



## Three green services that can't miss

**G**reen, sustainable — or whatever you call it — is here. It offers us limitless opportunity. Few industries stand to gain as much from the growing consciousness among the public that we must conserve our resources and protect our environment as we do. But with this incredible opportunity comes responsibility.

Take this responsibility seriously. It's the future of our businesses and of our industry. Start by identifying, researching and providing those services and products that offer the greatest return in terms of environmental benefits and to the health of our businesses and our industry.

Using green merely as a marketing hook and promoting green services that aren't genuinely green is self-defeating. If the market sees through this veneer (and it will), you will be finished.

Here are three services that deserve your consideration because they offer recognizable environmental benefits and, in most cases, measurable returns for customers and for you. Could there be more compelling reasons for providing them?

**1. Green roofs.** Any landscape company expecting to be a leader in a major or mid-level metropolitan region should learn as much as it can, as fast as it can, about green roofs. Green roofs offer so many benefits they'll eventually be specified for almost all new major public and commercial buildings.

**2. Water-efficient landscaping.** There will come a day (one that has already arrived in California,

Florida and elsewhere in the United States) that every landscape you install and maintain will have to be water-efficient. This means acquiring specialized knowledge and skills encompassing such areas as native/regionally adapted plants, installing and maintaining smart irrigation systems and providing water harvesting products and services, to name a few. The use of potable water to irrigate landscapes will be limited and become increasingly expensive in many parts of the United States.

**3. Holistic turf/ornamental care services.** While synthetically produced fertilizers and pesticides have a legitimate place in our industry, many lawn service companies are shifting efforts toward a plant health care (PHC) philosophy. PHC recognizes the use of these products, but mostly to solve specific problems that aren't otherwise manageable. Chemical products are valuable tools as long as they're used for the right purposes, in the correct locations, at the appropriate times and in the right quantities.

Liken PHC to your own health, which is dependent on eating correctly, getting the proper amount of exercise and avoiding harmful environmental conditions. Staying healthy, of course, is preferable to daily doses of medicine. The same goes for the turf and other landscape plants we maintain.

Offering PHC, of course, offers a more complete system of care. It requires scouting and monitoring, and a thorough knowledge of plant/soil relationships. PHC (or whatever your particular term for it is) will grow as a choice for our customers as the green movement grows.

You won't master these — or any other sustainable initiative or service — without a well-thought-out plan. Avoid the “ready, fire, aim” syndrome. Otherwise, you disappoint. Even worse, you might become disillusioned with the concept of green itself. That would be a shame.

We have so much to offer in terms of improving and restoring our urban environments, as well as increasing the value of our businesses and our industry, if we proceed intelligently.

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