independent outdoor power equipment dealers throughout North America who are ready to provide reliable customer

service. For more information and a dealer locator, visit www.efcopower.com or call 1-800-800-4420. You can purchase Efco products with complete confidence that you can use them to their full potential year after year, knowing that they're backed by a rock-solid global company and we stand by them 100 percent.



Emak USA, Inc.
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Web site:

www.efcopower.com

E-mail: info@emak.us



Darrell Adamson
President and CEO

Engrave-A-Crete

Product focus:

Engrave-A-Crete is the world's premier manufacturer of decorative concrete cutting equipment. We offer the tools and resources for you to easily learn the art of concrete engraving. Nearly 15 years ago, Engrave-a-Crete began development of the processes, systems and machines that have become the basis of an entire industry—Decorative Concrete Engraving.

Engrave-a-Crete has successfully helped individuals start a profitable business—or add to their existing businesses—with decorative concrete engraving tools.

Engrave-a-Crete offers seven business packages that allow you to enter the highly profitable decorative concrete engraving business with nearly any budget.

Technical support:

You'll get FREE unlimited ongoing technical advice for as long as you own your machines. There is no extra cost for this service; and at Engrave-a-Crete's acclaimed **Training and Discovery Seminar**, you'll become a certified specialist in just three days.



Engrave-A-Crete®

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E-mail:

sales@engraveacrete.com

Tony Pappas
CEO/President

Mission Statement:

At Exaktime, our mission is to save our customers time and money by providing electronic time and attendance tracking solutions that are accurate and easy to use.

Exaktime, Inc.

Exaktime revolutionized time and attendance tracking in 2001, when it introduced the portable, all-weather JobClock. Subsequent innovations such as PocketClock™, TimeSummit® and AccountLinx® have cemented Exaktime's place as the industry leader in time and attendance tracking solutions. Over 500,000 workers clock in every day with the No.1-selling JobClock System.

The JobClock System

With The JobClock System you can track attendance for every worker, and every jobsite, 24/7—and you can get rid of handwritten timecards once and for all.

The battery-operated JobClock is the No.1-selling timekeeping solution in landscaping today because:

- > **It's easy to use:** Workers carry green "Keytabs" on their keyrings to clock in and out. Green for go, red for stop.
- > **It's rugged:** Made of stainless



steel and milled aluminum, it can withstand any weather.

- > **It's 100% accurate:** It takes the guesswork out of payroll and eliminates time "rounding" and "fudging."
- > **It automates the payroll process:** The JobClock System interfaces with accounting and payroll software, eliminating the need for manual data entry. Time and attendance records (including overtime and lunch deductions) are transferred electronically to programs like QuickBooks, MasterBuilder, American Contractor, Peachtree, Timberline, Paychex, etc.

PocketClock

For service and route work, Exaktime offers PocketClock. This Palm-based time and attendance tracker is a portable timeclock that tracks an unlimited number of cost codes. PocketClock software

records worker time and attendance on a Palm Pilot. Each worker is assigned a PIN, which they use to clock in and out. PocketClock enables workers to select from a list of jobsites and cost codes, displayed in English or Spanish. Supervisors have the option of clocking an entire crew in or out.

JobClocks and PocketClocks can be combined to handle the needs of long-duration, short-duration, and service jobs.

Manufacturing facilities:

The JobClock System is made in the United States. Exaktime is based in Calabasas, CA.

Contact us:

Call one of our time and attendance specialists at 888-788-8463. We'll answer your questions and put together a JobClock System that meets your needs.



Exaktime

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www.jobclock.com

E-mail: info@jobclock.com



Dan Rosenbaum
Director, FMC
Professional Solutions

Mission Statement:

Feeding the world, protecting health and providing the conveniences of life. That is the mission of FMC.

With our superior technology and strong partnerships with customers, FMC Corporation is finding solutions that help to change people's lives for the better. FMC is a global, diversified chemical company that has been providing innovative solutions, applications and quality products for more than a century in agricultural, industrial and consumer markets.



FMC Corporation
FMC Professional Solutions
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E-mail: rick_ekins@fmc.com

FMC Corporation

Product focus:

FMC Professional Solutions is dedicated to providing creative solutions that answer a direct need in the marketplace. The history of FMC is steeped in innovation and success in bringing new technologies to the market. It began with John Bean's insecticide spray pump invention in 1883 and continued when FMC set the standard for broad-spectrum pest control with Talstar® insecticide and continues today with the introduction of QuickSilver®, Dismiss® and Echelon™ herbicides.

FMC is proud of its 124-year history of providing effective technologies that answer a need for customers in the United States to Australia, Europe and beyond.

With its heritage of fierce independence and dedication to customers, FMC first entered the pest control industry in 1987 and has since expanded its portfolio to address market needs in the nursery, turf, ornamental, golf, aquatics and other specialty chemical segments.

To keep pace with the demands of today's marketplace, FMC Professional Solutions has created an initiative that seeks input on new product needs directly from customers and searches aggressively, both inside and



outside of FMC for solutions to meet those needs.

Technical support:

To reach customer service or technical support representatives, please contact the Customer Satisfaction Center at 800-321-1FMC.

Major product lines:

> **Talstar® insecticides:** Proven reliability for superior, long-lasting, broad-spectrum control of the toughest surface-feeding pests. *Trusted Because It Works.*

> **QuickSilver® herbicide:** Visible results within hours

of application when tank-mixed to control more than 50 tough-to-control broadleaf weeds. *Customer Satisfaction In Every Tank.*

> **Dismiss® turf herbicide:** See visible results in just 48 hours and get long-lasting control of even the toughest sedges. *Results Without The Wait.*

> **Echelon™ herbicide:** A new preemergent crabgrass product providing preemergent broadleaf and sedge control—making subsequent postemergent treatments easier and more profitable. *Expect More.*

Russ Mitchell
Director of Marketing
and Products

Quali-Pro

Product focus:

Quali-Pro professional turf and ornamental products feature post-patent herbicides, fungicides, insecticides and plant growth regulators. Backed by the strength of Makhteshim-Agan Industries, Quali-Pro is focused on quality, value, performance, and most of all the continued success of our customers in the professional turf and ornamental markets.

We are proud to support and actively participate in our professional affiliations, which include: RISE, PLANET, GCSAA, PAPA, CAPCA, ITODA and various local and state associations.

Technical support:

Quali-Pro has a network of sales managers throughout the United States with extensive professional turf and ornamental market experience. In-house, Quali-Pro has two customer service representatives to meet the needs of customers on a daily basis.

This season the newest addition to the team is Jerry Corbett as Technical Services Manager. Jerry is responsible for conducting research, developing product data and providing support for end users. He works hand in hand with universities and extension agencies throughout the country to get this accomplished.



QUALI-PRO

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Raleigh, NC 27609

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Fax: 800-979-4075
Web site:
www.quali-pro.com

Mission Statement:

Premier designer, manufacturer, marketer and distributor of high quality outdoor power equipment sold exclusively through independent dealers.



Go The Extra Yard.™

Ferris
5375 N. Main St.
Munnsville, NY 13409

Phone: 800-933-6175
Fax: 315-495-0109
Web site:
ferrisindustries.com
E-mail: marketing@
ferrisindustries.com

Ferris Industries

Product focus:

Ferris is a veteran of innovation. We've introduced quality products and have been delivering solutions to our customers for over 95 years.

Our history is a long line of firsts. We brought you the industry's first hydrostatic drive walk-behind mower and the first electric deck lift. Our zero-turn mowers are the only commercial mowers with suspension.

We stay ahead of the pack. That's why Ferris, the commercial mower specialist, has earned the reputation as the innovation leader in the outdoor power equipment industry. Our ongoing development in mower design and suspension technology substantiates that position.

Products are a reflection of people who build them. Our cutting-edge technology starts with sharp minds—experienced professionals who understand what you do each day. At Ferris, we pour our talent and time into creating ways for you to work better, faster and smarter. The result: a first-class line of commercial mowers.

Ferris commercial mowers help you make the most of every minute in the field. Our mowers balance power and speed with productivity and precision. Our extensive equipment line promises you a perfect fit with a wide range of rugged walk-behinds, reliable three-wheel riders and innovative zero-turn mowers ranging from 44-



IS 3100Z BIG BLOCK: The blending of Ferris Suspension with a Vanguard™ BIG BLOCK™ engine results in a commercial mower with superior power and performance. In all, four new Ferris brand BIG BLOCK commercial mowers are available: a 30-hp air-cooled IS 2000Z, a 30-hp air-cooled IS 3100Z, a 32-hp air-cooled IS 3100Z and a 35-hp liquid cooled IS 4500Z.

72-in. Our exclusive patented suspension systems, paired with powerful engine choices, achieve new levels of performance and productivity.

Manufacturing facility:

All this technology turns heads. To keep up with demands for products, Ferris has expanded its resources with several facility additions that feature state-of-the-art tow lines, assembly areas and paint systems.

Technical support, sales, training and customer service:

Customers can count on the service and support they receive from authorized Ferris dealers.

Those dealers are backed by the most experienced service technicians and parts support team in the industry.

Major product lines:

Ferris manufactures a complete line of zero-turn and three-wheel riders, featuring Ferris' exclusive suspension systems, and innovative hydrostatic walk-behinds.



IS 500Z: Bar none the best value in the industry, featuring a 24-hp Briggs & Stratton Extended Life Series engine, 44-in. cutting width and patented suspension technology.

James Higgins
President & CEO

Finn Corporation

Product focus:

The Finn Corporation is a leading manufacturer of high-quality equipment and products that provide labor-savings and increase productivity in all phases of the lawn, landscape and erosion control development work, with products lines including HydroSeeders™, Bark Blowers, Straw Blowers and the Finn Hydroseeding Consumable Products.

Major product lines:

> **HydroSeeders:** Hydroseeding is more efficient than sodding, broadcast seeding or any other method of establishing turf or controlling erosion. FINN HydroSeeders use 100% hydraulically driven, mechanical paddle agitation and liquid recirculation to enhance the loading, mixing and discharge operation. Only FINN's exclusive pump design, variety of units ranging from 300- to 3,300-gallon capacities, and numerous options provides for a more powerful and operator-friendly HydroSeeder, while keeping maintenance costs low. The new Titan HydroSeeder is perfect for erosion control contractors with larger hydroseeding projects, as well as for highway, dust control,



landfill, golf course and greater commercial sites. The power, speed and design of the Titan HydroSeeder makes this machine unbeatable for steep slopes, extremely large coverage areas or hard to maneuver jobsites.

> **Straw Blowers:** FINN Straw Blowers multiply your productivity and profits by doubling straw coverage in a fraction of the time it takes to apply by hand. There's no more efficient way to ensure soil moisture retention and protect against erosion damage to freshly seeded areas. Designed to deliver smooth, reliable power for maximum straw shredding and discharge, FINN Straw Blowers make quick work of straw mulching even in the most demanding conditions.

> **Bark Blowers:** FINN Bark Blowers are the most versatile performers you can find, delivering high quality results in landscaping, erosion control and construction-related applications. With high production bulk material handling and accurate application, your workers

can increase productivity up to 700%. And since FINN Bark Blowers apply uniform coverage, you'll achieve material savings of 25% or more. A FINN Bark Blower is the most versatile worker on the job site—delivering needed materials to hillsides, tough terrain, and all hard-to-reach areas.



> **Hydroseeding Consumable Products** are an exclusive blend of premium products that create the ideal growing environment in a single-step HydroSeeder™ tank load. Consumable Products consists of plant hormones, polymers, erosion control tackifier, soil amendments and microbial bacteria to enhance germination, to create moisture retention, to promote soil stabilization, to provide valuable nutrients, and to help fight disease. This is the future of growing grass.

FINN

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E-mail: sales@finncorp.com



GMC

PROFESSIONAL GRADE VEHICLES. ENGINEERED TO LEAD THE INDUSTRY.

If you're looking for a complete lineup of innovative trucks and vans, look no further than GMC. Our engineers continue to craft smart, powerful vehicles designed with your business needs in mind.

> SIERRA

Stable and poised, loaded or unloaded, Sierra reacts with pure precision. It handles curves with a firm grip, capitalizing on a front track that's a full three inches wider than the previous-generation Sierra. It also has



an exceptionally sturdy frame that's an amazing 230% stiffer torsionally. That means Sierra can manage the road with handling that feels smooth and crisp, even while carrying a heavy load.

Sierra keeps you out of harm's way with a variety of available safety features. From



OnStar® with a one-year Safe & Sound Plan;* dual-stage frontal air bags;† head curtain side air bags;‡ and StabiliTrak® Stability Control System to its Tire Pressure Monitoring System (does not apply to spare tire) and Rear Parking Assist, **Sierra keeps you safe from every angle.**

> SAVANA

In addition, the 2008 Savana Cargo van sits alone — at the top. It's the only 1/2-ton with a standard V6 engine. No small feat when you're looking to drive your business to a new level of efficiency. Look beyond this GM-segment exclusive offering,** and you'll also find a host of other powerful engine choices for 1/2-ton models, including a 5.3L V8 and a 5.3L V8 with E85 FlexFuel for most applications.

Of course, every business has different demands. So

Savana 3/4-ton and 1-ton models offer a 6.0L V8 on passenger models and a 4.8L V8, 6.0L V8, and DURAMAX 6.6L Diesel V8 on cargos and cutaways. Plus, the 6.6L is specifically engineered for low emissions and easy servicing. The Savana Cargo van: Countless engine choices. **A one-of-a-kind business tool for any tradesman.**

* Call 1-888-4-ONSTAR (1-888-466-7827) or visit www.onstar.com for system limitations and details.

† Always use safety belts and the correct child restraints for your child's age and size, even in vehicles equipped with air bags. Children are safer when properly secured in the rear in an appropriate infant, child, or booster seat. Never place a rear-facing infant restraint in the front seat of any vehicle equipped with an active frontal air bag. See the vehicle owner's manual and child safety seat instructions for more safety information.

‡ Air bag inflation can cause severe injury or death to anyone too close to the bag when it deploys. Be sure every occupant is properly restrained.

** Excludes other GM vehicles.

GMC
Phone: 1-800-GMC-8782
Web site: www.GMC.com

GPS Fleet Solutions



Eron Iler
President

Mission Statement:

Supply the right technology to meet customers' needs for the lowest investment while supported by industry leading customer service.

Product focus:

Fleet tracking technology helps companies save money, improve routing efficiency, identify unsafe driving behavior and improve customer service. These improvements add to the bottom line and help minimize operating expenses. Other benefits such as insurance reductions, overtime wage control and an end to moonlighting are real-world examples almost all GPS users experience. Whether your company is interested in real time or historical tracking, GPS Fleet Solutions has the product and expertise to meet your requirements.

GPS Fleet Solutions will create a project plan, ID the right system within budget, establish and deploy equipment nationally and train staff. We consult with enterprise managers on all aspects of evaluation, testing, implementation, training and finding the return on investment. Visit us online or call to learn why GPS Fleet Solutions can help take your organization to the next level.

Major Product Lines :

GO RF Historical, Wireless, GPS Tracking System: This is a one-of-a-kind, high-resolution system that provides passive

(historical), real time or both in one fleet—using one database. This is the landscaper's choice for small fleets or enterprise applications on a WAN. Fortune 100 companies to two truck fleets find this system beneficial. Large organizations can centralize a SQL SVR database and have multiple GO platforms reporting to one centralized database for the entire country.

Marcus Real Time Tracking System:

One word describes Marcus ... Easy. The Marcus® GPS vehicle tracking, location and dispatching system is our No. 1 real time fleet tracking system. It provides continuous information on stop times and locations, routes taken, speed and exceptions using email alerts. Companies in the service, delivery and transportation industries are finding the standard 2-minute updates and web access to be extremely useful and convenient for increasing efficiency, accountability, productivity and profitability.

Heavy Equipment Tracking,

Theft Recovery: Designed specifically for tracking large industrial equipment by exception or only a few times



per day. The HEU sends email alerts if equipment is removed from a job site, violates a zone or exceeds engine hour limits. This system is ideal for heavy equipment such as road construction machines, front end loaders, cranes, bulldozers, dump trucks, or situations where an occasional location is needed in a harsh environment.

Battery Powered Asset

Tracking System: The TTU is a battery operated, ready-to-go telemetry device designed to communicate with satellites that provide true nationwide coverage, even in the most remote areas. The versatile TTU installs in just minutes with four screws or an adhesive pad! The low profile and stealth design allows this GPS unit to be installed without the need for harnesses, external power or antennas. The Geo-Fencing option allows you to setup special regions where the unit will alert you if it leaves the specified region. The magnetic switch sensor can report things like doors being opened on construction containers.



GPS Fleet Solutions

12108 56th St.
Tampa, FL 33617

Phone: 813-600-1738

Fax: 813-319-5825

Web site: www.4agps.com

E-mail: info@4agps.com

Stan Guyer
President

The Grasshopper Company

Product focus:

Grasshopper True ZeroTurn™ mowers are built for maximum comfort, durability, productivity and versatility while providing easy operation, agility and timesaving performance. Deep DuraMax™ decks deliver a quality cut in a variety of mowing conditions. The QuikConverter Implement System™ lets you change FrontMount™ deck sizes or add attachments in minutes without tools. The industry-exclusive PowerFold™/Electric Height Adjustment option for Grasshopper 48- to 61-in. FrontMount™ DuraMax™ decks effortlessly raises the front of the deck vertically with the flip of a switch for easy access to the underside for cleaning and maintenance. PowerFold™ also lets you change cutting heights from 1 to 5 inches with the same switch.

Manufacturing facility:

Grasshopper power units, mowing decks and attachments are produced by skilled workers with high-tech equipment

including computer-aided manufacturing fully integrated with a 3-D solid modeling computer design system, and CNC fabrication and machining. Facilities include more than 300,000 square feet of manufacturing, testing and warehouse space in Moundridge, KS.

Technical support:

Technical support is provided to Grasshopper customers through an extensive dealer network throughout the United States. The company provides service schools for its dealers.

Major product lines:

Grasshopper True ZeroTurn™ FrontMount™ mowers with horizontal crankshaft, OHV engine choices from 16 to 32 hp, liquid-cooled or air-cooled, gas or diesel.

Grasshopper True ZeroTurn™ MidMount™ mowers with horizontal crankshaft, OHV engine choices of 18 to 32 hp, gas or diesel. Deck cutting widths available from 41 to 72 inches. Year-round attachments include PowerVac™ collection systems, AERA-vator™, edger, turbine blower, V-plov, dozer blades, rotary brooms, snowthrowers, tine-rake dethatchers, and sprayers. Other options available include winter enclosure and heater.



The Grasshopper Company
P.O. Box 637
Moundridge, KS 67107

Phone: 620-345-8621
Fax: 620-345-2301
Web site:
www.grasshoppermower.com

Todd Pugh, President
Steffon Hoppel,
Vice President
Lloyd Shankel, National
Sales Manager

Mission Statement:

Green Industry Innovators is dedicated in bringing to the landscape and turf industry innovative quality products designed to increase productivity while eliminating labor. To help landscape and turf professionals grow their business and increase their bottom line without the need of additional personnel.



Mulch Mule by Green
Industry Innovators
7727 Paris Ave.
Louisville, OH 44641

Phone: 330-875-0769
Fax: 330-875-0782
Web site:
www.mulchmule.com
E-mail:
lloyd@mulchmule.com

Green Industry Innovators

Product focus:

Green Industry Innovators is focused on building quality products that will help landscape and turf professional grow their business without increasing labor and payroll. The Mulch Mule with a three-man crew can spread 80 to 100 yards of mulch in one day, vs. the typical 20 to 30 yards of mulch with a four- to five-man crew. The Mule just produced three times the work in one-third the time. This is manpower and time to go after new jobs that were unattainable without adding personnel, increasing productivity and the company's bottom line.

Manufacturing facility:

Mulch Mule is manufactured by Green Industry Innovators at 7727 Paris Ave., Louisville, OH. Steffon Hoppel oversees all manufacturing and operations of the Mulch Mules.

Technical support:

Service and parts questions



can be answered by calling 330-823-5700 Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. during the summer months and 8 a.m.-5 p.m. the rest of the year.

Major product lines:

Green Industry Innovator's line of Mulch Mules has included two models: the Mulch Mule, a 15-yd. capacity machine; and the Mini Mule, a 10-yd. capacity machine introduced in January 2007.

At the 2007 GIE+EXPO, we will debut the new Labor Eliminator MEGA Mule option, which is capable of handling any landscape material from mulch to river rock. This new option will be available for all Mules.

Also debuting at the

GIE+EXPO will be three new Truck Mount Mules:

- > A Cab Over truck style mounted with a 10-yd. machine and debris/leaf vacuum system.
- > A larger conventional medium-duty landscape truck with a 15-yd. capacity and a debris/ leaf vacuum. Both will feature dual operating controls with one being a remote control for the driver or field man. A hydraulic driven 5-ft. Extension Conveyor will also be standard for increased production.
- > And a Roll Off 15-yd. machine for site work where you simply drop the Mule and take the truck to another site to perform more work.

Jim Ross
President

Mission Statement:

As a professional supplier to the green industry, we are committed to exceeding our customers' expectations by providing quality products, innovative services and professional knowledge — measured by the mutual profitability and success of our customers, employees and shareholders.

Horizon

Ask any landscape professional what his most costly expense is and he'll answer "time." Time wasted waiting, driving around, and trying to find the right product in stock. Over the past few years, many irrigation and landscape distributors have tried to combat this by expanding their inventories to deliver what has been called a "one-stop shop." But many have fallen short, unable to readily stock the many product choices available, especially in power equipment and agronomic products. And finding staff trained in everything from irrigation to two-cycle oil is difficult.

One distributor has found the answer. Horizon stores offer a complete selection of all products the landscape professional needs, including irrigation and central control, erosion control, specialty reclamation products, fertilizers, chemicals, seed, sod, two-cycle engines, walk behind and ride-along mowers, landscape lighting, pond supplies and tools. They even offer built-in barbecues! How do they do it?

Horizon doesn't dabble in a product line. The company offers a full line of products and expertise for each of its major product offerings: Irrigation, Landscape Products, Professional



Lawn Care Equipment and Specialty Products.

Contractors are savvy enough to know the difference between a full-line supplier and those that pretend to be. We respect our customers' time and back it up with the inventory and expertise they require. Each new product line is fully examined, analyzed and evaluated to ensure it will add value to Horizon and to its customers.

Horizon serves customers from 60-plus locations in 10 states. Horizon offers a full agronomic offering to the turf professional backed by the expertise of several pest control advisors on staff.

Based on customer feedback and demand, the formula is working.

Horizon's first commitment is to saving their customers

time, especially when they stop in for supplies.

Time is money to contractors. They have better things to do than take a number and wait at a counter for someone to go get what they want. All Horizon stores have in-aisle signage, displays and technical advice so the customer can quickly find the answers they want. And personalized assistance is just a moment away. We have the best people in the industry serving our customers.

Not every supplier can pull off the breadth and depth of this offering and do it with the expertise required. We spend more on developing and educating our people so they can quickly understand the customer's need and deliver the best solution for them—quickly.



Horizon
5214 S. 30th St.
Phoenix, AZ 85040

Phone: 800-PVC-TURF
Fax: 602-276-7800
Web site:
www.HorizonOnline.com
E-mail: webmaster@horizononline.com

Paul Jackson
Founder

Mission Statement:

Alocet Incorporated is built on the belief that solid business processes create solid companies. It is our mission to be the leader in accounting software add-ons by challenging our customers to adopt software systems that free up time from administrative tasks in order to focus on what makes them profitable.

QXpress

Product focus:

QXpress is the scheduling software of choice for green industry companies who use QuickBooks. QXpress is a true QuickBooks add-on that turns your favorite accounting package into top-rated, industry-specific management software by adding scheduling, job costing and invoicing capabilities. You don't have to learn a whole new system—you can just add industry-specific functionality to your existing QuickBooks.

QXpress is flexible enough to handle all the needs for the green industry:

- Lawn maintenance businesses save hours by automatically printing route lists for weekly services, and turning completed services into QuickBooks invoices at the end of the month.
- Irrigation businesses easily dispatch spring start-ups, winterizations, repairs and



installs by easily seeing what availability technicians have on their calendar.

➤ Landscaping businesses easily turn QuickBooks estimates into multi-day, multi-task projects, and track detailed job-costing information.

➤ Fertilization businesses calculate lawn care program prices by square footage and route their services according to geographical zones.

In short, QXpress can be as simple or as powerful as you need it to be!

Technical support, sales, training and customer service:

Telephone support is available Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. EST, by calling 877-529-6659.

Movie tutorials are available at www.qxpress.com/ MovieTutorials.

Major product lines:

➤ **QXpress 7.0** — For small- and medium-sized green industry businesses using QuickBooks.

➤ **QX Enterprise** — Runs on SQL server, for medium- to large-sized green industry businesses using QuickBooks.

➤ **QX Mobile** — A Pocket PC version of QXpress that allows supervisors, crews and estimators to take QXpress with them on a small handheld unit and synchronize wirelessly from home or in the field.

➤ **QX Mapping** — Has new functionality for accurate routing, such as the ability to calculate and display a job site's exact proximity to existing services.

➤ **QX Forms** — Free for all QuickBooks users, QX Forms features industry-specific route list, work order, invoice, renewal letter and proposal templates to be used with QXpress or QuickBooks.



QXpress Scheduling Software

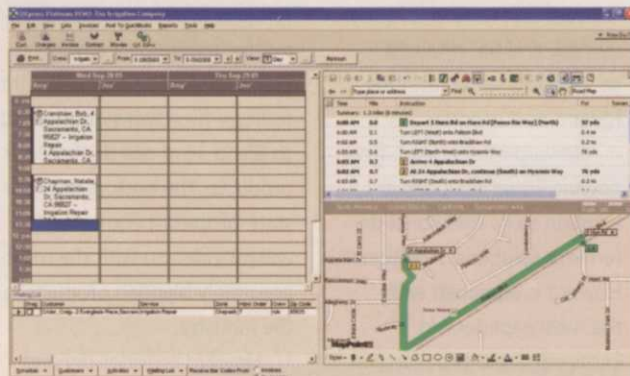
57 Spadina Ave., Suite 210
Toronto, Ontario
M5V2J2Canada

Phone: 877-529-6659

Fax: 416-640-6027

Web site: www.qxpress.com

E-mail: info@alocet.com





Robert Howard
President and CEO

Mission Statement:

No matter what challenges you face, Howard Fertilizer & Chemical Co. has solutions. You can rely on Howard for all of your fertilizer and chemical needs. Our proprietary, state-of-the-art, heat-infused coating process assures that our products are always perfectly blended for maximum performance and economy. After 75 years in the Southeast, no one knows the land and climate dynamics better than Howard.



**Howard Fertilizer
& Chemical Co. Inc.**

P.O. Box 628202
Orlando, FL 32862-8202

Phone: 800-899-3141

Fax: 407-858-0314

Web site:

www.howardfertilizer.com

E-mail:

cbarton@howardfert.com

Howard Fertilizer & Chemical Co. Inc.

Product focus:

Howard Fertilizer was founded in 1932 by brothers Julian and Robert Howard to provide a comprehensive collection of quality fertilizer solutions to the growing citrus industry in Florida. As the company grew and as agriculture evolved, Howard Fertilizer maintained pace with new technology that was developed to serve its market. The company became one of the largest fertilizer manufacturers in the Southeast and maintains its status today.

In 2002, Howard Fertilizer began offering chemicals to complement its fertilizer solutions, thus changing its name to Howard Fertilizer & Chemical Co. Along with this growth, the company began targeting other markets such as lawn care, turf and ornamentals.

Today, managed by Robert Howard Jr., Howard is family owned, and has retained its service-oriented attitude toward its customers.

Howard offers clean, free-flowing liquid solutions in addition to its traditional dry fertilizer solutions. Additionally, Howard is equipped with the most experienced, knowledgeable sales force in the Southeast.



Manufacturing facilities:

8306 S. Orange Ave.
Orlando, FL 32809

7205 Highway 50 East
Groveland, FL 34736

Major product lines:

Howard ProFusion™ is a proprietary, state-of-the-art, heat-infused coating process we apply to our **AccuBlend™** fertilizer mixes. **AccuBlend™** is our technologically advanced, computerized declining weight fertilizer blending system, used to blend all of our dry fertilizer products. The bottom line: our state-of-the-art equipment will provide you with the most accurately blended products in the industry.

Howard provides dry and liquid fertilizer, fertilizer/



pesticide products & chemical distribution including, but not limited to:

- > **Ronstar®** (pre-emergent herbicide)
- > **Bifenthrin** (multi-purpose insecticide)
- > **Pendimethalin** (pre-emergent herbicide)
- > **Dimension®** (pre-emergent herbicide)
- > **TopChoice®** (insecticide)

Richard E. Hunter
President and CEO

Hunter Industries

With a legacy of pioneering efforts, Hunter has focused on bringing to market truly innovative products that have the power to advance the industry.

At the heart of the Hunter product line are the company's signature pop-up gear-driven rotors. Using the most advanced technology to deliver a consistent stream of water to a precise location, Hunter rotors helped launch an industry-wide "rotor



revolution" by becoming the standard by which all sprinklers that followed would be measured. Because all Hunter rotors pop up above the turf when in operation, then retract below grade when the cycle is completed, landscape irrigation has become more accurate, reliable and safer.

Thanks to the concept of modularity, Hunter is bringing a revolution to the irrigation controller line as well. Starting with a base unit to which modules that contain additional stations are added, it is possible to configure a

single controller to the number of zones a particular job requires. No need to replace a controller with a larger one when a system's needs grow – simply add another module. And no need for the installer to stock an inventory of various sizes of controller – just keep base units and extra station modules on hand.

With a complete line of irrigation components encompassing virtually every kind of landscape need, the

Hunter product lineup is rounded out by a wide range of valves, spray heads, and a full family of sensor products.

All Hunter products are sold exclusively through an international network of professional

irrigation distributors. This highly successful system has made Hunter products available only to professional designers and installers who rely on the brand for the distinction it gives their projects and because Hunter is an industry leader.

But it is more than simply products at Hunter. It's a full commitment to helping those who purchase the brand make their business be the best it can be. A prime example is the Hunter Preferred Contractor Program, the industry's only frequent buyer program



that helps members get the equipment they need, advertise and promote their services, and provide training for their personnel.

There's also the Hunter DATA Line that puts design recommendations, programming solutions, and installation assistance just a phone call away. The Hunter Web site teeming with valuable resources. A wide array of computer software and helpful printed materials. Advanced education through the Hunter Institute of Irrigation, and more. In fact, no other company in the industry provides the kind of ongoing support that Hunter does.

From the performance of their products to the performance of their people, Hunter is dedicated to the needs of the irrigation professional.

Hunter[®]
The Irrigation Innovators

Hunter Industries
1940 Diamond St.
San Marcos, CA 92078

Phone: 800-733-2823

Fax: 760-471-9626

Web site:

www.hunterindustries.com

Dee Kapur, President

International Truck and Engine

Product focus:

Formed in 1902, International Truck and Engine is a leading producer of medium trucks, heavy trucks, severe service vehicles, mid-range diesel engines, parts and service. Our products, parts and services are sold through a network of nearly 1,000 dealer outlets in the United States, Canada, Brazil and Mexico and more than 60 dealers in 90 countries throughout the world.



can quickly assess a truck's situation, and specialized tools that can handle any repair, our goal is simple—get trucks back on the road fast. For more information and helpful tools, including Performance PM, a program to help manage your regular maintenance, talk to your International dealer.

> **Navistar Financial:** Only Navistar Financial Group offers a complete financial solution for your business. After more than 50 years in the transportation industry, it's what people have come to expect. Each customer has unique financial needs, and we take pride in tailoring programs to meet those needs.

Major product lines:

For the landscape market, International offers two products: the International® DuraStar™ and the International® CityStar™.

> **The International DuraStar** is a medium-duty conventional

truck, designed for maximum strength and durability. Through innovations such as leaner service schedules and a stronger, lighter frame rail system that can carry heavier loads, this truck helps drivers or work crews be more efficient. It's all part of the greater durability and maximum uptime that makes the International brand one of your smartest allies on the road to profit.

> **The International CityStar** is a low cab forward model, designed to maneuver through the tightest of job sites. The International CityStar is easy to drive, efficient to maintain and economical to own. International, with its affiliates, is the world's largest diesel engine maker across the 50 to 375 horsepower range. In North America, International has nearly 50 percent share of the diesel pickup engine market, and 40 percent of the market for medium-duty commercial trucks and buses.

Technical support:

With nearly 900 dealer locations nationwide, International® offers the industry's largest network of truck experts. Wherever your trucks may roam, we're right there with you.

> **Parts and service:** To stay miles ahead, you need expert service, from people with extensive knowledge, experience and training. The International dealer network has exactly what you're looking for. With premium quality parts available nationwide, the latest in diagnostic technology that



A NAVISTAR COMPANY

**International Truck
and Engine**
4201 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Web site:
www.internationaltrucks.com



James Field
President, John Deere
Worldwide Commercial
& Consumer Equipment
Division

Mission Statement:

We aspire to distinctively serve customers—those linked to the land—through a business as great as our products. We will achieve this through exceptional operating performance, disciplined SVA growth, and aligned high-performance teamwork.



JOHN DEERE

**John Deere Worldwide
Commercial & Consumer
Equipment Division**
2000 John Deere Run
Cary, NC 27513

Phone: 800-537-8233
Fax: 919-804-2343
Web site: www.JohnDeere.com
E-mail:
jdlawns@JohnDeere.com

John Deere Worldwide Commercial & Consumer Equipment Division

Product focus:

The John Deere Worldwide Commercial & Consumer Equipment Division manufactures and distributes a full line of lawn care products for residential, commercial, and golf and turf applications. The John Deere organization is noted for nearly 170 years of innovation, the highest quality products, and its product and operator safety initiatives.

Facilities:

The John Deere Worldwide Commercial & Consumer Equipment Division manufactures its line of commercial equipment in Raleigh, NC; Charlotte, NC; Horicon, WI; Augusta, GA; Alpharetta, GA; Greenville, TN; Rock Hill, SC; Welland, Canada; Gummersbach, Germany; and Enschede, The Netherlands.

Technical support:

At www.johndeere.com, John Deere customers can find information on a variety of support functions,



including online product operator manuals, warranty information and product selector tools. In addition,

customers can call the John Deere Customer Communications Center at 800-537-8233.

Kawasaki Motors Corp., USA

Product focus:

Kawasaki Engines and Power Products, a division of Kawasaki Motors Corp., USA, distributes gasoline engines and professional handheld power products for landscape, industrial and consumer markets. The division services customers through its network of over 7,500 independent dealers throughout the United States and Canada.

New products:

> BIG V-TWINS: The demand for more power in ZTR riding mowers with 72-in. decks is on the rise, and Kawasaki has responded with two big-power V-twins, the 34hp FX921V and the 37hp FX1000V. The FX Series engines are compact, 90° V-twins with a displacement of 999cc's.



Kawasaki Motors Corp., USA
5080 36th St. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49512

Phone: 1-800-433-5640
Fax: 1-616-954-3031
Web site:
www.kawpowr.com



They feature hemispherical combustion chambers and three valves per cylinder, with Kawasaki's advanced, overhead v-valve technology that provides low emissions, high power and smooth operation.

Other features include a twin barrel, internally vented carburetor with fuel shut-off solenoid, and large capacity fuel pump. Standard features that help ensure high durability include cast-iron cylinder liners, a forged crankshaft, a high-performance oil cooler, a large cooling fan, a combined crankcase design and a high-density canister air filter.

> HANDHELD BLOWER:

Kawasaki power and comfort are now available in a convenient handheld blower, giving lawncare and landscape professionals the power they need for quick, easy cleanups after mowing, edging and other jobs. The new KRH300A (KRH300AC in California) is lightweight and easy to maneuver, with a new ergonomic design and impressively powerful

maximum air flow.

The KRH300A is sleek, comfortable and professional. It weighs 10.4 lbs., yet features a powerful 26.3cc engine to clean up big jobs with a maximum air volume of 450 cfm.

The KRH300A includes an air intake guard that fits over the fan guard, allowing air into the engine while preventing loose-fitting clothing from blocking the air intake while in operation. Controls are conveniently placed on the hand grip for easy, one-hand use. The KRH300A features low noise and vibration levels.

All Kawasaki handheld and backpack blowers have the "Critical Component" for top performance: a Kawasaki engine. They deliver unmatched durability, reliability and overall quality in Kawasaki handheld power products, as well as commercial mowers and other equipment.

Keystone Retaining Wall Systems, Inc.

Blaine French
General Manager



complete solutions for earth stabilization projects of every description. CONTECH ESS is one of four operating divisions of CONTECH Construction Products Inc. The most extensive selection of bridge, drainage, earth stabilization, and stormwater solutions comes from CONTECH, the only true nationwide, single source provider. To learn more about the CONTECH ESS family of products, visit www.contechess.com. To learn more about the quality and value in Keystone Retaining Wall Systems products and services, visit www.keystonewalls.com or call 800-747-8971.

products. We are very proud to offer comprehensive and skilled support in the areas of research and development, engineering, sales and marketing. The web site, www.keystonewalls.com, is an interactive resource offering complete design and installation details. Individual portals for designers, contractors and homeowners make the web site a one-stop source for all Keystone site solution information.

Major product lines:

From do-it-yourself residential landscape projects to complex commercial jobs, Keystone products offer a diverse selection of aesthetics with unmatched structural integrity and durability:

- > **Keystone Standard Unit**, the industry's most stable construction platform for taller walls.
- > **Keystone Compac Unit**, a valuable combination of cost effectiveness, aesthetics and performance.
- > **Keystone Country Manor®**, for projects where aesthetic considerations are paramount.
- > **Keystone Half Century Wall®**, a multi-size system with advanced structural integrity.
- > **Keystone Landscape Series**, superior natural stone aesthetic perfect for residential projects.

Product focus:

After more than 20 years, Keystone Retaining Wall Systems, Inc. continues to set the standard for excellence and innovation within the segmental retaining wall industry. Symbolizing cutting-edge design, performance and aesthetics, Keystone provides site solutions for governmental, commercial/industrial, recreational, public works and residential applications.

Keystone is a subsidiary of CONTECH Earth Stabilization Solutions Inc. (ESS). CONTECH ESS is the nation's leading provider of

Manufacturing facility:

In partnership with the best network of manufacturers, Keystone products are available throughout United States and several international locations. Keystone has always been a product of the energy, passion and focus of the industry's premier manufacturers, product developers, engineers and sales professionals.

Technical support:

Since our establishment, Keystone's focus has been to offer exceptional support services as well as superior



Keystone Retaining Wall
Systems, Inc.
4444 W. 78th St.
Minneapolis, MN 55435

Phone: 1-800-747-8971

Fax: 952-897-3858

Web site:

www.keystonewalls.com

E-mail:

keystone@keystonewalls.com

C.G. Kim
President



Mission Statement:

KIOTI is steadfastly committed to the advancement and growth of compact tractor technology, value and service. And, in this important quest, KIOTI knows its success will always depend on two things:

- > Putting customers first
- > Believing in the power of teamwork

We are dedicated to providing quality economical tractors with marketplace staying power, committed to listening to our customers and providing the elite compact products their jobs demand, devoted to building an outstanding dealer network and supplying those dealers with quality parts and training and responsive service support.

KIOTI Tractor
6300 KIOTI Drive
Wendell, NC 27591

Phone: 1-877-GO-KIOTI
Fax: 919-374-5001
Web site: www.KIOTI.com

KIOTI Tractor

Product focus:

KIOTI Tractor, a Division of Daedong-USA, Inc., provides North America with premium tractors, implements and attachments that are engineered for reliability and durability. KIOTI tractors are "purpose built" and come with a Four-Year Warranty.

Manufacturing facility:

Daedong Industrial Co., LTD., located in Daegu, South Korea, has been a world leader in the engineering and development of mechanized farming equipment for more than 50 years.

Daedong's responsiveness to complex market challenges, manufacturing excellence and commitment to durable, high quality products has resulted in the acceptance of Daedong products in more than 30 global markets.

The company's progress in research and development continue to shape the future of farm equipment mechanization throughout the world.



Technical support:

KIOTI provides full service in parts, sales and warranty support throughout a network of dealers in North America. For over 20 years, KIOTI has

provided retail customers with quality compact and utility tractors, attachments and implements through its North American Dealer Organization. Service and warranty training are provided to the North American Dealers at KIOTI's headquarters in Wendell, N.C. to assure that dealers have qualified, factory trained technicians.



Tom Rich
President

L.T. Rich Products

Product focus:

L.T. Rich Products is a manufacturer of stand-on fertilizer/spray systems, aerators and turf renovators for the commercial lawn care industry. All units are zero-turn and feature a pump/wheel motor transmission. We use only state-of-the-art laser-cutting equipment and CNC fabrication machinery.

Sprayers feature all stainless

steel construction with large fertilizer and liquid spraying capacity. Sizes range from 100 to 300 lbs. for fertilizer and eight to 50 gallons of liquid.

Aerators feature 36-in. or 46-in. tine width and 95,000-sq.-ft.-per-hour productivity.

Several attachments are available for the aerators, including a spray system, fertilizer spreader, de-thatch rake, slit seeder, and even

a snow plow. Custom and purpose-built units are also available. All products are sold direct or through a dealer base depending on location.

Manufacturing facility:

22,000-sq.-ft. facility in Lebanon, IN.

Major product lines:

- > Z-SPRAY
- > Z-PLUG



L.T. Rich Products
920 Hendricks Drive
Lebanon, IN 46052

Phone: 877-482-2040

Fax: 765-482-2050

Web site: www.z-spray.com

E-mail: sales@z-spray.com

Katherine Bishop
President and CEO of
Lebanon Seaboard
Corporation

LebanonTurf staff:

Bob Rich, Director
of Sales and Marketing

Cynthia Andrews,
Marketing Associate

Mike Sisti,
Product Manager

Murray Wingate,
Marketing Manager—
Seed

Tim Ford,
Research Agronomist

Gary Neyman, Business
Development Manager

Tim Layman,
Sales Manager

Greg Ellis, Sales Manager



LebanonTurf
1600 E. Cumberland St.
Lebanon, PA 17042

Phone: 800-233-0628
Fax: 800-806-8563
Web site:
www.LebanonTurf.com

LebanonTurf

At Lebanon Seaboard Corporation, we have a proud 60-year history of serving customers, commitment to excellence, and dedication to innovation. Golf course superintendents and sports turf managers know they can count on LebanonTurf to provide the products they need to thrive in today's competitive business environment. A devoted network of dealers and distributors adds value with their outstanding service, local knowledge of agronomic needs, and insight into their specific markets. Recognized as an industry leader for our innovative technologies, we know the bottom line is delivering value to the customers we serve. At LebanonTurf, we are improving the way professionals care for turf.

Product lines:

ProScape

> **ProScape** fertilizers, fertilizer combination products and seeds are specially designed to deliver optimum performance for the serious turf professional. The ProScape line includes homogeneous fertilizers offering the ultimate in uniform distribution and coverage, premium blends featuring the latest technology in controlled release nutrient sources, and seed blends with top-ranked NTEP seed varieties. Whether you're looking for the latest nitrogen technology like Meth-Ex 40 and MESA, the extended release of potassium with Expo, or the top rated seed varieties, you'll find it all in LebanonTurf's ProScape brand.

Lebanon Pro

> Our **Lebanon Professional** line is designed to be the professional's toolbox, with products created for about any landscape situation. The Lebanon Professional line includes a wide variety of high-quality, cost effective, blended fertilizers;



fertilizer control combinations; granular control products; and award-winning seed varieties. A practical approach that delivers performance and convenience.

Technologies:

> **MESA**® is the first nitrogen source to combine ammonium sulfate with methylene urea in a single particle. The result is an effective and efficiently controlled nitrogen source. MESA provides a consistent, brilliant color with virtually no burn potential. Unlike SCU, MESA does not rely on a coating or lose its slow release attributes when cracked. (*Typical Nitrogen Release: 6-9 weeks*)

> **Meth-Ex** is the most efficient, high activity methylene urea complex available. The nitrogen source of Meth-Ex 40® is a microbial released, dependent upon soil moisture and soil temperature, which allows nitrogen to be released when the turf needs it most. The result is color the same day of application with minimal surge growth and maximizing long-term response. (*Typical Nitrogen release: 8-10 weeks*)

> **PennMulch**® Seed Accelerator is a pelleted seed establishment mulch comprised of recycled newsprint, starter fertilizer and Moisture Cell Technology®, a patented super-absorbent polymer. It's designed to reduce the likelihood of weed breakthrough during seed establishment; improve germination by eliminating dry spots; and help improve root development, critical to the seed germination process.

Edward Abraham
President

The Liquid Fence Company

Company focus:

Inc. magazine has named **The Liquid Fence® Company** to its first Inc. 5,000 list of the fastest-growing private companies in the United States. The environmentally conscious manufacturer makes all-natural animal repellents—including America's No. 1 selling Deer & Rabbit Repellent—organic plant boosters and DEET-free botanical insect repellents.

The future looks bright for a young company ready to mark just 10 years in business. Continuing steady increase in consumer demand for "green" lifestyle solutions, strong distribution relationships and their ever-expanding line of environmentally responsible outdoor-living products has The Liquid Fence Company well poised for the next 10 years.

But it's not consumer demand alone that fuels the rapid growth cited by Inc. The company's PRO Division services the substantial needs of America's top landscape professionals, foresters, golf course superintendents, farmers, horticultural institutions and government entities—all looking for eco-safe, cost-efficient and guaranteed effective solutions to wildlife management issues on a larger scale.



Major product lines:

> **Liquid Fence Mole & Vole Repellent** is designed to repel moles and voles from turf, landscaped areas, flowers, shrubs and plants. It is ideal for golf courses, municipal and private properties including parks, sports fields and schools, along with commercial and residential landscaping.

In independent lab testing, Liquid Fence Mole & Vole Repellent provided excellent results, with an astonishing 99% reduction in mole activity, even four weeks after treatment.

> **Liquid Fence Deer & Rabbit Repellent** will virtually stop deer and rabbits in their tracks. Because the all-natural, guaranteed effective repellent works on scent, the animals don't have to browse or rub to be repelled. The all-season formula enables year-round application and effectiveness. It's eco-friendly, EPA-exempt and will not harm vegetation.

> **Liquid Fence Goose Repellent** is ideal for all private and public places, from parks to golf courses. Liquid Fence Goose Repellent will dramatically reduce habitation and the unsightly, unhealthy droppings they leave behind.

The application of Liquid Fence Goose Repellent makes the food supply in the treated area very undesirable. The elimination of the food source will completely change the feeding habits of these birds and cause them to look for a more desirable feeding location.

> **Liquid Fence Snake Repellent** keeps snakes away from landscaped areas, foundations and crawlspaces, decorative fishponds, and off patios—safely and effectively. The Liquid Fence Company has created a naphthalene-free repellent that is guaranteed to drastically reduce disturbing—and sometime dangerous—snake infestation problems.

LIQUID FENCE®
PRO
DIVISION

The Liquid Fence Company
P.O. Box 300
Brodheads ville, PA 18322

Phone: 800-923-3623
Fax: 570-722-8452
Web site:
www.liquidfence.com
E-mail: pro@liquidfence.com

Key contact:
Eric Gerhartz, PRO Division
Sales Manager
Phone: 800-923-3623

Marsan Turf and Irrigation

At Marsan Turf & Irrigation Supply, Inc., we offer a complete line of wholesale turf and irrigation products, from sprinklers to low-voltage outdoor lighting. Our warehouse in Southern California is full of professional landscape sprinkler equipment and the parts and supplies you need. You can count on an expansive inventory of all the major manufacturers to meet your needs. Everything you need to get the job done right! All at the most competitive prices to help you save money and boost your profits. Visit our web site to view the great prices we offer on products you use every day.

MTI has served the Southern California market for more than 25 years, and we've been helping contractors save money nationwide for more than 10 years. We offer free shipping for all orders. With thousands of products in stock, you'll find what you'll need and save money.

These prices are only available to professional contractors, so our site is only advertised in professional trade publications. These



special prices also require box quantities on most products, except items such as backflows or controllers. This site is wholesale only for working contractor professionals.

Our web store at www.sprinklers4less.com contains hundreds of our top-selling products, many at special sale prices for the season and all others at everyday low prices that you can't beat or find consistently. As more contractors use the online store, we'll add additional items to expand online availability. For items not found on the web store, you can place as much of your order online as possible and then e-mail or call us for any

other items needed. You can always call 800-600-TURF, and one of our customer service specialists will take your order and answer any questions.

Our goal is to make your purchasing job easier with prompt, courteous and efficient service while saving you money. Unlike some "partner" programs, our approach lets you keep the money you save. You decide how you want to spend your savings. In today's challenging economic times, this can help small- and medium-sized contractors raise their profits and keep more for themselves.

This is the MTI economic recovery program for contractors—try it and save!

Marsan Turf and Irrigation
519 Terrace Drive
San Dimas, CA 91773-3305

Phone: 800-600-8873

Fax: 800-445-7770

Web site:

www.sprinklers4less.com

E-mail: bob@marsanturf.com



Andrew L. Outcalt
President

Mission Statement:

Meyer Products, LLC aspires to be the first choice for work products and services. We strive to provide reliable products that work the "first time, every time," and are committed to uncompromised quality and customer satisfaction.



Meyer Products LLC
18513 Euclid Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44112

Phone: 216-486-1313

Fax: 216-486-3073

Web site:

www.meyerproducts.com

E-mail:

info@meyerproducts.com

Meyer Products, LLC



Product focus:

Meyer Products is a leading manufacturer of highly reliable snow and ice control systems. Meyer's product innovations and industry knowledge have been making transportation in America safer and more convenient since the day we invented snowplows over 80 years ago.

Major product lines:

Meyer manufactures full lines of commercial snowplows and salt/sand spreaders. The Meyer **EZ-Mount Xpress** is by far the easiest and fastest attachment/detachment system on the market. In about 10 seconds, the plow can be put on or taken off the vehicle. There is also 4 inches of leeway—up, down, right or left in aligning the truck with the plow. With other systems, the truck must line up dead straight into receiver brackets. There are also no pins to turn or twist into place. It's an ideal offering for people who use the truck for work and pleasure, not to mention that not having the extra weight on the front can save a lot of fuel when the vehicle is not being used for plowing.

In spring 2007, Meyer announced the extension of its line of contractor-grade moldboards with an innovative commercial plow for small pickups and SUVs. The Meyer **Drive Pro** is a lightweight

yet rugged plow uniquely designed to make it easier for contractors to plow driveways, condos or anywhere there is a limited amount of space.

Meyer stands behind its recent \$4 million of plant and process improvements with its **ROC Solid Warranty**. This free extended warranty provides standard coverage for three years on all non-wear components and five years on structural steel. It is by far the best warranty protection in the snowplow industry. "ROC" stands for Reliable Over-time Construction, which is Meyer's brand name for its new manufacturing process. ROC includes heavy-duty trips springs, robotically welded seams and cross-sections, easy access grease points and triple-layered waterproof seals just to name a few ROC attributes.



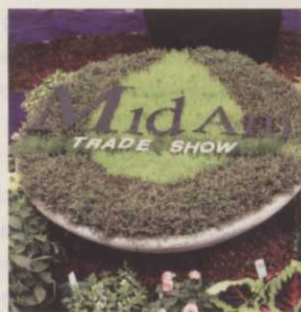


Rand Baldwin, CAE
Managing Director

Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show

The Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show (Mid-Am), the Midwest's premier horticultural trade show, is in full bloom with lots of great ideas to help you improve your business and your career. The show, which is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 16 through Friday, Jan. 18, 2008 at Lakeside Center in Chicago's McCormick Place, features exhibits from more than 500 companies offering products, services, and equipment for the horticulture industry.

Come to Mid-Am to nurture your business and your career with more than 70 hours of educational sessions. The pre-show **Management Workshop** and **Midwinter Conference** feature top industry and business speakers who provide insights into the latest trends, best practices and vital information that you need to improve your skills and provide the very best service to your customers. Additional classes are offered by the Irrigation Association, the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association, and Green Roofs for Healthy Cities. Attend the free keynote address on Wednesday for an exciting and inspirational message from Wingman Rob "Waldo"



Waldman—a combat-decorated Air Force F-16 fighter pilot and entrepreneur. His message, which includes dramatic jet fighter video clips and edge-of-your seat personal stories, will encourage, enlighten and empower you!

The newest products, services and equipment can be found at the **Innovation Showcase**. This "new idea pavilion" highlights cutting-edge plant varieties, labor-saving equipment,

and innovative ideas to give you an advantage over the competition.

Attend a free Daily Demonstration, short interactive presentations on the show floor, to discover innovative products and services that will make your job easier and more productive.

The **Student Career Center** on Thursday, Jan. 17 provides a perfect opportunity for employers and students to connect and is free for full-time horticulture students who register in advance.

Connect with people who, like you, love what they do and are always looking for ways to learn and grow. Plan your Mid-Am visit using the online interactive floor plan.

For more information, visit www.midam.org.

Mid Am
TRADE SHOW

Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show
1000 N. Rand Road
Suite 214
Wauconda, IL 60084

Toll Free: 1-800-223-8761
Phone: 847-526-2010
Fax: 847-526-3993
Web site: www.midam.org
E-mail: mail@midam.org



Loren Olson
President

Mission Statement:

Modeco Systems' goal is to offer a comprehensive software system, TimeScape™, which will streamline the collection of data from the field into the office in a seamless introduction of technology. Simply automating this process allows for unlimited savings potential. With TimeScape™, we offer solutions that give vision into your business to become lean and efficient. We work hard to make your job easy.

Modeco Systems, LLC
W208 N16975 Center St.
Jackson, WI 53037

Phone: 866-677-8184
Fax: 262-677-8186

Web site:
www.modecosystems.com

E-mail:
sales@modecosystems.com

Modeco Systems, LLC

Product focus:

Modeco Systems, LLC's TimeScape™ is a mobile time tracking system designed to streamline the data collection process and dynamically generate reports for payroll, job invoicing, tasks and material. Utilizing a small hand-held scanner and barcodes to gather valuable landscape work information throughout the day's routine, TimeScape™ can integrate with other

software programs and can be completely customized to fit your specific requirements.

By quickly reviewing the newly collected data when gathered on a daily—not weekly—basis, time management and invoice issues can be appropriately adjusted. Our mobile time-tracking system replaces messy, hard-to-read daily log sheets and time cards, plus it saves hours of data-entry work for your office

staff. The collected data is brought back to the shop—and with a few clicks of the mouse, it is downloaded into a central database for immediate use with dozens of reports.

Technical support, sales, training and customer service:

Our experienced staff supplies technical service support, technical information, software and hardware support.



- > Employees collect data with small hand-held scanner
- > Shows exact time of arrival and departure from customer sites
- > Replaces time cards and job log sheets
- > Downloads to a central database with a click of the mouse
- > Crew scanning, remote downloads and dozens of reports
- > Less time crunching numbers — more time for profit

Franco Fenoglio
CEO

Mission Statement:

New Holland Construction is a successful, growing global company that designs and manufactures construction equipment for North America and worldwide markets.

New Holland Construction



Product focus:

A leader in product innovations and improvements and a pioneer in the skid steer loader market for more than 35 years, New Holland Construction introduced its first skid steer loader, the New Holland L35, in 1972. Since then, New Holland Construction has produced more than 200,000 skid steer loaders around the needs of its customers.

Technical support:

Through its network of more than 700 dealers and more than 1,800 outlets in 100 countries, New

Holland Construction customers have access to the resources of the company's worldwide commercial, industrial and finance organizations. More information is available at www.newholland.com.

Major product lines:

Drawing on a combined 230-year history from an array of powerful heritage brands, New Holland Construction brings technological leadership to the marketplace in a complete range of state-of-the-art products. New Holland Construction sells and supports

a full line of construction equipment, including:

- > Skid Steer Loaders
- > Compact Track Loaders
- > Loader Backhoes
- > Tractor Loaders
- > Compact Excavators
- > Mid-size Excavators
- > Telescopic Handlers
- > Full-size Excavators
- > Compact Wheel Loaders
- > Wheel Loaders
- > Crawler Dozers
- > Motor Graders

New Holland Construction
245 E. North Ave.
Carol Stream, IL 60188

Phone: 866-726-3396

Fax: 630-260-4369

Web site:
www.newholland.com

E-mail:
inquire@newholland.com



Dale Mellody
President/CEO

Mission Statement:

Our mission is to meet the interests of all stakeholders in a manner that shows we care about:

- > The growth and success of the business;
- > The well-being of our employees;
- > The environment and the communities in which we operate;
- > Our customers and suppliers and the reputation and performance of our products and service.

Nufarm Turf & Specialty

150 Harvester Drive
Suite 200
Burr Ridge, IL 60527

Phone: 800-345-3330

Fax: 630-455-2012

Web site:

www.turf.us.nufarm.com

E-mail: ask@us.nufarm.com

Nufarm Turf & Specialty

Product focus:

Nufarm Turf & Specialty is a rising and innovative manufacturer that formulates plant protection products for weeds, disease and insect control.

Manufacturing facility:

Our manufacturing facility is in Chicago Heights, IL. With 80,000 square feet of manufacturing space and 60,000 square feet of warehouse capability, this site houses four buildings on eight acres and provides the backbone for the production of our extensive portfolio. Our facility has the capability to package our products in one-gallon containers all the way through 20,000-gallon railcars.

Technical and sales support:

An extensive and knowledgeable sales and technical staff provides exceptional product support, in tandem with a wide distributor network that covers all 50 states. Contact our Customer Service Call Center between 7 a.m.-5 p.m. CST. To find a sales professional in your area, visit www.turf.us.nufarm.com.

Major product lines:

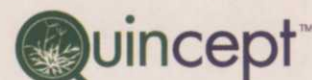


> **Dynamo**, Nufarm's new dithiopyr containing pre- and early post-emergent herbicide, provides season-long control of many broadleaf and grassy weeds including crabgrass. Dynamo's broad application window allows for applications to emerged weeds up to the 5-leaf stage, and is non-staining to concrete and other surfaces.



> **Mallet** is Nufarm's proven insecticide that provides long-lasting control over key pests. Only one application per year is necessary to contain insect pests such as white grubs, cutworms and billbugs in turf, and aphids, beetles, mealybugs, leafminers and thrips in ornamentals. Mallet is the choice for insect control in public outdoor and interiorscaped areas, trees and shrubs, and as a spray

application on ornamentals. Applications also can be made using foliar or broadcast sprays, soil injection or soil drench.



> **Quincept** is a new, post-emergent herbicide designed for the control of both grassy and broadleaf weeds. With its powerful ratio of active ingredients, Quincept is effective for early-season broadleaf control or late-season crabgrass cleanup. Quincept not only performs on the toughest grasses but over 200 broadleaf weeds as well.



> New **Spoiler** is the highest concentrated phenoxy 3-way herbicide available on the market, ensuring complete and swift control of some of the toughest broadleaf weeds. Spoiler's powerful load allows for rate flexibility, while being less persistent in the soil and reducing the risk to shallow-rooted woody plants.

Sam Duncan
Chairman and CEO

Mission Statement:
The OfficeMax mission is simple: To help our customers do their best work.

OfficeMax

OfficeMax is a leader in both business-to-business and retail office products distribution. With 40 years experience, innovative technology, convenient retail presence and the most knowledgeable and friendly associates to back it up, we're confident our customers won't find another company who can deliver at every level.

The company provides office supplies, print and document services, technology products and solutions, and furniture to large, medium and small

services, and bridging the gap between do-it-yourself design and design agencies. OfficeMax ImPress now offers more than 1,000 customizable business card and stationery designs that enable customers to create a look of their own. With the help of an OfficeMax ImPress associate, customers have the option to design a look using design templates, upload artwork into an existing design, or create a new identity from scratch. Customers are able to see artwork in real-time through on-site design kiosks. This technology also enables customers to apply designs instantly across coordinating stationery, brochures, labels, folders and more.

From top-level procurement management for Fortune 1,000 companies to managing the thousands of details at home, we have the products, services and personal service to help our customers succeed:

> Enterprise-level organizations: For organizations with 250 or more employees, OfficeMax provides the expertise to drive success with enterprise-

wide control over the entire procurement process.

> Mid-size businesses: For businesses with 20-249 employees, OfficeMax saves time and money with effortless ordering, world-class experience and personalized attention.

> Small businesses: For companies with 1-19 employees, retail superstores and www.officemax.com take care of the business of office products and services so they can mind theirs.

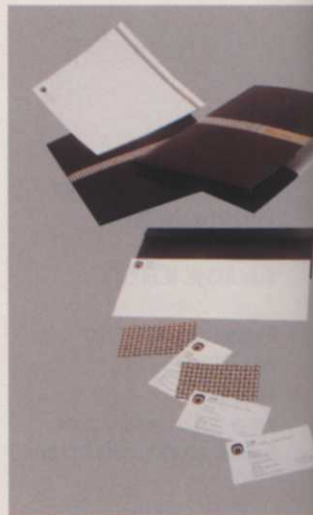


OfficeMax
263 Shuman Blvd.
Naperville, IL 60563

Phone: 1-800-4-THEMAX
Web site:
www.officemax.com
E-mail: customerservice@officemax.com

businesses and consumers. OfficeMax customers are served by approximately 35,000 associates through direct sales, catalogs, e-commerce and more than 900 stores.

OfficeMax is expanding its line of business design services through OfficeMax ImPress™, OfficeMax's print and document





Zach Taylor
President, Oregon Fine
Fescue Commission



Kent Doerfler
President, Oregon Tall
Fescue Commission

Dave Nelson
Administrator, Oregon Fine
Fescue Commission &
Oregon Tall Fescue
Commission

**Oregon Fine Fescue
Commission & Oregon Tall
Fescue Commission**
1193 Royvonne Ave. South
Suite 11
Salem, OR 97302

Phone: 503-585-1157

Fax: 503-585-1292

E-mail:
forages@oregonstate.edu/
organizations/seed/

Oregon Fine Fescue Commission & Oregon Tall Fescue Commission

Company focus:

The Oregon Fine Fescue Commission and Oregon Tall Fescue Commission represent Oregon's professional Chewings, creeping red and tall fescue seed growers in research and promotion of quality turfgrass seed where fine and tall fescues are adapted. Both commissions strive to provide information and answers about planting and maintaining fine and tall fescue turf on home lawns, sod farms, golf courses, athletic fields, industrial campuses and roadsides. They act as liaisons between growers and marketers to better understand the needs and projections of the turfgrass seed industry.

Oregon-grown fine and tall fescue seed is sold by virtually every distributor and dealer in areas where fine and tall fescues are adapted. Insist that your seed dealer provide you with only Oregon-grown fine and tall fescues.

Fine and tall fescues produce similar-appearing seedheads and share some other characteristics, but have distinct differences:

Fine-leaved fescue



> **Fine-leaved fescues** are cold and shade tolerant, and are planted more and more in golf course extreme roughs for "the dunes look," as well as fairways and greens in some areas. For home lawns, parks, sod production and industrial campuses, fine fescues are often mixed in equal parts with perennial ryegrass and Kentucky bluegrass for extended adaptability around trees. Ongoing research and development keeps improving fine fescues in areas of disease resistance and wider adaptability.

Tall fescue



> **Tall fescues** are inherently deep rooted, as well as shade, drought and wear tolerant. Tall fescues will grow further south than fine fescues, and are, in some areas, replacing bermudagrass stands. Tall fescue is used more and more in golf course roughs and is often mixed with Kentucky bluegrass. Over the past several years, improvements have included: more dwarf growth habit for less mowing, finer leaved than older types, naturally darker green color for less nitrogen use, and inclusion of endophytes for natural insect resistance.



Richard Martin
President & CEO

Mission Statement:

PBI/Gordon Corporation, a 100% employee-owned company, is a national leader in specialty pest management products and those related products and services that keep our environment beautiful and bountiful.

Our mission is to continually improve our products and services to meet the needs of the many specialty markets that make up the professional turf and ornamental, home, lawn and garden, agricultural and industrial vegetation management industries.



PBI/Gordon Corporation
1217 W. 12th St.
Kansas City, MO
64101-04090

Phone: 800-821-7925
Fax: 816-474-0462

Web site:
www.pbigordon.com

E-mail:
webmaster@pbigordon.com

PBI/Gordon Corporation

Nobody knows your turf like we do

Product focus:

At PBI/Gordon, innovative product development for the turf and ornamental industry is our primary focus. We were the first to formulate products specifically for this industry.

We continually search for and evaluate products or product combinations that fill the needs of the professional end-use market we service. Our professional field sales team keeps us constantly alerted to these needs.

In the past, PBI/Gordon has been best known for quality herbicide products, first Trimec®, and more recently, SpeedZone®, Surge® and the Q4® turf herbicide. But we're no longer "just an herbicide company." We were the first to offer plant growth regulators for fine turf. And since becoming an employee-owned company, we have taken a more aggressive position in the marketplace, have formed important strategic alliances in the industry and have introduced several new products—and there's more to come.



Manufacturing facilities

We have two manufacturing facilities—in Kansas City, KS, and Crestline, KS.

Technical support

Technical support service is available from dedicated support personnel on our toll-free line at 800-821-7925 (answered by real people!) or online at www.pbigordon.com or www.weedalert.com.

Major product lines

Gordon's Professional Turf and Ornamental Products:

- > SpeedZone® Herbicides
- > Surge® Herbicides
- > Trimec® Herbicides
- > Q4® Herbicides
- > Embark® Plant Growth Regulators
- > Atrimmec® Plant Growth Regulators
- > Azatrol® EC Insecticide
- > Ferromec Liquid Iron
- > Bensumec and PreSan Pre-Emergent Herbicides
- > Launch and Focus Plant Nutrient Supplements

Michael Weagley
President

Pro-Tech Manufacturing & Distribution

Product focus:

Sno Pusher IST (Ice Scraping Technology) is the first steel trip edge designed for Sno Pushers to incorporate the longevity and limited moving parts of rubber edge pushers.

Urethane-based technology ushers in a new generation of steel trip edges that do not require springs or hinges, which are very susceptible to malfunction. The Sno Pusher IST incorporates extended-wear shoes for a balanced, even push and smooth, non-shocking tripping action.

Manufacturing facility:

Pro-Tech's products are manufactured at its facility in Rochester, NY. We use the latest equipment technology in the steel manufacturing and welding industry, combined with the expertise and experience of our employees. Pro-Tech unites its manufacturing



abilities with a formal R&D branch, including a testing course on its site.

Technical support:

Pro-Tech integrates its customer support through a dedicated internal sales and customer service staff with an expansive dealer network. Pro-Tech is very concerned with progression and training of the snow & ice industry. We worked with the Snow & Ice Management Association to produce the most comprehensive training video and guide to date for Sno Pushers. Pro-Tech has developed considerable online resources. Its website, www.snopusher.com, contains helpful and relevant information for the experienced contractor down to the novice

contractor. As always, our staff is available at 888-PUSHSNO to assist you.

Major product lines:

- > **Rubber Edge Pushers**
Loader (SPL); Backhoe (SPB); Skid Steer (SPS) Compact (SPC); Fold Out (FPB/FPL); Pull Back (PBS/PBB); Super Duty (SDL); Angle (APL/APB); Forklift (FTF)
- > **Switchblade Pushers**
Loader (SBL); Backhoe (SBB); Skid Steer (SBS)
- > **IST Pushers**
Loader (ISL), Backhoe (ISB), Skid Steer (ISS)
- > **Heavy Duty V Plow (VP05S)**
- > **Material Handler Box (MH08T)**



**Pro-Tech Manufacturing
& Distribution, Inc.**
711 West Ave.
Rochester, NY 14611

Phone: 888-787-4766
Fax: 585-436-8172
Web site:
www.snopusher.com
E-mail: sales@snopusher.com



Glenn Johnson
Vice President

Rack'em Manufacturing



Product focus:

Rack'em Mfg. produces accessory products for the landscaping industry, which consist of equipment handling racks for both open and enclosed trailers. All of our racks are made of heavy-duty steel and coated with ultra durable hammer paint. We offer the most extensive line of enclosed trailer equipment racks, all of which feature a top hook design for maximum strength. In addition to the racks, we produce grass catchers, the E-Z Ride sulky that fits most major brands of mowers, wheel locks, motorcycle accessories and the Double Barrel tailgate assist for open trailers.

Technical support:

In an effort to keep Rack'em Mfg. in tune with our customers' needs and wants, technical support



and customer questions are regularly handled by Glenn Johnson, the company's vice president. Contact him at 570-226-6093. For sales inquiries or dealership opportunities, contact Sales Coordinator Harold Block at 570-493-5560. View the Rack'em products at www.RackemMfg.com.

Major product lines:

One of Rack'em's newest

products is the Fitz-All Trailer Ladder Rack. This unique product is made from lightweight rustproof aluminum. It is designed to be fully adjustable and will fit almost any enclosed trailer, regardless of size. Gone are the days of having to find the exact size ladder racks for your exact brand of trailer. Ask for Rack'em's Fitz-All Trailer Ladder Racks at a dealer near you.



Rack'em Manufacturing
1301 Purdytown Turnpike
Hawley, PA 18428

Phone: 570-226-6093
Fax: 570-226-6094
Web site:
www.RackemMfg.com
E-mail: RackemMfg@aol.com

Anthony "Tony" LaFetra
President

Corporate Philosophy:

Water is the earth's most valuable resource—and the need for each of us to use this resource wisely has never been greater than it is today.

As the world's largest manufacturer of irrigation products, Rain Bird utilizes state-of-the-art technologies that help our customers use water efficiently.

From central control systems and automatic shut-off devices to pressure regulating components and low volume drip irrigation, Rain Bird creates products that use water wisely.

Rain Bird strives to create opportunities for industry partners and irrigation users to help ensure that this critical resource is available for generations to come.

Visit www.rainbird.com/iuow for information about The Intelligent Use of Water™ initiatives available to you.



Rain Bird
970 W. Sierra Madre Ave.
Azusa, CA 91702

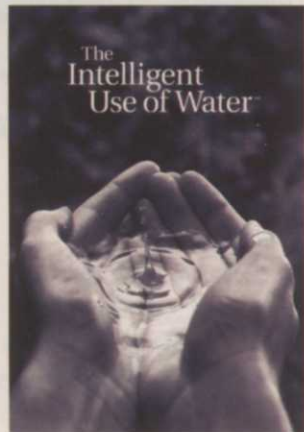
Phone: 1-800-RAINBIRD
(1-800-724-6247)
Web site: www.rainbird.com

Rain Bird

Quality and Innovation:

RAIN BIRD is the world's leading provider of irrigation products and services. Since its beginnings in 1933, RAIN BIRD has offered the industry's broadest and most trusted line of irrigation products for farms, golf courses, sports arenas, public parks, commercial developments and homes. RAIN BIRD offers more than 4,000 products in over 130 countries around the globe.

Since introducing the



impact sprinkler in 1935, RAIN BIRD innovations have earned over 130 patents. Today, RAIN BIRD operates one of the most comprehensive controlled-environment irrigation testing facilities in the world. At this high-tech facility, RAIN BIRD engineers evaluate products under the most demanding conditions, helping ensure unsurpassed product performance and durability.



RAIN BIRD's state-of-the-art rotors deliver water efficiently and uniformly in the toughest residential and commercial applications. These rotors integrate the following RAIN BIRD technologies:

> **RAIN CURTAIN NOZZLES** that deliver uniform water distribution even in windy conditions.

> **MATCHED PRECIPITATION RATE (MPR) NOZZLES** intended to simplify the design process by allowing rotors with various arcs and radii to be mixed on the same circuit without compromising efficient water distribution.

> **SEAL-A-MATIC™ (SAM) CHECK VALVES** for built-in technology that significantly reduces water waste.

> **PRS stem pressure regulator** option that maintains optimal pressure in each head for maximum watering efficiency.

Unparalleled Service:

RAIN BIRD is committed to training and improving the

knowledge of all irrigation professionals. The company offers a comprehensive selection of diverse programs taught by Irrigation Industry Certified Trainers. Courses cover topics such as system design, field installation techniques, troubleshooting irrigation systems and business skills. Courses are offered in both English and Spanish.

RAIN BIRD offers various value-added programs to professional and public agency customers. Details are available at www.rainbird.com/rewards or from your RAIN BIRD representative.

RAIN BIRD also operates a fully-staffed technical support call center. Technical support for contractors is available at 1-800-RAINBIRD (1-800-724-6247) Monday through Friday, 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. (PST).

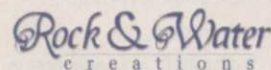
Visit www.rainbird.com today and discover the many reasons why RAIN BIRD is the world leader in irrigation.



Rodger Embury
President/Owner

Mission Statement:

To provide the waterfeature industry with the highest quality and most realistic rock cliff panels and boulders. We also offer the most technical training seminars on installation and coloring techniques.



Rock & Water Creations Inc.
815 Fifth St.
Fillmore, CA 93015

Phone:
1-866-466-Rock (7625)
Fax: 805-524-7339
Web site:
www.rock-n-water.com
E-mail:
info@rock-n-water.com

Rock & Water Creations, Inc.

As the United States' largest manufacturer and wholesaler of GFRC reinforced concrete replicated boulders and rock cliff panels to the pool, spa, landscaping and general construction trades, Rock & Water Creations enjoys a worldwide reputation for our hands-on seminars, technical support and customer service, and the realism and quality of our large selection of GFRC products.

Company President Rodger Embury has 30 years of experience in the water features and landscape industries and has spent the past two decades perfecting manufacturing techniques to create a wide assortment of GFRC products with molds



taken from actual boulders and cliffs.

Compared with, for example, a 3,000-pound natural boulder, a similar-sized rock from our company weighs just 180 pounds and installs much easier and faster, looks better, costs less and—most importantly—provides a contractor with a higher profit margin than working with natural rock.

We're proud to be in demand by waterscape, landscape and general

construction contractors who have previously been unable to find a reliable supplier of quality materials to meet the growing number of their customers desiring a more impressive, exotic and natural look to their commercial and residential projects. For current and new customers we provide plan review, cost analysis and on-going technical support.

Once they join other trade professionals from around the country for one of our required two-day technical seminars in which they're fully familiarized with proper GFRC installation and finishing techniques, our contractor customers are able to order an excellent product that provides the consistency, versatility and quality they demand.

The Scotts Company LLC

Mission Statement

Based in Marysville, OH, The Scotts Company LLC is the world's leading producer and marketer of professional horticulture and landscape products. The company's industry-leading brands include Osmocote® and Poly-S® controlled-release fertilizers, Peters Professional® and Peters Excel® water soluble fertilizers, and more than a dozen herbicide, miticide and fungicide products. For many years, The Scotts Testing Lab® has helped thousands of professionals maximize their nutritional needs. Learn more by calling customer service at 1-800-492-8255 or visit www.scottsprohort.com.



Scotts Company LLC
14111 Scottslawn Road
Marysville, OH 43041

Phone: 1-800-492-8255
Fax: 1-888-329-4678
Web site:
www.scottsprohort.com
E-mail:
tami.bayes@scotts.com

Product focus:

The Scotts Landscaper® PRO™ series provides landscapers with a highly reliable and cost-in-use source of turf and ornamental nutrition, all backed by Scotts' heritage of plant nutrition experience.

All Scotts Landscaper PRO products are specially formulated with Scotts' patented Poly-S®, a poly-coated sulfur-coated nitrogen extended-release fertilizer, which feeds for three to four months.

In addition to the new series of fertilizer products, Scotts has a comprehensive line of fertilizers, fungicides and pre-emergent herbicides, all available for the landscape market.

Manufacturing facilities:

The Scotts research and development organization has some of the world's leading experts in horticultural science, fertilizer product and package development, pesticide formulation and package development, fertilizer and pesticide efficacy testing, soil science and regulatory assessment.

Scotts has three research stations nationwide, including the largest facility at the



corporate headquarters in Ohio, with a state-of-the-art greenhouse and more than 100 acres of field research capability.

Technical support:

As is the case for all Scotts products, the Landscaper PRO line is supported with an extensive network of technical advisors and territory managers who are also available for questions and troubleshooting.

Landscapers will be confident using all of Scotts' products, knowing Scotts Landscaper PRO series is backed by a science of superior plant nutrition research and development.

Product lines:

- > 16-25-10 Starter® fertilizer
- > 32-3-10 Turf fertilizer
- > 14-14-14 Outdoor Ornamentals fertilizer
- > STEP® MAX™ micronutrients formula
- > Two landscaper-designed Pro spreaders
- > Agriform® Planting tablets
- > Combination Fertilizers: 30-3-4 with Pre-Emergent Weed Control; 22-0-8 with Grub Control; 26-2-9 Turf Fertilizer 3-Way for St. Augustine; 28-3-3 with Post-Emergent Weed Control; 24-0-8 with Insect Control; 32-0-10 Turf Fertilizer with 2% Iron and 1% Magnesium



William Culpepper
President

Mission Statement:

To provide plant protection and plant management products and services that fit specialized market segments that are often outside of the core business strategy of large manufacturers. We acquire, develop, manufacture and market value-added products and services that satisfy the unique needs of our customers. A top priority of all SePRO employees will be product and environmental stewardship.

SePRO Corporation
11550 N. Meridian St.
Suite 600
Carmel, IN 46032

Phone: 800-419-7779
Fax: 317-580-8290
Web site: www.sepro.com
E-mail: stevem@sepro.com

SePRO Corporation

Product focus:

Cutless* Granular Landscape Growth Regulator is a new systemic landscape growth regulator for shoot growth suppression in landscape ornamentals, resulting in more compact growth form and reduced trimming, in an easy-to-apply granular formulation. Expected plant responses:

- > Reduced trimming/pruning frequency
- > Increased plant density or compact growth habit
- > Shoot growth suppression
- > Decreased internode length
- > Darker green foliage
- > No negative flowering response
- > Plant stress conditioning effects associated with PGRs

Cutless* Turf Growth Regulator is a unique turf growth regulator that enhances the quality of fine turfgrass. Cutless improves turfgrass playability, reduces mowing time, reduces clippings, improves water utilization, makes turf



more wear resistant and improves turfgrass color and appearance. On cool-season turfgrass, Cutless can shift the competitive balance from *Poa annua*-infested turf to desirable perennial grasses.

R&D focus

The SePRO Research and Technology Campus (SRTC) greatly expanded SePRO laboratory and field research capabilities while providing high quality technical support for SePRO's future growth. Located in Whitakers, NC, the SRTC houses an extensive

six-building aquatic research and technology complex on a 410-acre site complete with laboratories and 11 acres of specialized aquatic research ponds and mesocosms. The center incorporates an aquarium, mesocosm and field research studies, laboratory assay support, and growth room screening for evaluating existing and new products. In the future, the facility could also accommodate turf and landscape ornamental research capabilities and distribution center for SePRO's growing product line.

Major product lines

- > Cutless* Granular Landscape Growth Regulator
- > Cutless* Turf Growth Regulator
- > Professional ornamental fungicides, plant growth regulators and insecticides
- > Professional aquatic herbicides and algaecides





Tom Bunch
President

Mission Statement:

The mission of Shindaiwa Inc. is to deliver complete customer satisfaction by being First to Start, Last to Quit — in all business dealings. Our business is managed to achieve a balance between sales and market-share growth of core products and markets, increased profits, and effective asset turnover. To accomplish this we deliver our customers' products and services with superior levels of quality, as well as value exceeding their expectations. We want our customers to enjoy above-average profitability for our industry, and we strive to deliver more than we promise and not promise more than we deliver.

Shindaiwa, Inc.
11975 SW Herman Road
Tualatin, OR 97062

Phone: 800-521-7733

Fax: 503-692-6696

Web site:

www.shindaiwa.com

E-mail: info@shindaiwa.com

Shindaiwa, Inc.

Product focus:

Shindaiwa offers our customers choices — commercial-grade products featuring both high quality two-stroke and micro four-stroke C4 Technology engines. Shindaiwa will continue to invest and improve our range of two-stroke products as long as mechanically-advanced technologies for two-stroke are still prudently cost-effective when complying with emission standards.

By offering a full range of models featuring our low emission micro four-stroke C4 Technology Engines, complemented with our legendary two-stroke models, Shindaiwa customers will have all the products to keep them in business and coming back for more. Within the OPE industry, we believe Shindaiwa has taken a leading role in designing new engine technologies that will take us well into the future. It's all about choices. Whether it's two-stroke or micro four-stroke engine technologies, Shindaiwa has you covered.

Manufacturing facility:

At the heart of all Shindaiwa products is its engineering excellence. With more than 100 degreed engineers, Shindaiwa is a fully integrated manufacturer. Every new product from its Hiroshima,



Japan, manufacturing facility is subjected to an established set of criteria (ISO9001) to maintain a high level of performance and quality control. And, in October 2005, Shindaiwa opened an ultra-modern assembly and warehouse operation in Tualatin, OR.

Technical support:

Shindaiwa products are sold through independent distributors and dealers who know and understand the outdoor power equipment industry. Shindaiwa values its relationship with its distributors and dealers by investing heavily in the development of numerous sales programs, creative marketing tools, and

technical training material to help improve their sales and profitability.

Major product lines:

Shindaiwa manufactures a full line of commercial-grade outdoor power equipment including trimmers, brushcutters, hedge trimmers, blowers, the PowerBroom®, chain saws and lawn edgers. In October 2001, the company established itself as a leader in technical innovation when it introduced its patented C4 Technology® and the industry's first low-emission two-stroke/four-stroke hybrid units.

Mission Statement:

The vision of Syngenta is to provide the best products in the industry, to build superior packages of chemistries and technology, and to provide strong technical field support, all to help our customers create noticeably beautiful lawns.



Syngenta Professional Products

410 Swing Road
Greensboro, NC 27419

Phone: 866-SYNGENTA
886-796-4368

Fax: 336-632-6135

Web site: www.syngenta-professionalproducts.com

E-mail:
robert.goglia@syngenta.com

Syngenta Professional Products

Product focus:

Syngenta offers industry-leading products for weed and disease prevention and control, and growth regulators to help manage turf. Syngenta also offers a variety of resources and services to help lawn care operators manage their businesses more efficiently, effectively and profitably.

Major product lines:

Syngenta offers some of the industry's most effective herbicides, fungicides, insecticides and plant growth regulators, including:

> **Barricade® herbicide** is a selective pre-emergence herbicide that offers low-rate, season-long control of more than 30 grassy and broadleaf weeds, including crabgrass, goosegrass and *Poa annua*. Barricade offers the widest possible window for keeping turf weed-free, allowing for applications from fall through early winter and spring.

> **Meridian™ insecticide** readily fits the operational requirements of a lawn care operator because of a wide application window and watering-in up to seven days after application. With broad-spectrum preventive and curative grub and foliar pest control at low rates, Meridian can be a cornerstone in helping to keep customers' lawns and landscapes healthy, green, and pest free. It also is effective and suitable for use on trees and shrubs.

> **Headway™ fungicide** provides lawn care operators with the most innovative, cost-effective and practical way to control all major turf diseases on their customers' turf.

Headway uses two active ingredients to deliver broad-spectrum disease control against brown patch and other major turf diseases. Using dual modes of action helps ward off disease resistance and allows Headway to control a wider range of diseases than any other registered product.



Customer support:

Syngenta offers lawn-care operators:

- > The Syngenta staff of territory managers, who consult with customers to solve problems and work in partnership with a nationwide network of full-service distribution partners;
- > The Syngenta staff of field technical managers, who are available to assist with issues that customers might face;
- > The Syngenta Customer Center, which gives customers access to a wealth of knowledge about Syngenta products and services, as well as assistance with marketing programs. Available at 1-866-Syngenta;
- > The GreenPartners® program, which allows loyal customers to accrue points with each purchase of Syngenta products, to be redeemed for business tools such as computers, equipment and educational seminars and conferences. (www.greenpartners.com)

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Important: Always read and follow label instructions before buying or using these products. Barricade®, Headway™, Meridian™ and the Syngenta® logo are trademarks of a Syngenta Group Company.

Syngenta Crop Protection, Inc. warrants that its products conform to the chemical description set forth on the products' labels. NO OTHER WARRANTIES, WHETHER EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY AND OF FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, SHALL APPLY TO SYNGENTA'S PRODUCTS. Syngenta Crop Protection, Inc. neither assumes nor authorizes any representative or other person to assume for it any obligation or liability other than such as is expressly set forth herein. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHALL SYNGENTA CROP PROTECTION, INC. BE LIABLE FOR INCIDENTAL OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES RESULTING FROM THE USE OR HANDLING OF ITS PRODUCTS. No statements or recommendations contained herein are to be construed as inducements to infringe any relevant patent now or hereafter in existence.



Lon Records
President

Mission Statement:

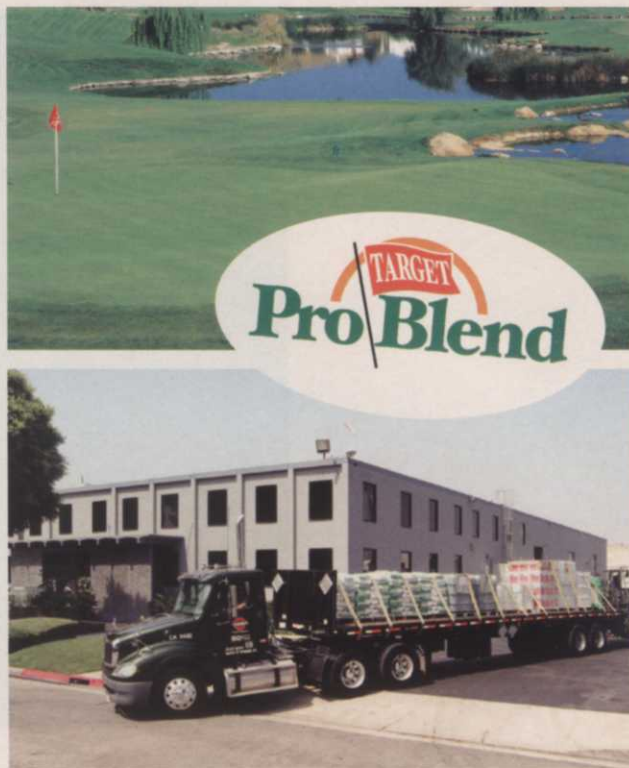
To be the best wholesale distributor of specialty agricultural chemicals and supplies to the specialty markets, while striving to serve the needs of our customers, employees, suppliers, community and owners.

Target Specialty Products

Target Specialty Products is the West's leading wholesale distributor of specialty agricultural chemicals, fertilizers, application equipment, services and education. Since 1969, Target has provided products and services to both the public and private sectors in the following markets: golf, landscape, nursery, professional pest management and vegetation management. Committed to quality through service, Target is ISO 9002 certified and provides specialized training and education programs, risk management, worker safety classes and regulatory compliance.

In achieving ISO 9002 certification, all processes and procedures throughout the company from customer service to shipping and receiving are documented. ISO 9002 certification ensures consistent, reliable service.

Target Specialty Products



carries a complete product line of disease and pest management products and equipment including:

- > Adjuvants, Wetting Agents
- > Fertilizers, Herbicides, Insecticides, Fungicides, Soil Surfactants
- > Soil Conditioners & Amendments
- > Lake and Pond Herbicides, Algaecides and Colorants
- > Spreader and Nutrient Management Products
- > Spray Application Equipment, Parts and Accessories
- > Personal Safety and Protective Equipment

Target ProBlend Seed

Target Specialty Products recently introduced a new line of ProBlend grass seed mixtures. Especially designed for the golf market, the 3-way GLS Perennial Ryegrass Blend contains three varieties of gray leaf spot resistant perennial ryegrass, offering the best gray leaf spot resistance in the industry.

Target plans to expand the ProBlend grass seed line. For more information, contact the Target branch near you.



SPECIALTY PRODUCTS
Delivering Value

Target Specialty Products
Home Office
15415 Marquardt Ave.
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670

Phone: 800-352-3870

Web site:

www.target-specialty.com

Ted Scovitch
President / CEO

Mission Statement:

To provide a superior
product for the best price.

TAS Industries, Inc.



TAS Industries Inc. was formed in 1993 to provide the most efficient and cost-effective means of trimming grass away from sprinkler heads and valve box covers. The TAS Trimmer—Don't settle for anything less than the best.

The TAS Trimmer attaches to any straight shaft line trimmer and quickly and conveniently trims grass and debris around pop-up sprinkler

heads, donut protectors and valve-box covers. With 9 models currently available, the TAS Trimmer can get the job done fast and efficiently saving time and money. The TAS Trimmer is proudly made in the United States.

> See the TAS Trimmer in action at
www.tastrimmer.com.

TAS Industries, Inc.
P.O. Box 1686
Venice, FL 34284-1686

Phone: 866-231-0778

Fax: 941-485-0262

Web site: tastrimmer.com

E-mail: ted@tastrimmer.com



Robert Vevoda
President and
Managing Director

Tensar International Corp.

Product focus:

Tensar International Corporation, the leading developer and manufacturer of high-performance geogrid products and engineered systems, offers a variety of cost-effective solutions for sites with challenging grade changes.

We have a retaining wall option for almost any job—big or small—from large commercial developments and highway projects, to a homeowner's backyard. Or, if a slope is needed in place of a wall, we can provide an aesthetically pleasing vegetative alternative.

Manufacturing facilities:

Morrow, GA; Blackburn, England;
Wuhan, China

Technical support:

Tensar offers a network of licensed manufacturers and distributors throughout the United States, Canada and Latin America to provide a full line of products designed specifically to meet your grade separation needs. Call 888-827-9962 to find out how we can help add value to your land today.

Major product lines:

> **Mesa® Retaining Wall Systems:** The only segmental retaining wall systems with a proven, positive, mechanical connection that does not rely on friction or stone fill for its connection, the Mesa Retaining Wall Systems offer superior and cost-effective solutions for all your structural and landscaped retaining wall needs in the commercial, industrial, residential and transportation markets. Our new Mesa® Ashford™ System with ashlar facing offers the same trusted mechanical connection coupled with a more natural-face wall.

> **SierraScape® Retaining Wall Systems:** The SierraScape Systems are the only geosynthetic-



reinforced, wire-formed retaining wall systems with a positive, mechanical connection, assuring long-term structural integrity and reliability. This positive connection better withstands differential settlement and offers exceptional performance in areas where seismic activity or heavy external loads are a concern.

> **Sierra® Slope Retention System:** The Sierra Slope Retention System creates natural-looking, earth retention structures in the form of oversteepened slopes that typically range from 1.5H:1H:2.75V. This alternative to conventional retaining walls increases the usable land and is less susceptible to differential settlement than conventional retaining walls, while also being more resistant to seismic activity.

Tensar International Corp.
5883 Glenridge Drive
Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30328

Phone: 888-827-9962

Fax: 404-250-9185

Web site:

www.tensarcorp.com/m2

E-mail: info@tensarcorp.com



George Kinkead
President

Corporate Philosophy:
The Direct Answer to Your
Renovation Needs

TURFCO Direct

Fifty years of building renovation equipment has taught TURFCO many things. And right up there with your need for durable, effective equipment, we understand your need to get quick answers to your renovation questions. That's why we created TURFCO Direct—a one-stop shop for your turf renovation needs. Not only can you order parts and equipment directly from us, the manufacturer, you can count on fast, friendly answers to virtually anything to do with "renovation." Give us a call—our friendly staff will make sure it is the only call you will need to make.



TURFCO Direct
1655 101st Ave. NE
Minneapolis, MN
55449-4420

Phone: 800-679-8201
Web site:
www.TURFCOdirect.com

The Advantage of Partnering With TURFCO Direct

> **Quality Products**—For over 50 years, TURFCO Manufacturing has provided the professional lawn care industry with some of the most advanced equipment available. Buying direct allows

you to get the latest technology at prices you can afford.

> **Orders and Answers Direct**—Are you frustrated at not being able to get answers? Call TURFCO Direct. We will personally help you choose the right equipment for your needs, walk you through your purchasing options, and arrange for your equipment to be delivered direct to you.

> **Profit Tools**—TURFCO Direct can provide professionally-designed brochures and door hangers to help sell your aeration, overseeding, landscaping or bed-shaping services. These proven marketing tools are available to all TURFCO Direct customers at a low cost, and can help you grow your customer base and increase revenue.

> **14-Day Trial**—You have 14 days to complete your purchase approval once your machine arrives. During that time, you can return the equipment to TURFCO Direct for a refund for any reason.

> **2-Year Warranty**—TURFCO stands behind its products with an industry-leading, two-year warranty against defects in its lawn care products used for commercial applications, or one full year from products used for rental.

> **Service and Support**—We understand that downtime costs you money. So if you encounter



a service or technical problem, give us a call right away. We'll work hard to get you back up and running as quickly as possible. We can be reached in-person from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. CST. You can also access our service center 24 hours a day via our website. You'll find exploded parts drawings, convenient online parts ordering, and more.

> **Parts/Shipping**—The last thing we want is for you to be waiting for equipment or parts. That's why the TURFCO Direct shipping department prides itself on super-fast delivery. Parts ordered by 2 p.m. are shipped the same day, and equipment orders are shipped within 48 hours. You can even check the status of your shipment online.

> **Quick Financing**—TURFCO Direct offers a variety of financing options. Apply by phone, fax, or through our website, and receive your notice in just half an hour.



Ken Hutcheson
President

Mission Statement:

To provide our clients with the highest quality landscape management program at competitive prices through a national organization of dedicated owner operators and their employees supported by the expertise of today's most accomplished industry leaders. In pursuit of excellence we are committed to honest and forthright dealings with our clients, our employees and our vendors.



U.S. LAWNS Inc.
4407 Vineland Road
Suite D 15
Orlando, FL 32811

Phone: 800-USLAWNS
Fax: 407-246-1623
Web site: www.uslawns.com
E-mail: info@uslawns.com

U.S. Lawns, Inc.

Company focus:

Recently included among *Entrepreneur* magazine's listing of "Best Franchise Opportunities," U.S. Lawns is America's fastest growing and most dynamic landscape franchise company. Since its founding in 1986, the U.S. Lawns team of business, sales and landscape professionals has consistently guided the franchise family as they pursue their dreams of operating a business in the landscape industry.

With more than 150 franchise locations open in 29 states, U.S. Lawns' philosophy of no job too big or too small, along with our four ideals—Trust, Quality, Services and Value—has proven to be a winning strategy. If you are looking to take your company to another level, explore the benefits of owning a U.S. Lawns franchise:

> There is no other



franchise opportunity backed by a stronger, more powerful company. ValleyCrest Companies, one of the nation's oldest, largest and most-well established landscape management companies, has sales in excess of \$600 million annually.

> Business operating systems, complete marketing support and purchasing power put you, the owner-operator, in the best possible position ... entrepreneurial freedom with the power of a well-established organization behind you.

> The distinctive U.S.

Lawns logo is receiving ever-increasing exposure as U.S. Lawns follows its growth plans to expand into many key markets in the United States.

> The training and support you will receive from U.S. Lawns provides access to a staff of experts in all areas of the landscape maintenance business, including technical training and support, sales training and support, administrative training and support and more. This means you won't have to hire an in-house team or consultants to advise you. You'll have the resources, without the payroll.

The U.S. Lawns corporate team combines the hands-on philosophy of a small business with large corporate-style organization and technical resources to provide complete personalized support. For more information on becoming a U.S. Lawns franchisee, contact Scott Finn, Director of Franchise Development, at 407-246-1630 or e-mail sfinn@uslawns.com.



Robert Vermeer
Chairman and CEO

Mary Andringa
President and CEO

Mission Statement:

Taking care of customers worldwide with better solutions.

Vermeer Manufacturing Co.

Product focus:

Vermeer believes in "Taking care of customers worldwide with better solutions." And for more than five decades, Vermeer has been successfully manufacturing equipment and providing solutions that enable customers on job sites around the world to work more efficiently. Vermeer offers products for the landscaping, underground installation, environmental and agricultural industries.

Manufacturing facilities:

Vermeer products are designed and manufactured at the company's factories in Pella, IA.

Technical support, sales, training and customer service:

Vermeer offers worldwide sales, support, service and parts through an independent, authorized dealer network. The Vermeer dealers are on the front line, gathering input from customers before and after the sale, standing by customers for the long haul. The Vermeer way is to understand that when customers are successful, the company is successful. Service, training, certified parts and exceptional warranty programs are just a few of the resources Vermeer offers once a customer takes delivery of a machine. For more



information, please call 888-VERMEER (837-6337) or visit www.vermeer.com.

Major product lines:

Vermeer is a proven leader with an innovative, high performance line of construction equipment, including mini skid steer loaders.

The Vermeer S400TX, S600, and S600TX mini skid steers are versatile machines designed for landscaping, utility or do-

it-yourself home projects. All models feature a ride-on design with ergonomically-designed, multifunctional controls, enabling the operator to easily maneuver in confined areas and on uneven terrain. Universal mounting plates make it easier for the operator to hook up various attachments.

In addition to landscapers and utility contractors, the Vermeer line of mini skid steers are ideal for rental stores.

Vermeer®

Vermeer Manufacturing Company
1210 Vermeer Road East
Pella, IA 50219

Phone: 888-VERMEER
(888-837-6337)

Fax: 641-621-7734

Web site:
www.vermeer.com

E-mail:
salesinfo@vermeermfg.com

Todd Strand
President

VERSA-LOK Retaining Wall Systems

Product focus:

VERSA-LOK has been creating "Solid Solutions™" for architects, engineers, contractors and homeowners since 1987. VERSA-LOK systems are the original solid, pinned segmental retaining walls (SRWs). Quick and easy to install, VERSA-LOK retaining walls offer superior durability and a wealth of design/build options along with a variety of styles and sizes. Whatever your landscape needs, VERSA-LOK has a retaining wall for you.



VERSA-LOK Retaining Wall Systems
6348 Highway 36 Blvd.
Oakdale, MN 55128

Phone: 800-770-4525
Fax: 651-770-4089
Web site: www.versa-lok.com
E-mail: versalok@versa-lok.com

Major product lines:

> **VERSA-LOK Standard:** The Standard unit is the backbone of VERSA-LOK retaining wall systems. Its solid construction and classic proportions provide the foundation for the entire family of VERSA-LOK systems.
> **VERSA-LOK Mosaic:** Mosaic comprises all three VERSA-LOK units—one Standard, one

Cobble and two Accent—in a series of four-unit panels that are blended to create artistic walls with a random face pattern.

> **VERSA-LOK Cobble:** At half the size of the Standard unit, Cobble offers an appealing lightweight alternative to the Standard unit without compromising strength.

> **VERSA-LOK Accent:** A sleek version of the Standard unit, Accent is the lightest-weight member of the VERSA-LOK family. Its slim profile has a clean, understated appearance highlights its surroundings.

> **VERSA-LOK Square Foot:** Square Foot is VERSA-LOK's hollow-core segmental retaining wall system. It covers a full square foot of wall face economically, making it a low-cost alternative for some large applications. Square Foot's trapezoidal shape and top-pinning system allow for variable bond construction, accurate alignment, tighter vertical joints and easy installation.

> **VERSA-LOK Brute:** With Brute, you get 240 pounds of VERSA-LOK dependability in every unit. And at 1-1/3 square feet of face area per unit, you get the coverage you need in less time than with other retaining wall systems, saving installation costs.



> **VERSA-LOK Bronco:** Weighing in at 4,500 pounds and displaying 14 square feet of face area, Bronco offers developers an attractive big-block alternative to traditional small-block retaining walls. Bronco builds walls up to 10 feet tall without soil reinforcement, making it ideal for projects with excavation constraints.

> **VERSA-Grid Soil Geogrid Reinforcement:** Building a wall taller than four feet or with special requirements? You need VERSA-Grid. It aids soil reinforcement and helps wall stability. Its high tenacity, multifilament polyester yarns are resistant to natural chemicals, alkalis and acids so it won't degrade.

Mission Statement:

Visual Impact Imaging provides landscape professionals with the highest quality landscape design software and technological tools. We are committed to customer service and development of innovations so that our customers can create extraordinary landscape solutions efficiently and triumph as leaders in the Green Industry.

Visual Impact Imaging

Product focus:

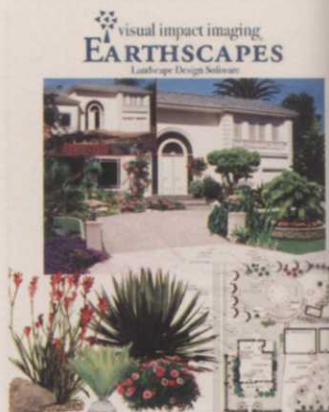
Visual Impact Imaging is the leading provider of professional software for the landscape industry. We are committed to providing the green industry the most advanced technological tools, user-friendly interface and widely compatible platform, making EARTHSCAPES an integral component for every landscape company, regardless

of its size. This exclusive advantage is based on Visual Impact Imaging's strategic partnership with the Corel Corporation. Together, we develop the ultimate software that enables designers to transform their ideas into professional results. Since 1993, the combination of vision, business management and focus on customer service has made Visual Impact

Imaging the leader of the landscape design software industry. EARTHSCAPES Landscape Design Software provides for the creation of traditional design drafting methodology with the efficiency of technology. EARTHSCAPES software includes both high-resolution photo-imaging capabilities and to-scale site plan drafting. EARTHSCAPES also includes an estimator to easily calculate bids and a diverse plant library of 4,500 objects accommodating every USDA plant hardiness zone. All this with FREE technical support.

EARTHSCAPES

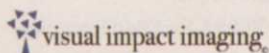
- > Photo imaging with high-resolution plant library-picture perfect quality.
- > Texture tool paints on grass, hardscapes and mulch.
- > Perspective tool smoothly lays hardscape elements into your design.
- > Art effects transform your photo design into a pencil sketch, water color and other art strokes.
- > Design nightscapes with light placement, cone size, intensity, direction and color manipulation.
- > Compatible with over 30 file types including .dxf and .dwg.
- > Site-plan designs in B&W or color.
- > Estimator bids.
- > Windows XP/ Vista compatible.



> Free technical support.

To maximize your business it is absolutely critical to communicate with your customers efficiently and effectively. The very best way to do that is with visuals, using Visual Impact Imaging's EARTHSCAPES landscape design software. The EARTHSCAPES software is an amazing tool for every landscape professional. It is so easy to take a digital photograph of your client's property and drag and drop design elements onto the screen. The result is an immediate picture perfect vision of the services your company provides.

EARTHSCAPES professional service is guaranteed to generate referrals, keep existing clients returning for more services and potential clients calling you! EARTHSCAPES landscape design software redefines professionalism in the industry.



Visual Impact Imaging
3533 W. Bath Road
Akron, OH 44333

Phone: 330-665-9080
Web site:
www.visualimpactimaging.com
E-mail:
sales@visualimpactimaging.com

of its size. This exclusive advantage is based on Visual Impact Imaging's strategic partnership with the Corel Corporation. Together, we develop the ultimate software that enables designers to transform their ideas into professional results. Since 1993, the combination of vision, business management and focus on customer service has made Visual Impact



John A.A. Thomson
President-Founder

Vitamin Institute

SUPERthrive is a proprietary formulated invention by John A. A. Thomson, Ph.D., D.A. This is the 50-vitamins-hormones solution that helped Dr. Thomson and his Vitamin Institute win the Science and Industry gold medal at the Golden Gate International Exposition official Worlds Fair at San Francisco in 1940, for "Use for the greatest public benefit of scientific advances of the past decade."

Thomson started with the purpose of arriving at the formula that would be universal for all plants and all plant processes.

SUPERthrive is the popular material for activating, reviving, transplanting, growing (beyond the effects of fertilizers) and perfecting trees and other plants. In fact, the record shows that the Vitamin Institute has, without a challenge for 67 years, offered \$5,000 to the first person to create a product to beat SUPERthrive's efficacy for these purposes.

SUPERthrive has long been billed as "America's most unanimously respected horticultural product" for half a century and also is said to be the "World's No. 1 plant supply."



This formula is a highly concentrated liquid that is understood to have normalizing effects that bring out the maximum potential of any plant. Some 50 types of horticulture are listed by SUPERthrive's maker as improved by the product. The most popular concentration for many purposes is 3 fluid ounces of the product per 100 gallons of water.

SUPERthrive provides carbon, hydrogen and oxygen molecules that would otherwise have to be constructed by each plant in order to complete cells. It is

not a fertilizer or so-called "plant food." It therefore would not be required by plant materials under ideal growing conditions and with plenty of time available. It is when growing conditions are not perfect and time is a factor that SUPERthrive brings about otherwise unattainable effects, including saving 100% of trees under difficult conditions.

Some of the most noticeable results observed from adding SUPERthrive to a growing program include earlier and stronger plants, with earlier crop with heightened quality and quantity.

Vitamin Institute
12610 Saiticoy St. South
North Hollywood, CA 91605

Phone: 800-441-VITA (8482)
Fax: 818-766-VITA (8482)
Web site:
www.superthrive.com



Bob Walker
President

Mission Statement:

The only way for a small company to enter an established product market and stay there is to design products with irresistible superiority and uncompromising quality. A conventional product with conventional performance may be acceptable and even attractive when offered by a large established company; the same company cannot hope to survive in the marketplace where profit margins are small, competition is strong, and consumer loyalty to existing product lines is great.

Walker Manufacturing Co.
5925 E. Harmony Road
Fort Collins, CO 80528

Phone: 1-800-279-8537
Fax: 1-970-221-5619
Web site:
www.walkermowers.com
E-mail:
info@walkermowers.com

Walker Manufacturing Co.

Product focus:

**> WALKER RIDING MOWERS
MEAN "PRODUCTIVITY"**

Contractors, municipalities and homeowners alike are finding the Walker Riding Mower to be one of the most compact zero-turn radius mowers available. The tractor's size and maneuverability are designed to fit and do the work of mid-size walk-behind mowers with the increased productivity of a rider. Ten tractor models are offered from 13- to 31-hp with gas or diesel engines, and 13 mower deck sizes range from 36-74-in. with grass collection, side discharge or mulching capability. All decks tilt up to 90 degrees for easy maintenance and compact storage.

In conjunction with Kohler Engines, Walker has become an industry leader for Electronic Fuel Injection (EFI) designs in power equipment—an efficiency that offers easy starting over a wide temperature range, less maintenance, and improved throttle response; along with considerable fuel savings.



Manufacturing facility:

Walker Mowers are hand crafted in our 216,000-sq.-ft. facility in Fort Collins, CO. Walker takes pride in being more than an assembly shop. We have a full metal fabrication area and a full staff of highly skilled welders. Our average term of employment is over nine years.

Technical and sales support:

Walker sells through two-step distribution throughout North America and around the world. Our distributors are factory supported for service but have their own in-house technical staff to support their dealer network.



Major product lines:

Commercial riding mowers and a full range of attachments make the Walker Mower a work horse all year long.





Bill Wright
President and CEO

Mission Statement:

To enjoyably, safely and profitably participate in the business of manufacturing and promotion of the most safe, useful, durable and excellent quality lawn equipment in the world.

We endeavor to relentlessly and continuously improve and remove waste from our processes and systems according to lean concepts. We will treat with the highest respect each other, our internal and external customers, suppliers and stakeholders while promoting each others' real success and progress in life.



Wright Manufacturing, Inc.
4600X Wedgewood Blvd.
Frederick, MD 21703

Phone: 301-360-9810
Web site:
www.wrightmfg.com

Wright Manufacturing, Inc.

Product focus:

Since 1981, Wright has been manufacturing mowers designed by lawn care professionals for lawn care professionals. With a wide range of models, a Wright's just right for every job.

Major product lines:

The operating position and compact footprint make the Stander® one of the industry's most maneuverable riding mowers. The innovative Stander® puts your center of gravity at your feet, not your seat. You use your weight to keep traction on the higher wheels and cross slopes at speeds no other mower can handle, so you mow faster with greater control and without switching to a walk-behind.

A fold-down seat gives the Sentar® the agility of a standup with the power and comfort of a sitdown. The Sentar® overcomes landscaping challenges with handling no other mower can match. Its lightweight design uses significantly less steel in construction than the competition without sacrificing strength. And its low profile and riding position help you steer clear of obstacles like branches.

The Velke®, with a choice of pistol grips or self-neutralizing control handles, is a walk behind that can be ridden when paired with



Wright's easily deployed, easily stowed, patented sulky. It is designed for "ride-behind" convenience and is more compact than competing walk-behind mowers.

Experience Wright's engineering excellence in the Mid-Mount Z. Its compact lightweight design means less rut damage on the turf. Not to mention, it fits easily on the trailer. Yet the Mid-Mount Z's low center of gravity offers all the stability you've come to expect from Wright. And it runs faster and cooler than the competition with larger hydro pumps.

Wright also manufactures a complete line of grass catchers and sulkies.

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Innovations

TECHNOLOGY HOT NEW PRODUCTS



1 Yanmar Compact Backhoe Loader

Yanmar's Model CBL40 Compact Backhoe Loader is built with the professional in mind and loaded with these features: durable and strong single-frame chassis; automatic bucket leveling with a loader lift height of 9 ft. 6 in. and 2,960 lbs. lift capacity; HMT transmission means no range shifting during loader operation with forward-reverse pedal; swivel seat with suspension — just swivel from loader to backhoe operations; backhoe dig depth is 10 ft. with a backhoe reach of 13 ft. 2 in.; digging force is 5,800 lbs. at the bucket and 3,600 lbs. at the arm.

Contact Yanmar at 847/541-1900 or www.yanmar.com/ / circle no. 250

2 Bobcat loader radio remote

The Bobcat loader radio remote control system enhances the capabilities of Bobcat skid-steer and compact track loaders with selectable joystick controls and Bobcat all-wheel steer loaders. Operators can start the loader engine and operate the drive, lift, tilt and auxiliary hydraulic functions from approximately 1,500 ft. away with the radio remote control transmitter. The transmitter joystick controls activate the loader's joystick controls in the ISO control pattern. The system is useable for up to 15 hours on a rechargeable battery.

Contact Bobcat at 866/823-7898 or www.bobcat.com/ / circle no. 251

3 Isuzu Truck 2008 F-Series

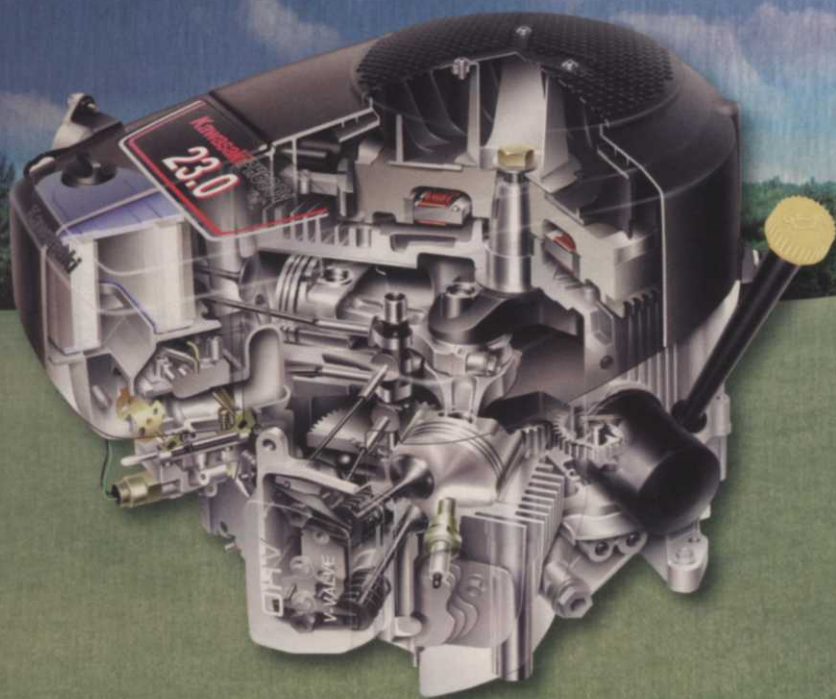
Isuzu released its 2008 F-Series line-up of Class 6, 7 and 8 low-cab-forward trucks. The F-Series is offered in three models: FTR and FVR single-axle trucks have a 25,950-lbs. GVW. The Isuzu 6H diesel engine in the FTR and FVR has been increased from 210 to 215 hp with 560 lbs./ft. of torque. The FXR diesel engine has been increased from 250 hp to 260 hp for the single-axle version and from 275 to 300 hp for the tandem-axle model. F-Series wheelbases were expanded to 152 in. to 260 in. to accommodate 16-ft. to 32-ft. bodies.

Contact Isuzu Commercial Truck of America at 866/441-9638 or www.isuzucv.com/ / circle no. 252

4 Bri-Mar Split Deck Trailer

With a 20-ft. tilt deck and 4-ft. stationary front, the HT824D is Bri-Mar's longest split deck, heavy-duty tilt trailer. The absence of ramps eliminates navigating up or down them, reducing the risk of equipment damage or injury. Space needed to unload is also minimized. A 4-ft. stationary front deck provides room for attachments or tools. With a deck height of 33 in., the deck-over design gives it an overall width of 102 in. — 20 in. more than other tilt trailers with decks in between the fenders. A GVWR of 14,000 lbs. further expands its capacity.

Contact Bri-Mar at 800/732-5845 or www.bri-mar.com/ / circle no. 253



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Kawasaki
Engines

You should be planning to replace roughly one third of your company's computers and technology each year.



4 valuable tech budget tips

BY TYLER WHITAKER

Over the years, I have been involved with all kinds of business planning exercises. Offsite retreats, onsite meetings, top down analysis and business process modeling. Great business planning always results in changes to the budget. But how accurate is your technology budget to begin with? I've collected a couple of tips to help you capture the line items that are often overlooked.

1. Employee growth — When it comes to new employees, planning for salary and benefits is pretty straight forward. But don't forget their technology needs. Will they need a PC, a cell phone or a pager/Blackberry? Don't forget to factor in usage costs of these items. Cell phone minutes, Internet access and extra long distance costs can all add up in a high growth environment. Developing a standard set of technology and costs can help you forecast the effects hiring can have on your budget.

2. Technology consumables — When you really stop to think about it, there's a fair amount of technology-related consumables that gets used up each year in an office. The first items that come to mind are the countless printer ink cartridges. Hopefully you've upgraded to laser printers, as the cost per page is much lower. Other items to remember include backup tapes, canned air (for cleaning computers) and of course copy paper. Being able to forecast these expenses can be helpful as you model your expenses.

3. Maintenance & support — Depending on the software that you use, you may have annual maintenance and support costs to factor into your budget. These costs are usually 15% to 20% of the initial purchase price and provide you software upgrades and the ability to call technical support. This is a great area to cut costs if you find that you don't use support very often. Check if your vendor has a pay-per-call or pay-per-incident option. Also evaluate how often you upgrade. Sometimes the best option is to use what works for as long as possible.

4. Hardware replacement — Most technology becomes obsolete within three years. That means that you should plan to replace roughly one-third of your company's computers and technology each year. While it's possible to squeeze extra life from some machines, the best practice is to track your hardware's purchase date and the date when it fails or becomes unusable. That way you can have hard data for use in your budgeting. Staying on top of your hardware replacement schedule can be one of the biggest contributors to an accurate budget.

Great business planning is only half of the battle. Being able to execute on that plan and adapt as necessary is where great companies tend to shine. Building an accurate and comprehensive technology budget should help remove the unknowns and allow you focus on your core business. Hopefully these tips will make budget and planning time a little easier.

— *The author is a freelance technologist focusing in business automation. Contact him at 801/592-2810 or visit his blog at www.tylerwhitaker.com.*

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As the premier manufacturer of decorative concrete cutting equipment, we offer the tools and resources for you to easily learn the art of concrete engraving. Nearly 15 years ago, Engrave-A-Crete developed the processes, systems and machines that have become the basis of an entire industry – decorative concrete engraving.



Photo Courtesy BMJ Design



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Step 2

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Step 3

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Circle 191

Get a Grip

TECHNOLOGY PRODUCT TESTING

By demo'ing a piece of equipment in "real-life," you get a feel for what it can do.



Give it a whirl first

BY ALLEN SPENCE

Can't decide which chain saw to buy? Hedge trimmer? Stick edger? Too many choices? Not enough details? Don't guess. Try out the many competing choices yourself. By demo'ing a piece of equipment "real-life," you get a feel for what it can do and how it fits your hands and your on-the-job needs. Most suppliers and distributors will gladly allow you to test equipment before you buy. They want a satisfied customer as much as you want efficient and productive equipment.

If the situation allows, let the technician that will be using the equipment give it a whirl, too. He's the one that will be doing the production. If it feels good to him, chances are he will be a happier and more efficient employee.

If you're fortunate enough to visit this year's Green Industry and Equipment EXPO in Louisville, KY, (Oct. 24-27) you'll be able to try out every piece of landscape equipment that you can imagine before you plunk down your cash. This year's event is the first ever that combines the educational venues of the Professional Landcare Network and

the Professional Grounds Management Society with the huge EXPO trade show.

The trade show with its indoor and huge outdoor demo area reminds me of an amusement park for landscapers.

Last year more than 20 acres of equipment were spread out for someone like you to come along and try it out. I ran 2-cycle powered equipment I had never seen before, discovered manufacturers that I had never heard of and equipment that I had only seen in pictures.

By attending events like the big Louisville show, not only can you get your hands on the equipment and test it out, you can talk to the engineers that designed it. They will provide insights on its features, offer tips on its long-term care and maintenance and perhaps teach you a thing or two about using it safely and more efficiently.

Every year that I have gone I have seen something new at the EXPO and I'm fully expecting to be surprised again — or see something I just haven't had time to see before.

Trust me, events such as the Green Industry and Equipment EXPO are well worth your investment in time and money.

— The author is turf equipment management instructor at Hinds

Community College in Raymond, MS.

Contact him at haspence@hindscc.edu

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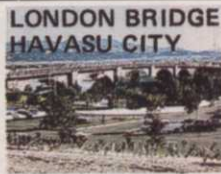
SUPERthrive™ unique extra life:—TRANSPLANTING, MAINTENANCE, SALVAGING. "IMPOSSIBLES" MADE EASY. 1,800 60 to 75 year-old trees dug from grounds of 20th Century Fox Studios, stock-piled in weather for years, replanted along streets of Century City. Landscape architect and contractor reported "not one sick or dead tree at any time." **Only SUPERthrive™ could have done this—or even approached it.**



In 2006, SUPERthrive™ inventor Dr. John A. Thomson was the first chemist to win the Lifetime Achievement Award from Lawn and Garden Marketing and Distribution Association.



DISNEYLAND
 400 HUGE SPECIMEN TREES DUG IN HOT, DRY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SUMMER. ZERO LOSS. Disneyland.® Enabled opening a year earlier". *Disneyland and Disney World are registered trade marks of The Walt Disney Co.



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- ▶ SAVED ALL OF HUGE SHIPMENT OF PALMS FROM FLORIDA TO 48 Taiwan GOLF COURSES. LOSE OVER HALF WITHOUT.
- ▶ 15 GAL. DRUM SAVED \$100,000 — ALL CONDEMNED TREES, U.S. CORPS OF ENGINEERS PENN. JOB — ALCA vice-president, Ohio.
- ▶ SAVED ALL GREAT SPECIMEN TREES TRANSPLANTED by U.S. Corps Of Engineers, FOR CAMOUFLAGE, WORLD WAR II.
- ▶ TWO WEEKS DIFFERENCE IN HYDROSEEDED GRASS STAND, ALONG FREEWAY BANKS FOR EROSION CONTROL. — Maryland State Highways.
- ▶ CELERY ALL TRANSPLANTED PERFECTLY IN 17 LARGE HOUSES, before and after one without, IN WHICH ALL LOST. — California
- ▶ 1200 TREES WITH 4" CALIPER TRUNKS BARE-ROOTED IN DESERT JUNE. NO LOSS. — Tucson, Arizona, City Parks Department.
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- ▶ ALL PALM SPRINGS DESERT GOLF BENT GREENS PERFECT WHILE EACH OTHER COURSE LOST 6 TO 14 BENT GREENS — California.
- ▶ BIGGEST TREE EVER MOVED, 100 YEARS OLD. GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS. MANY OTHER "BIGGESTS."
- ▶ WELL OVER MILLION EACH BARE-ROOT ROSES, ZERO LOSS AND STRONGER — California grower; New Mexico retailer, each..
- ▶ LARGE BLOCK ROOTED CUTTINGS TRANSPLANTED WITH SUPERthrive, 100% HEALTHY, WHILE LOSING ALL WITHOUT IT TO FUNGUS IN HEAVY RAINY SPRING.
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- ▶ ON EVERY CONTINENT, WITHOUT SALESMEN, UNCHALLENGED GUARANTEES SINCE 1940. Just results. REFUSE BEING BURNED BY FALSE "AS GOODS".
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38 EXTRA INCHES PINES GROWTH ABOVE FERTILIZERS-ALONE. SEVEN MONTHLY USES
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RECORD TREE-SAVING & BEAUTIFYING, 66 YEARS,
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Alturamats Inc.'s new 3 ft. by 6 ft. portable mat is designed to protect against turf damage resulting from vehicles weighing up to 60 tons. The 1/2-in.-thick mat, when used over soft turf, can save thousands of dollars in repair costs and virtually eliminate vehicles getting stuck in mud. The mats are fully guaranteed for six years. Weighing 51 lbs., the Alturamats are easy to handle using two hand slots on each side.

Contact Alturamats at 888/544-6287 or www.alturamats.com / circle no. 254



Single signal sensor

Creative Sensor Technology's Combiflow 100 combines the outputs of two flow sensors and generates one output signal allowing irrigation controllers and pump control panels to read multiple flows through a single input. Typically, a controller has one flow sensor input. However, increasingly complex irrigation systems may be supplied by multiple water sources, reclaimed water, harvested rainwater, private wells and public water connections, all requiring separate flow sensors. The Combiflow 100 combines flow sensors of any size and produces a

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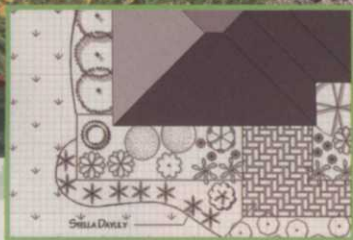
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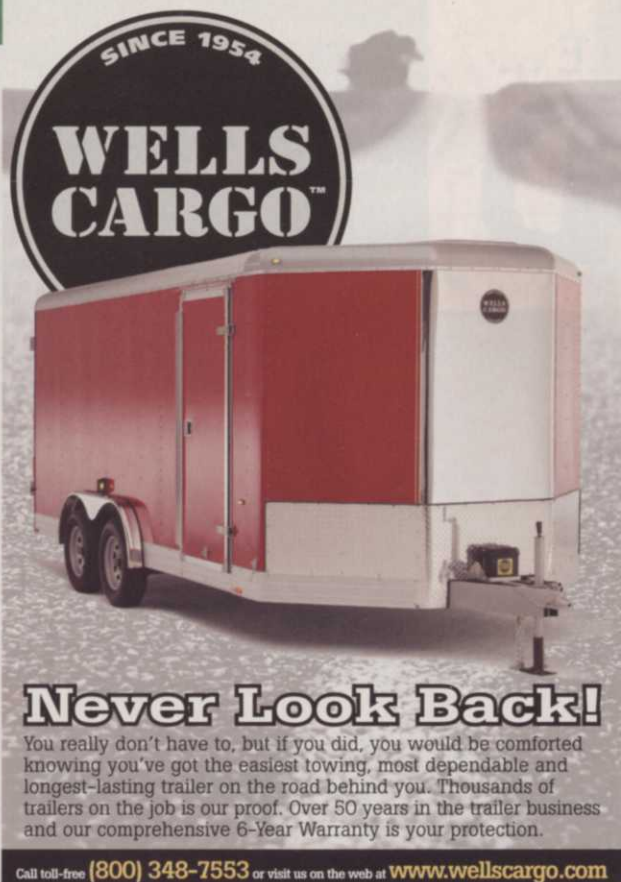
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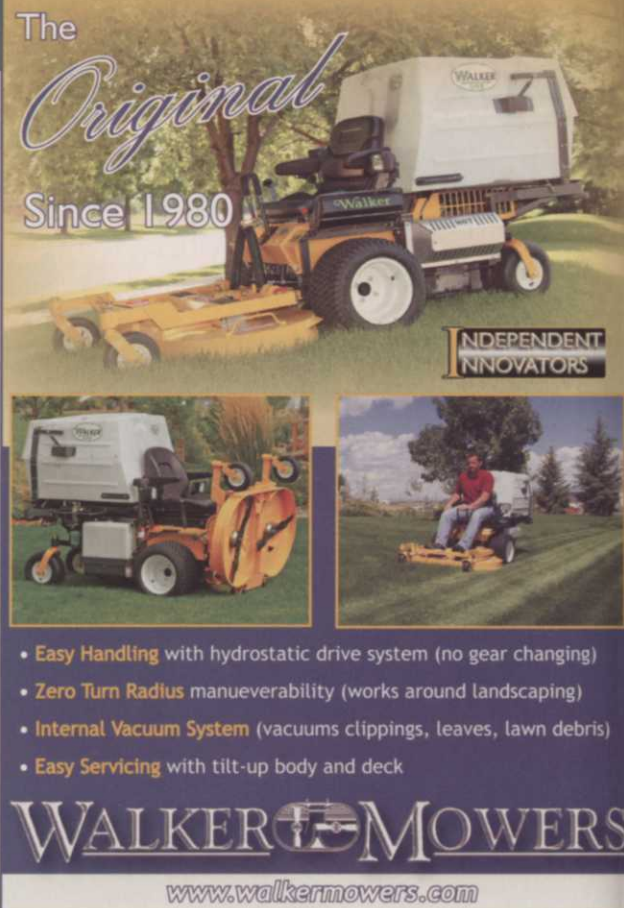
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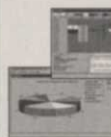
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Ted Collins Tree and Landscape

50 years young and still giving back to customers and community

BY JANET AIRD

Ted Collins Tree and Landscape, Rochester, NY, has changed a lot since Ted Collins started it back in 1957. It's moved from a commercial alleyway to a site on 35 acres of farmland. It has grown from three employees to more than 50.

What hasn't changed is the company's culture, says Greg Frank, vice president, who began working with the company as a plant health technician in 1977. He now owns the business with Doug Ward, who'd been in the general contracting field when he bought the company from Collins in 1990.

"Ted was a great teacher and mentor," Frank says. "We wanted to keep his philosophy, management and people. I don't think the general public really knew the business had changed hands."

Ted Collins' staff includes

►► **Founded:** 1957 **Location:** Rochester, NY **Business mix:** Design/build: 60%; Plant health services 40% **Customers:** 92% residential, 8% light commercial **Employees:** Year-round 50-55;



Experienced leadership
Doug Ward (l.) and Greg Frank combine for 47 years in the landscape business.

landscape architects, arborists, design consultants, lawn and plant care specialists and horticultural experts. Its services include a design/build division and a lawn and plant health care program that begins with choosing the right plant and tree for the right place. The company follows up with maintenance and also does tree removals.

"In our market people like to make one call," Frank says. "We really manage the whole property. It makes it easy on the customer."

Giving & training

Ted Collins emphasizes training, which is usually done by vendors, company sales groups and department heads. The company has weekly toolbox training sessions, from simple to advanced horticulture. About five years ago, it started a cross-training program, which Frank says helps at the start of the season.

"We want each person in a department to be able to go into another department and know how to do the work," Frank says. "When we start up, from the end of March to the first of May, we increase our staff by 30 to 40 people.

Having the veterans able to work in other areas helps out dramatically."

This year, Ted Collins celebrated its 50th anniversary by giving back to the community, Frank says. It started with a Christmas tree recycling program, where the company donated the profits to Ronald McDonald House. It donated services and equipment for tree pruning at a local high school and created butterfly gardens in a neighborhood.

The company is also taking high school students to work sites and giving career talks in least five area high schools to give students an appreciation of horticulture, Frank says. This appreciation can become a passion that lasts a lifetime, leading to rewarding careers.

These days, Mr. Collins cultivates and sells lilacs at his Lilac Hill Nursery in Victor, NY. Although he hasn't been involved in the landscape business since he sold it, Frank says after 50 years, "He still stops by and says 'hi.'" **LM**

— The author is a freelance writer in Altadena, CA. E-mail janet.aird@earthlink.



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