



## AT A GLANCE

**NAME:** Steve Pattie

**COMPANY:** The Pattie Group

**YEAR STARTED:** 1968

**INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT:**

Former president and current member of the Ohio Landscape Association; former PLANET board member; SIMA

**EDUCATION:** Attended Ohio University and graduated from Kent State University with a business degree. "But it's funny, I don't think my education's ever stopped."

**HOBBIES:** I love pruning my yard. I like traveling. I like coaching companies, too. I teach them how to restructure their companies to make them more profitable.

**FAMILY:** I have three kids and four grandkids. All three kids are at the company (Jonas, 35; Carla, 33; and Brian, 30).

**WEBSITE:**  
www.pattiegroupp.com

At The Pattie Group, based in Novelty, Ohio, the focus not only is on customer service, but on mentoring and training employees. "We have very good coaching, very good mentoring, very good structuring," says The Pattie Group President **Steve Pattie**. About \$150,000 of the full-service company's \$7.5 million revenue is attributed to lawn care.

The company trains its staff continuously and tests them on their knowledge. It even has its own certification system in which employees can gain credentials in new skills.

Here Pattie talks with *Landscape Management* about the company's work-related initiatives, its values and more.

**What is your business**

**philosophy?** Honesty and integrity come first to mind. We train our staff to be proactive and helpful to our clients and to others. So if they see someone broken down on the side of the road, they have to stop to assist them. It's not just about landscaping. It's about life.

**What special work-related initiatives do you have in**

**place?** We require 45 hours a year of continuing education. Twenty-six hours are provided through the company; the rest is through recommended reading or classes or seminars. The average budget for that is between \$200 and \$300 per employee. It's been very effective. We can tell the staff's growth by the number of licenses our staff has. We have 30 or 40 certifications represented among our 88 employees.

**What makes an exceptional lawn care professional?** Number one is teaching your staff to think holistically. It's analyzing plant needs, adjusting the water, talking to the client. It's about analyzing what looks right, what needs help, what needs to be enhanced.

When I was younger, I wanted to be the one-stop shop. I wanted to have all the expertise in one location, and we've done that.

**How has that helped your business?** We have the expertise on staff to address all types of problems. When you have your own people involved, once they're trained, you have higher quality.

**What do customers value?** It's mandatory that my staff gets back to the client within four hours. Four hours. It's hard, but speed sells. You can increase your sales by 30 percent by

speed. We sell by speed and we sell by experience.

**On your website, it says the The Pattie Group encourages Christian values.** We are a Christian company. Our goal is to be ethical and moral. We want you to be a better person. It's not just about work. It's about goal setting. Then you can relate that to other things in your life, to your family. You can relate that to your business goals. It's about how to make you more valuable in the company.

**You sometimes ask politicians to speak to your staff. Why?**

I want our staff to be educated when they go vote, because this country could be headed in the totally wrong direction. I want my staff to know what candidates stand for.

**What are your goals?** I'm 61 and I've done everything I've ever wanted to do. I'm ready to take a step back. I want the succession plan to be instituted and my kids ready to take over by the end of this year. I want to start the second half of my life.

IT'S MANDATORY THAT MY STAFF GETS BACK TO THE CLIENT **WITHIN FOUR HOURS** ... IT'S HARD, BUT SPEED SELLS."