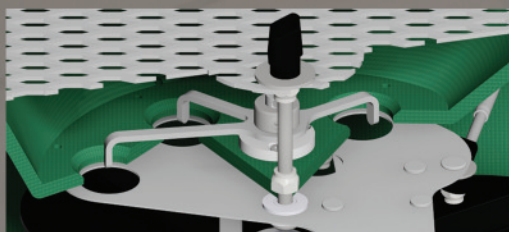


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owner Bob Drost
(right) and GM
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Drost

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At Drost Landscape, well-defined
owner/GM roles will help the firm
grow 25 percent this year. p.30



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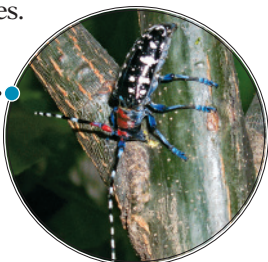
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ON THE COVER: PHOTO BY MOLLY HAUXWELL CURRIER,
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WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE LM GROWTH SUMMIT

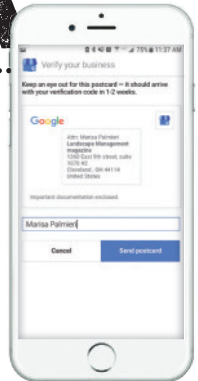


➔ The 2018 *Landscape Management Growth Summit* is an exclusive, invite-only networking and education

event for turf+ornamental care companies held in Orlando, Fla., Nov. 12-14. This year's workshop speaker, Ken Bogard, will explain how the Entrepreneurial Operating System—popularized by the book “Traction: Get a Grip on Your Business” by Gino Wickman—helps people get what they want from their businesses. Interested in attending? Head over to **LMGrowthSummit.net** to learn more about the event.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

MARISA PALMIERI
EDITOR

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mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net



Walker ways

Have you ever visited a company and instantly knew that everyone who worked there was on the same page—and wondered how they got there?

That's the feeling I got when I visited Walker Manufacturing in July for the Walker Family Reunion III. The event, which celebrated production of the company's 150,000th mower, was held on Walker's 60-acre campus in Fort Collins, Colo.

More than 2,200 people attended the reunion, which included a variety of activities to learn about Walker's history and its products—including a factory tour, skills challenge, obstacle course and vintage vehicle show—and lots of opportunities for family fun, like a Ferris wheel, hot air balloon rides, go-carts, live music and more.

During a pre-event press briefing, President Bob Walker acknowledged the unconventional nature of the reunion.

"This kind of a gathering is not the everyday way of doing business," he said. "Most of the industry is corporate and would analyze something like this for ROI and would have a hard time justifying it."

During the two days I spent at Walker, I observed a genuine sense of gratitude and an emphasis on people and relationships I haven't seen in other corporate settings. I noted just a few of the company's practices that any business—from a small landscape firm to a larger corporation—could learn from.

1. Set goals and celebrate achievements. In fact, celebrating met goals—mower production milestones—is the Walker Family Reunion's reason for being. "For a company of our size to be able to manufacture, sell, service and stand behind 150,000 machines, we

think it's a big achievement and worth celebrating," Bob Walker said.

2. Think long term. The Walkers produced their first mower in 1977, but it was a decade before they made a profit. "You have to be a long-term thinker," he said. "Otherwise, you'll give up."

3. Follow your customers' needs—not your competitors' moves. Walker builds front-mount mowers it says its customers prefer rather than the mid-mount style most common today. "We build machines to do a job rather than to fill a market," Bob Walker said.

4. Foster a great workplace. Walker practices "level manufacturing," meaning it runs year-round, so it can provide steady, full-time careers for its employees—not a given in manufacturing. All team members receive a "What We Believe" card, which outlines the company's 18 guiding principles, including taking Sundays off and reminders like "Keep your word, tell the truth, be honest in all things."

5. Embrace who you are. The company doesn't apologize for being a Christian, family-run business. For instance, Walker has hosted an annual hymn sing on its grounds since 2004, and scripture dots the firm's messaging.

Bob Walker explained the company intends to remain family-run with the third generation—his nephews (Dean Walker's sons), Ryan Walker and Ted Walker—transitioning into leadership roles over the past six years.

6. Give thanks. Bob Walker says, "We think living with gratitude is part of our culture, and being grateful for who you work with and what the Lord has given you are important." 🙏



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FromDesign2Build.com
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"I promised my general manager a nice stock dividend based on the size of the company upon selling it, then I put it in writing."

"The owner and the GM need to be almost diametrically opposed in terms of their personalities."

"Weekly 'same page' meetings along with clear and honest communication at all times are needed."

"Picking the right GM (skills and personality) to complement the owner is a priority."

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See more great advice and complete answers from our Editorial Advisory Board in the online version of this feature at LandscapeManagement.net.



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THE DETAILS Brickell City Centre transformed a nine-acre tract into an entertainment and shopping district in the heart of Brickell, the main financial district of Miami. The developer sought to incorporate the concept of biophilia in the design, with natural ventilation and native landscaping.

The Gold-LEED-certified \$1.5-billion, 5-million-square-foot project opened in phases over four years.

The 40-story East Miami hotel is a centerpiece of the east block of Brickell City Centre. East Miami features extensive plantings in the pool, restaurant and bar areas. A total of 13,300 plants were installed on the east block alone and lifted by crane as high as 525 feet.

Greensleeves assisted landscape architecture firm ArquitectonicaGEO with respecifying plants for the project and was responsible for the landscape installation and maintenance.

The project earned Greensleeves a 2017 Grand Award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program.

PHOTO The garden rooftop bar at the East Miami hotel features foliage at every turn.

See more photos from this project at LandscapeManagement.net/BigPicture.

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U.S. Army veterans Brian and Kristy Boase are in their second season operating Mil-Spec Lawn Care in Clarksville, Tenn. The husband and wife team recognize it's difficult to add employees, so for now, they're remaining a two-person show. Yet, they say they've been able to grow thanks to the online invoicing platform they've selected: Jobber. They have about 60 maintenance accounts and an increasing amount of landscaping work.

Their operation is simple. They complete jobs together, then Kristy Boase emails an invoice to clients from the Jobber app as their truck pulls away from the property.

"Usually, before we even get to the next job, we've already been paid," she says.

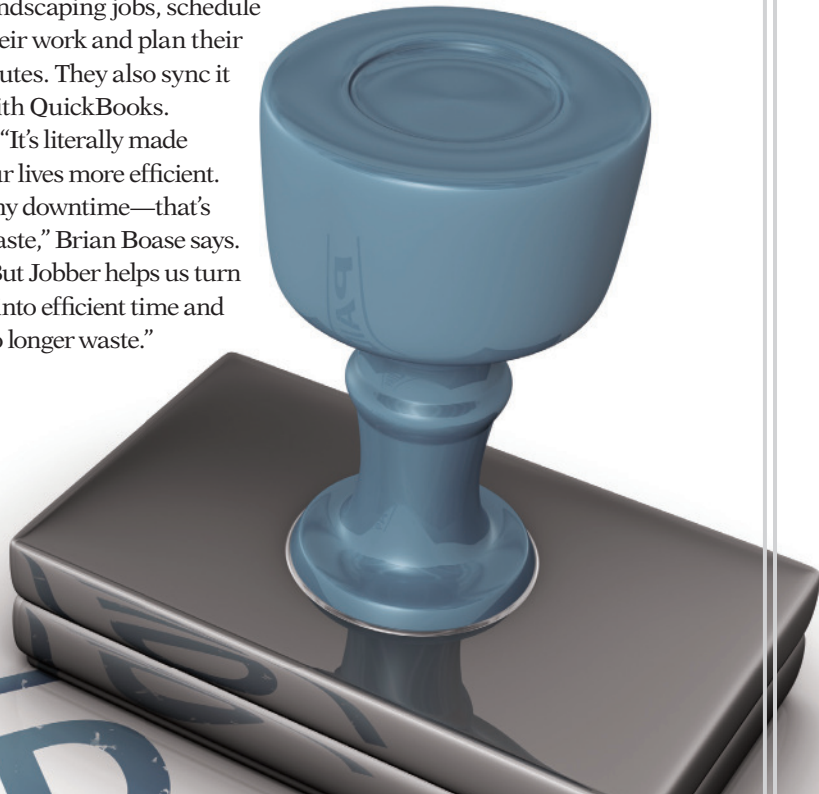
The duo estimates this method saves them about an hour a day compared to having to collect checks from their primarily residential clients and deposit them at the bank or scan

them for mobile deposit. That savings easily justifies the cost of the service, which starts at \$69 per month, Brian Boase says.

On top of the invoicing capabilities, the Boases use Jobber to build quotes for landscaping jobs on the spot, request deposits for landscaping jobs, schedule their work and plan their routes. They also sync it with QuickBooks.

"It's literally made our lives more efficient. Any downtime—that's waste," Brian Boase says. "But Jobber helps us turn it into efficient time and no longer waste."

"Usually, before we even get to the next job, we've already been paid."



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LEADERSHIP ADVANTAGE



BY BEN GANDY

The author is principal of Envivor Consulting. Reach him at bengandy@envisorco.com.

STRUCTURE MATTERS IN MAINTENANCE

Business structure matters. As businesses grow, questions come up about who to hire and for what purpose.

When the business is small, the owner wears all the hats: He sells the work, schedules it, manages production, manages the client, collects the check and takes it to the bank.

As landscape businesses grow, the first thing to delegate is administration; the next thing is usually production.

Sales and customer management are often the last things owners delegate. In these processes, there's increasing specialization. If everybody does everything, it doesn't scale and you don't optimize; it simply models how the owner operated from the beginning.

CHOOSE A MODEL

Some businesses choose an account manager (AM) model where one person handles a portfolio of accounts and is responsible for both the management of the crews as well as the customer relations, including upselling. Using this model minimizes the risk of communication breakdown. Customer requests are made directly to the party responsible for dispatching production resources. Unless the AM forgets, doesn't follow up or provides poor instruction to the crews, customers are likely to get what they want.

The model's weakness is that the AM may never have an opportunity to optimize the upsell revenue because of the time spent with the crews, and he

“In times of stress, relational people will put their arm around the customer and hope the crews figure it out, and logistical people will gravitate to the field with the crews and hope the customer doesn't call.”

may never optimize crew productivity due to time spent with customers. This model also doesn't acknowledge the natural inclination of personalities. Some people are naturally logistical and excel at overseeing operations. Others are relational and excel at charming customers. Few people are gifted at both ends of this spectrum.

In times of stress, relational people will put their arm around the customer and hope the crews figure it out, and logistical people will gravitate to the field with the crews and hope the customer doesn't call.

Other businesses choose to have one person handle crew management, but not customer management. A customer relations person handles the customer, including upsells. He must pass requests from the customers to the operations person, who dispatches the crews. This model allows for optimizing sales opportunities on the customer side and production on the operations side, and it enables personality types to stay in their area of strength more of the time. However, there's a risk in communication breakdown in this model. Messages from the customer may get diluted in content and urgency or fail to get passed along at all.

Both structures can be employed successfully. On the customer-facing

side, the accountability is for sales and retention, and on the operations-facing side, the accountability is for safety, quality and productivity.


Finally, the structure has to handle the upsells, or the installation part of the maintenance business.

This side of the business is entirely different than the maintenance side. It's ever-changing versus repetitive and predictable.

Most businesses separate this portion and put it under someone with strong logistical skills and decision-making abilities who's also production-oriented.

When those dealing with maintenance are tasked with producing the enhancement work as well, the urgent nature of it can be all-consuming.

When does a dedicated enhancement production resource make sense? There's a point when the salary pays for itself in margin points and increased sales volume. If there's \$1 million worth of revenue, three to four points of gross margin are worth \$30,000-\$40,000, and an AM who is freed from production responsibilities should be able to sell at least 10-30 percent more.

As you think about structure, seek counsel, plan ahead, resist the temptation to build around current personalities, accept that it's not perfect and build a model you can replicate. 



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STEP BY STEP

How to properly mark utilities before digging

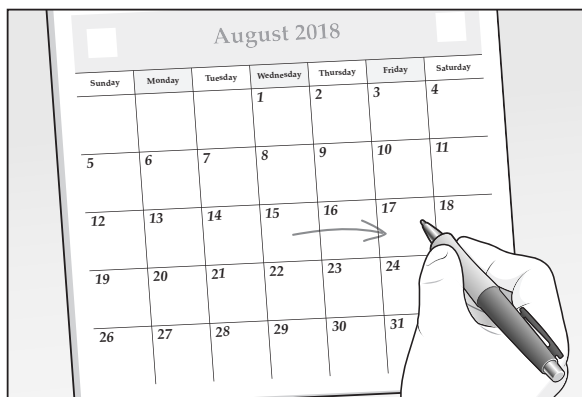
Data shows that an underground utility line is damaged once every six minutes nationwide because someone decides to dig without first calling 811, the number for contractors and homeowners to call before digging to prevent unintentional contact with these lines. Digging without knowing the approximate location of underground utilities can result in damage to gas, electric, communications, water and sewer lines, which can lead to service disruptions, injuries and costly repairs.

Contacting 811 automatically routes callers to the call center in their area within the U.S. Callers provide the operator with information about where they plan to dig and what type of work they will be doing. Utility companies that potentially have facilities in the area of the dig site will be notified, and each affected utility company will send a locator to mark the approximate location of the underground utility lines typically within two to three business days.

Contractors also can contact their local 811 call center to receive safe digging trainings for themselves and their employees. As state laws are subject to change, a local 811 call center is a reliable resource for the most up-to-date information about how to dig safely and within the confines of the law. Contractors also should educate their customers about the 811 process and make sure they know to call before beginning digging projects they complete on their own.

Follow these steps to properly mark utilities before digging. 

SOURCE: A Common Ground Alliance Initiative; Call811.com/start-here/contractors



STEP 1

Notify your local call center by calling 811 or making an online request two to three business days before work is scheduled to begin. The call center will transmit the project's information to all affected utility operators. Wait two to three days for affected utility operators to respond to your request. On average, seven to eight utility operators are notified for each request.

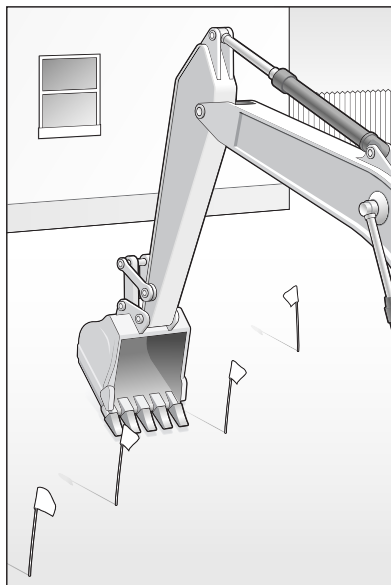


STEP 2

Confirm with your local 811 call center that all affected utility operators have responded to your request. If you see clear evidence of a utility, such as an above-ground marker, manhole cover or utility box, but no marks, call 811 again so the utility company can be notified.

STEP 3

Respect the marks and dig carefully. The marks provided by the affected utility operators are a guide for the duration of the project. If you are unable to maintain the marks during your project, or the project will continue past your request's expiration date, call 811 to ask for a re-mark. State laws generally prohibit the use of mechanized equipment within 18 to 24 inches of a marked utility. If you must dig near the marks, hand dig or use vacuum excavation.



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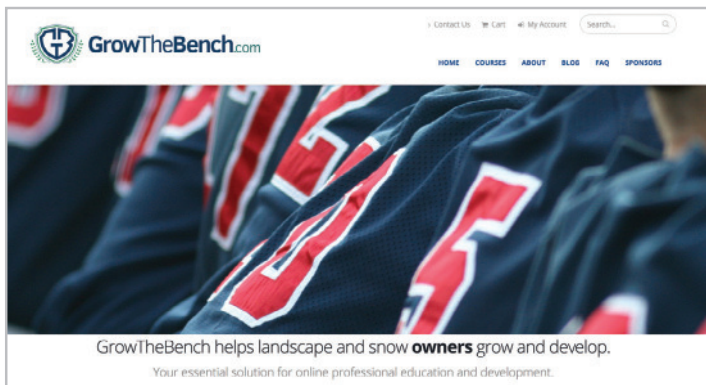


AndersonsPlantNutrient.com

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NEW STUFF

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2



3

**1. GROWTHEBENCH****COMPANY:** GrowTheBench**URL:** GrowTheBench.com

GrowTheBench—launched by industry consultants Phil Harwood and Neal Glatt—is a subscription-based educational service featuring access to more than 80 online class modules, lasting 15-20 minutes. Offered for a variety of positions, the courses focus on professional fundamentals, management foundations, developing great crew leaders, effective time management and high-performance coaching. The mobile-friendly courses are available 24/7 and viewable with a 4G or Wi-Fi connection. An “all-access pass” is available for \$97 per month per user.

2. SURE POWER SELECTIVE HERBICIDE**COMPANY:** Nufarm Americas**URL:** Nufarm.com

Nufarm Americas’ Sure Power selective herbicide—now registered under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency—offers early-season and late-season control of more than 250 weeds, including tough-to-manage broadleaf weeds that affect turf appearance and quality, according to Nufarm. It uses a four-way active ingredient combination of 2,4-D, triclopyr, fluroxypyr and flumioxazin and delivers two different modes of action to support resistance management programs.

3. FUSION EDGE SNO PUSHER**COMPANY:** Pro-Tech**URL:** SnoPusher.com

Pro-Tech’s containment snow plow features a steel-infused rubber cutting edge and is available in 10- to 16-ft. models for loaders, compact wheel loaders, backhoes and skid-steers. The plow’s three main components include the Fusion Edge, which can squeegee wet heavy snow and scrape hard-packed snow; the Pro Float coupler, which floats vertically and horizontally and oscillates; and the Fast Attack shoes, which allow the operator to achieve an optimal position.



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4. PPF-2620 POWER PRUNER

COMPANY: Echo

URL: Echo-USA.com

The 96-in. fixed-length PPF 2620 power pruner features a 25.4cc engine and provides increased power and torque over the PPF-280 pruner, according to Echo. The pruner includes a see-through oil tank with a large opening for easy filling, a rubber engine mount for reduced vibrations and a rubber grip and sleeve for operator comfort. The machine's main pipe is made of steel.

5. SAFER PLAY

COMPANY: Branch Creek

URL: SaferPlay.com

The Safer Play line of liquid and granular control products is made of ingredients classified as "minimum risk" under section 25(b) of the EPA's Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act. Lawn Food with Crabgrass Prevention is a nonmanure-based, biosolid-free fertilizer with no restrictions on reentry time after application. Weed Shield kills and prevents weeds from forming with a botanical oil blend that doesn't harm grass. Grub Shield works to control grubs and other surface-feeding insects, using botanical oils and oyster and clamshells.

6. SMRT LOGIC

COMPANY: The Toro Co.

URL: Toro.com

SMRT Logic is now compatible with Google Home and Amazon Alexa devices. SMRT Logic enables customers to control their irrigation, outdoor landscape lighting and other landscape features through their smartphone, tablet or computer. It uses proprietary technology to enable mobile device connection without having to access a wireless network and provides a secure platform for operation by either the homeowner or landscape professional from anywhere.

SAFETYWATCH

AERATOR OPERATING HAZARDS

There are several types of operating hazards that may occur when running an aerator.

- **Personal hazards** are hazards that may harm you, the operator.
- **Bystander hazards** are hazards that may harm co-workers or other bystanders.
- **Property hazards** may harm the equipment or other property.

Don't leave an aerator unattended. Always park it on flat ground when not in use. The aerator can roll, especially when the tines aren't in the ground on turf. It also may roll during transport unless it's securely tied down. Keeping the tines in the lowered position on turf when not in use may stop it from rolling unexpectedly.

Running the aerator with the tines down over hard surfaces or any other surface you don't want to aerate may damage the tines and the ground surface. Lowering the tines on a medium density surface like a wooden trailer bed is considered OK



by some managers.

Ask your supervisor what he prefers.

The tines may penetrate anything on or beneath the surface, including sprinkler heads and sprinkler lines. Remember, most sprinkler heads are at the edges of lawns and gardens. Walking the property prior to aerating may help identify sprinkler heads and other hazards. Report any damage you may have caused to your supervisor.

Be careful when turning or maneuvering near cars or other valuable property. The aerator is long and can be awkward to maneuver. Its handle could scratch a vehicle or building.

Aerators also can move with considerable force when operated at full ground speed—slow down as you near the end of a pass or when turning, so you don't run into objects like cars or landscape plants.

WATCH AND LEARN

Visit [LandscapeManagement.net/SafetyWatch](https://www.landscapemanagement.net/SafetyWatch) to view a video about aerator operating hazards and use it as a training tool for your team.

SOURCE: Greenius

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DAY 1 TUES OCT 16

Omni Louisville

- 8:00 AM – 12:25 PM ● Irrigation Summit
- 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM ● Design Build Summit
● Landscape Management Summit
● Lawn Care Summit
- 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM ● Account Manager Training Workshop
- 11:00 AM – 5:30 PM ● OSHA 10 Hour Course (Part 1)
- 1:00 PM – 5:15 PM ● Snow & Ice Summit
- 5:30 PM- 7:30 PM ● NALP Kickoff & Welcome Reception + Live | Silent Auction
- 8:00 PM – 9:00 PM ● Newcomers Reception
- 9:00 PM – 10:30 PM ● NALP – PAC Reception

DAY 2 WEDS OCT 17

Omni Louisville | KEC

- 7:00 AM – 8:30 AM ● Breakfast With Champions
- 7:30 AM – 2:10 PM ● OSHA 10 Hour Course (Part 2)
- 8:45 AM – 10:15 AM ● Power Sessions
- 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM ● CEO Forum
- 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM ● Crew Leader Workshop
- 10:30 AM – 11:45 AM ● Educational Sessions
- 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM ● Keynote with Dr. Robert Ballard
- 3:00 PM – 7:00 PM ● GIE + EXPO
- 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM ● Young Professionals Reception
- 9:00 PM – 10:30 PM ● Leadership Appreciation Reception (*Invitation Only*)

DAY 3 THURS OCT 18

Omni Louisville | KEC

- 7:00 AM – 8:30 AM ● Breakfast with Champions
- 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM ● GIE + EXPO
- 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM ● Technical Training Workshop (*English & Spanish*)
- 9:45 AM – 11:15 AM ● Power Sessions
- 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM ● Educational Sessions
- 2:30 PM – 3:45 PM ● Educational Sessions
- 4:00 PM – 5:15 PM ● Educational Sessions
- 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM ● IGI Reception (*Invitation Only*)
- 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM ● Awards Celebration

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IT'S ELECTRIC!

The buzz that's behind the
battery-powered mower market.

▶ PAGE 22



Space invaders

Invasive insects are a threat to landscapes all over the country, so it's important for green industry professionals to keep an eye out for these damaging pests. BY EMILY SCHAPPACHER

Invasive pests are a threat to trees, shrubs, landscapes and crops in every region of the U.S. Left unchecked, they can devastate entire plant species, threatening food supplies and costing billions of dollars in damages. In addition, they're a nuisance for homeowners trying to enjoy their lawns and landscapes. These invasive insects easily can be transported from place to place on vehicles and can be hidden in fruit, vegetables, plants, firewood or on outdoor items, so it's important for contractors to be able to properly identify them and know how to get them under control.

Below are the top five invasive pests of concern to landscape and lawn care professionals, as identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Read on for information about where they're prevalent the plants at risk and some control methods. Always check with local experts and read and follow label instructions before using pesticides.



Asian Longhorned Beetle

The Asian longhorned beetle, or ALB, is an invasive insect that feeds on a wide variety of trees in the U.S., eventually killing them. The beetle is native to China and the Korean peninsula and is in the wood-boring beetle family *Cerambycidae*. Adult beetles are large, distinctive-looking insects measuring 1 to 1.5 inches long with long antennae. Their bodies are black with small white spots, and their antennae are banded in black and white.

Places with federal quarantine: Massachusetts, New York and Ohio.

What's at risk: Hardwood trees, including ash, birch, elm, horse chestnut/

buckeye, golden raintree, London planetree/sycamore, katsura, maples (including boxelder, red, silver and sugar maple), mimosa, mountain ash, poplar and willow.

Control methods: Imidacloprid applied in the spring, early summer or fall—prior to adult emergence or when adults are feeding and laying eggs. All infested trees should be removed, even if they've been treated with insecticide.



European Gypsy Moth

The European gypsy moth, or EGM, is native to Europe and first arrived in the U.S. in 1869. The caterpillars defoliate trees, leaving them vulnerable to diseases and other pests, and can eventually kill the tree. Adult male gypsy moths are light brown with dark brown wings, which have a series of black bands down their lengths. Adult females are slightly larger than males and are mostly white, also with a few dark bands on the wings. Gypsy moths are 15 to 35 mm long on average. Newly hatched larvae are black, hairy caterpillars, and as they age, they grow two rows of blue, then red, spots on their backs. Each spot has a patch of yellow or brown hair growing out of it. Legs of larvae are dark red.

Places with federal quarantine: 19 states and the District of Columbia.

What's at risk: More than 300 species of trees and shrubs including aspen, birch, cedar, cottonwood, fruit trees, larch, oak, poplar and willow.

Control methods: Chemical insecticides, such as acephate, carbaryl and others; mass trapping by setting numerous traps in an infested area to lure male moths and eliminate them from the breeding population; or mating disruption by saturating the treatment area with enough pheromone sources to confuse the male moths, preventing them from finding and mating with female moths.

Continued on page 20

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Continued from page 18



Emerald Ash Borer

The emerald ash borer, or EAB, is an invasive wood-boring beetle. Native to Asia, the beetle's first North American populations were confirmed in the summer of 2002 in southeast Michigan and in Windsor, Ontario. Adult beetles are typically bright metallic green and about 8.5 mm long and 1.6 mm wide. Underneath the elytra, the upper side of the abdomen is coppery-red, a distinctive feature of the species.

Places with federal quarantine: 30 states.

What's at risk: All 16 species of ash trees as well as the white fringetree.

Control methods: Acephate, bifenthrin, imidacloprid, imidacloprid + clothianidin, dinotefuan and others. Impacted trees should be felled and disposed of.



Red Imported Fire Ants

The red imported fire ant, or RIFA, is among the world's most infamous, aggressive and widespread invasive ant species. Native to South America, imported fire ants will feed on the buds and fruits of numerous crop plants, especially corn, soybean, okra and citrus. They can also girdle young trees. Fire ants measure 1/8 to 1/4 inch long. Red imported fire ants have a reddish colored head and thorax, as well as elbowed antennae.

Places with federal quarantine: Most of the southeastern U.S., California, New Mexico and Puerto Rico.

What's at risk: Corn, soybean, okra, citrus, humans, young and newborn animals and agricultural equipment.

Control methods: Abamectin, bifenthrin, chlorpyrifos, diazinon, fenoxycarb, fipronil, hydramethylnon, metaflumizone, methoprene, pyriproxyfen, tefluthrin and others.




Spotted Lanternfly

The spotted lanternfly is native to China and was first detected in Pennsylvania in September 2014. Spotted lanternflies feed on a wide range of fruit, ornamental and woody trees, with the tree of heaven being a preferred host. Adult spotted lanternflies are approximately 1 inch long and 1.5 inches wide and have large, visually striking wings. Their forewings are light brown with black spots at the front and a speckled band at the rear. Their hind wings are scarlet with black spots at the front and white and black bars at the rear. Their abdomen is yellow with black bars. Nymphs in their early

stages of development appear black with white spots and turn to a red phase before becoming adults. Egg masses are yellowish-brown in color and covered with a gray, waxy coating prior to hatching.

Places with federal quarantine: None.

What's at risk: Grapes, orchard fruits, hops and trees.

Control methods: From September to June, egg masses on trees or other hard surfaces can be scraped off using a plastic card or putty knife. Scrape them into a bag or container filled with isopropyl alcohol or hand sanitize. Tree banding is another method. When the nymphs first hatch, they will walk up the trees to feed on the softer new plant growth. Wrap tree trunks in sticky tape to trap the nymphs. Chemical controls include acetamiprid, azadirachtin, bifenthrin, carbaryl, dinotefuran, imidacloprid, thiamethoxam, insect-killing/insecticidal soaps and more. 

Schappacher is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.

PHOTOS: LEAH BAUER, USDA FOREST SERVICE NORTHERN RESEARCH STATION, BUGWOOD.ORG; USDA APHIS PPQ - IMPORTED FIRE ANT STATION, USDA APHIS PPQ, BUGWOOD.ORG; LAWRENCE BARRINGER, PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, BUGWOOD.ORG

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MOWING+LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

The buzz on electric equipment

As the second commercial electric zero-turn mower brand enters the market, industry insiders weigh in on the growth of electric and battery-powered tools. **BY ABBY HART**

When Greenworks Commercial unveiled its Lithium Z mower line this summer, the manufacturer joined Mean Green Mowers in the commercial zero-turn electric mower market.

This segment was bound to gain a competitor. Shipments of electric outdoor power equipment products (both corded and cordless) are projected to see a 51 percent growth rate from 2015 to 2019, according to data from the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) presented by Greenworks at the Lithium Z launch event in July.

Joe Conrad, president of Mean Green Mowers, says the demand for electric has significantly increased since he rigged his first electric mower with a lead acid battery in 2008.

In 2013, Mean Green produced fewer than 100 mowers, Conrad says. Next year, he projects the company will produce 800 mowers—including commercial zero-turn and walk-behind models—to be sold through more than 60 dealers throughout the U.S. The mowers are particularly in demand on college campuses, city parks and federal parks districts—areas that see plenty of foot traffic and need quieter equipment with zero emissions, he says.

Handheld equipment and walk-behind mowers are growing segments, says Kris Kiser, president and CEO of OPEI, which represents all outdoor power



Kris Kiser



MORE MOWERS
Expect to see more manufacturers entering the electric zero-turn mower space, experts say.

equipment manufacturers, both gas and electric.

OPEI has yet to begin aggregating data on electric zero-turns, but Kiser says electric equipment in general is increasing in popularity because of advances in battery power.

“What we’ve seen with the development of lithium ion battery technology is the ability to store more power than we’ve been able to before,” Kiser says.

The Greenworks Lithium Z line—which includes a 48-inch stand-on mower and a 60-inch ride-on mower—provides a run time of 6 hours and 4.5 to 5 hours, respectively. Mean Green’s mowers offer a continuous run time of 6 to 7 hours for its ride-on zero-turns, depending on the model.

Typically, the first products to enter an equipment segment are expensive, Kiser says. Mean Green zero-turns range from \$13,299 to \$22,999, depending on the model and battery package. Greenworks Lithium Zs are priced at \$22,500 for the stand-on and \$25,000 for the ride-on.

The battery power is a large portion of the cost of battery-powered equipment, and as Tony Marchese, director of independent retail for Greenworks Commercial, noted at the Lithium Z launch event, a landscape contractor has to consider that he’s buying his fuel upfront with the cost of the battery.

The upfront cost aside, Marchese sees that electric equipment could be a useful selling point for landscapers. “There are some landscape contractors who are using (electric equipment)

Continued on page 24

NEWSFEED

HUSQVARNA RESTRUCTURES

Husqvarna Group will exit from low price point product segments and brands,

such as gas-powered walk-behind lawn mowers and garden tractors. Customer commitments for the

2019 season will be honored.

BRIGGS BUYS HURRICANE

Briggs & Stratton Corp. acquired certain assets of Hurricane, based in Muskegon Heights,

Mich. Hurricane designs and manufactures stand-on leaf and debris blowers. Terms of the transaction, which accelerates the company’s diversification into commercial products,

were not disclosed. This move builds on the 2017 acquisition of spreader-sprayer maker Ground Logic, said Todd Teske, Briggs & Stratton’s chairman, president and CEO.



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HONDA

MOWING+LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

Continued from page 22

as a marketing tool to be all ‘green,’ and it really differentiates them from guys that are all gas,” Marchese says.

Marchese expects other manufacturers to enter the commercial electric zero-turn space soon because municipalities and property owners desire low-impact, low-noise and zero-emissions products on their properties.

Additionally, Greenworks is working on integrating GPS technology into its smart batteries for handheld equipment and creating an app to track battery life and productivity—and this technology will be integrated into the zero-turns as well, Marchese says. The company is also planning to add more deck sizes to the Lithium Z line, and it’s considering creating electric versions of aerators,

overseeders and snow products, he says.

Marchese says industry members will see how electric power is moving forward at this year’s GIE+EXPO trade show in October.

“Louisville will have more new products, and next year, I think you’re going to see a significant step forward for the industry around the electrification of traditional gas products,” Marchese says.

ELECTRIC IN THE FIELD

In June, Stephen Pieloch, account manager at LandCare’s Middlesex, N.J., branch, began transitioning his equipment on a large pharmaceutical client’s site to all electric equipment—including a 52-inch walk-behind and a 48-inch zero-turn electric mower, both from Mean Green Mowers.

The 110-acre campus required the shift to electric equipment because the client wanted to maintain air quality inside the building, and multiple air intake vents surrounded the property. The client also was concerned about how gas fumes and noise would affect the safety of the 2,000 employees moving around the property.

“With the electric equipment, it (sounds like) a fan running when the blades are on,” Pieloch says. “It’s for the client’s safety, but also for ours. We can see and hear people talking to us when we’re on the (electric) machines.”

LandCare has a shop on the client’s property dedicated to storing and charg-



Stephen Pieloch

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ing its electric equipment, which is a major reason why the company switched. One of the main drawbacks to electric zero-turns currently is the inability to charge on the go, unless a contractor opts to tow and plug into a generator or there is a charging site available.

"If I had to pull a trailer, I probably wouldn't have gone the electric route," he says.

Greenworks is addressing the on-the-go charging issue for handheld equipment by rolling out a six-battery rapid charger later this year. It's also teaming up with Solar Lawn Technologies on a solar-panel-lined truck, designed to recharge 82-volt lithium ion tools from any location. The truck is currently in the beta testing stage.

Cody Martin, branch manager of LandCare Pasadena, integrated electric zero-turns three years ago for one of his clients, the city of South Pasadena. The city had discussed becoming a green city with the American Green Zone Alliance.



Cody Martin


"As their landscaping partner, we agreed to make that switch with them," Martin says. LandCare Pasadena maintains 55 acres for the city, about half of which is turf, including 12 acres of sports fields.

In LandCare's Pasadena shop, the charging areas for its two Mean Green mowers have been specially hard wired for 240 volts instead of the standard 120 to decrease charging time for the company's two 60-inch zero-turn mowers. A typical charge takes 10 to 12 hours, with a run time of 6 to 8 hours.

As far as downsides to the equipment, Martin says that production rates are the biggest concern, noting they decrease when crews mow lower than the standard cut for sports fields or during the heavy growing season.

On the plus side, using electric equipment has opened up conversations with potential clients. Martin also mentions the cost advantages to going electric, such as not having to do preventive maintenance

related to gas-powered equipment, such as changing oil or oil filters.

"I do feel like there is a push toward all electric," he says, "but I don't think it'll fully happen in the next decade." 



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Re-lamped!

Landscape lighting pros explain how they position their halogen to LED conversion offerings.

BY MARISA PALMIERI



With approximately 95 percent of all new landscape lighting installations being LED, according to Kristoff Byrd, landscape lighting category manager for SiteOne Landscape Supply, LEDs themselves are not necessarily a trend.

“LED is much more efficient, lasts longer and is much easier to install and maintain for a contractor than halogen,” he says. “As LED prices have dropped, more and more, homeowners have been looking to install LEDs in place of the halogens that would fail at least annually, compared to LEDs that can last six to seven years without failing.”

Though LED landscape lighting installations are the norm in 2018, some contractors emphasize the opportunity they see in halogen to LED conversions.

At Southern Lights of N.C. in Summerfield, N.C., for example, Pete Bryant and his team were early LED adopters—the company

has been 100 percent LED for more than five years. Today, it does one or two halogen to LED conversions per week.

“Initially, adding LED conversions was a trend for us as another revenue stream that helped fill our schedules,” Bryant says. “As we began performing more and more of them, it also became a sales strategy we used to show our clients we were looking out for their best interest—for example, reducing fire hazards, lowering power consumption, saving money and providing a warranty.”

Client conversations have been similar at McKay Landscape Lighting in Omaha, Neb. The company considers itself a late adopter of LED technology.

“We’ve been doing LED for about three years, but last year was the first time we specifically marketed conversions,” says Andrew Coleman, outdoor lighting designer and salesperson. McKay has been in business for 27 years, and it has 2,500 customers on annual service contracts to approach for upgrade opportunities.

Getting the word out about conversions has been successful. McKay has added three to four jobs per month converting halogen systems over to LED.

“It’s much easier to sell an existing customer than to go find a new one,” Coleman says. “They’re already familiar with us, trust us and have an established relationship.”

AN EASY SELL

Most landscape lighting customers quickly understand the benefits of converting from halogen to LED, lighting professionals say.

For example, most LEDs have a five-year manufacturer warranty, Coleman says.

“So, for a lot of our annual service customers who were paying to have their bulbs changed on an annual basis, there is a savings there,” he says, noting there also may be energy savings on a large system. “Instead of hundreds a year in energy cost, you’re talking \$20 a year.”

At Southern Lights, a halogen to LED conversion sale is usually triggered by a service call.

“We typically don’t give our clients an option for halogen, especially on systems where we weren’t originally a part of the lighting design or installation,” Bryant says. “There are too many



Pete Bryant

NEWSFEED

PAVER SALES ARE UP

For the seventh consecutive year, combined sales of segmental concrete

pavement products in the U.S. and Canada have increased, according to the 2018 Industry Sales Profile

released by the Interlocking Concrete Pavement Institute (ICPI). The 2017 mark (750 million square feet) is approaching the all-time high for sales established in

2006, prior to the recession.

HNA ANNOUNCES DEMOS

Hardscape North America (HNA) named Frank Bourque as the presenter for its live,

continuous build hard-scape demos. Bourque will discuss installing hardscapes, segmental retaining walls and raised patios around water features at this year’s trade show.

← BEFORE AND AFTER

The brightness, clarity and consistency of light has improved greatly with LEDs, landscape lighting professionals say, giving clients sharper and more detailed lighting effects.



variables that create liability for us as a company to replace halogen lamps without taking voltage and amperage readings everywhere. I don't want to have to stock halogen lamps and take up room in my service vehicles and storage to carry a lamp that will rarely get used. Our website, social media and direct mail is all branded with marketing materials geared to show our clients, new and old, we offer LED upgrades."

McKay's conversion approach has been a marketing campaign directed at annual service customers and also at homes where McKay did the halogen installation years ago but hasn't maintained an annual contract with the client. It starts with an email, followed by a phone call and then a request for a quote.

"We reached back out to them and said, 'It's been awhile since we talked to

you about new offerings—would you be interested in discussing LED?'"

Now, Coleman says, part of the message is encouraging customers to plan for conversions.

"We still do a lot of halogen on the service side of things—everyone can't go to LED right off the bat," he says. "But we're not installing halogen systems anymore, and it's harder and harder to find materials to keep those systems going."

SERVICE SETUP

At McKay, conversions can be treated like either a service call or an installation job, depending on the scope.

"If the system is new within the last five years, we know the fixtures are compatible, so it includes bulbs plus a service call fee," McKay says. "But if it's older, where there is new wire and transformers, it's treated more like an install."

The team removes old fixtures and installs new fixtures with a new connector. They often can reuse all the wire, especially if they installed and have been servicing the system. They offer an option to reuse clients' old transformers or to upgrade to new ones with astronomical timers.

When Southern Lights does a conversion, it entails a full system check, taking amperage and voltage readings to ensure the proper load, verifying the system is balanced, that each fixture is receiving equal voltage and that proper wire size was run and checking the quality of the fixtures. This check determines whether the team needs to make further upgrades to the system.

Typically, an LED conversion is coupled with a lighting repair or service visit, which falls into a time-and-materials billing structure.


Contractors should keep in mind LED conversions may change their business model a bit. Offering LED upgrades is a great way to increase revenue, but moving away from halogen systems limits maintenance opportunities, Bryant says. Service calls become more spread out and require fewer bulb replacements, which generates less service revenue, but that's not necessarily a detriment to the business, he says.

"The more confident people become in lighting systems that don't need consistent lamp replacements, the better low-voltage outdoor lighting looks over some of the other options," Bryant says.

Coleman says annual service contracts haven't taken a big hit at McKay.

"People are still busy, and they still want their system maintained," he says. "We're still checking the system, cleaning fixtures and checking the timer. The warranty covers the bulb, but we're still getting a service call out of it."

When it comes down to it, Bryant says LED conversions have helped his company grow and given him the ability to offer his clients more value, thanks to LED lighting's versatility, lower power consumption, warranties and ability to run cooler than halogen systems, which reduces fire hazards.

"More times than not, our clients want to expand their systems," he says. "While performing LED upgrades, you not only are giving your client a product that has a warranty, but you are also reducing the load on the transformer, allowing for more fixtures to be added without having to size up your transformer or purchase another one." 



Andrew Coleman



IRRIGATION+WATER MANAGEMENT

Seeing it through

A patient, persistent approach pays off for John Bianco's California-based landscape and irrigation business. BY EMILY SCHAPPACHER

Over the course of two years, John Bianco worked patiently, yet persistently, with the property managers of a Mather, Calif.-based homeowners' association (HOA) to upgrade 127 outdated irrigation controllers to smart models. The controllers he encountered on the property were anywhere from five to 20 years old, and none of them were in good working order. Bianco spent countless hours educating the client about the benefits of upgrading and discussing options to get the project funded. In the end, his patience paid off for everyone involved.

"So much in this industry is patience, but you also have to be persistent because the customer doesn't always know what is best for them," says Bianco, president of Bianco Landscape Management in Sacramento, Calif. "You have to keep educating them so when they are ready, you are ready."

Bianco applies this thorough approach to all aspects of his business. Whether it's taking the time to adopt and implement the latest technologies, or making the effort to educate his cli-

ents on how they will benefit from his services, Bianco is sure to see it through.

"You're going to receive many 'nos' in this industry when you start out, even after you have been in business for 15-plus years," he says. "There are projects that I have done two, three, four times in my 35-year career due to a number of reasons, but being persistent and keeping the same procedures and best practices for your business pays off over time."

Bianco's experience in the landscape industry began in high school, when he and a friend worked for a contractor doing custom installations. He found the work exciting and thought it was a great way to make extra income. Bianco's employer had a degree in soil sciences, which inspired him to explore higher education programs to further his knowledge base.

With a degree in ornamental horticulture from California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo and an irrigation water auditor certification under his belt, Bianco went on to work for a national landscape company, working his way up from a crew leader to a branch manager.



John Bianco



In 2005, Bianco says he had an "entrepreneurial seizure" and decided to start his own company, Bianco Landscape Management. Today the company provides 70 percent landscape maintenance, 25 percent construction and irrigation and 5 percent tree services to a commercial client base.

"The national company I was with went through some monumental changes, and there were decisions being made at the upper level regarding profitability and efficiencies that I just didn't agree with," Bianco says about his decision to start his own operation.

Since then, Bianco has run his business with the mindset that it's more important to find a niche at which to excel than to try to be everything to everybody. In college, it was drilled into Bianco's head that "nothing grows without water, and if you get that right, everything else falls into place." He began his business with the understanding that water is a precious commodity and

NEWSFEED

SMART RAIN CONTROLLER

Smart Rain, a partner of Lawn Butler, introduced a new controller and software platform.

Smart Rain's controller is compatible with Wi-Fi, Bluetooth and cellular devices. It includes a 5-inch full color touch-

screen display and waterproof controller box. It's expansion- and rain-sensor capable, can manage up to 48 zones and features multiple flow sensor and master valve capabilities.

SPIIO SECOND-GEN SENSOR

Spiio released its second-generation wireless sensor, the SP-110, enabling a new data dimension for smart irrigation in the green industry. The

SP-110 includes four sensors: soil moisture, temperature, light and nutrients. The sensor integrates with smart controllers and comes with the highest possible IP grading.



STEADY FOCUS
Bianco Landscape Management takes care to use the same best practices and procedures on each landscape.


the base product is affordable, you can install that and then later you can upsell the client to go to the next level to make it a smart controller. Then down the road, you can maybe upsell them again and make it a centralized system that can run from a home or office."

But Bianco knows that embracing and adapting new technology is only half the battle—the customer also needs to understand the technology and how it will benefit them in the long term. Bianco does not hesitate to take the time to educate his clients about how to save money by saving water. He also knows that education varies among his clients in different areas. For example, he notes that folks in California's Bay Area seem to be more knowledgeable about the "latest and greatest" in irrigation compared to clients in Sacramento, who may need a bit more information about what's available.

"It's an education process—people only know what they know," Bianco says. "In California, we have been living in a drought—this is really the first year we've been out of it. We know down the road, we will be in a drought again and preparing people for that is our job."

When it comes to customer education, Bianco is a big proponent of the lunch and learn process. Particularly for large HOA properties, he feels this is an efficient way not only to educate new customers but to stay in front of existing ones. Three or four times a year, Bianco will sit down with property and office managers, bring in lunch and give a presentation. These vary based on the time of year and include topics such as plant health care, tree trimming and fall cleanups. During the drought in 2016, Bianco held several lunch and learns about the benefits of low-volume nozzles and smart controllers, along with ideas to help the landscape survive.

"We are always kind of pitching ourselves to everybody. Turnover in property management is pretty high so you want to make sure everyone hears you," Bianco says. "They get the benefit of a lunch, and you get to pitch yourself and why you are the best person for the job."

"Persistence comes in having a vision," he adds. "And not letting other factors bring you down." 

Schappacher is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.

that most landscape companies overwater their landscapes, which leads to dull, nutrient-starved plants. By using water correctly, Bianco can help improve a landscape's overall health and vigor, minimize insect and disease issues and decrease his clients' water bills.

"Irrigation has been our focus since the day I started my company, and we have evolved into the niche that we are really good at," he says. "We are good at things like programming and solving problems, backflow testing, etc. We have those in-house capabilities that are uncommon for a small company."

Embracing new technologies has played a big part in the company's success in the landscape and irrigation market. For example, Bianco is a big fan of the new low-volume nozzles, which offer a 20 to 30 percent savings on his clients' water bills. He also has embraced Rain Bird's new LXME Enhanced Controllers, which start out as affordable, basic irrigation controllers but can be modified to smart controllers over time or as a client's budget allows. Bianco says being on the cutting edge of new irrigation technology allows his company to bring more to the table for its customers.

"Not everyone can spend \$3,500 on an irrigation controller," Bianco says. "But if

USE WISELY
Bianco Landscape avoids overwatering with education and technology.





Drost
Landscape's
owner Bob
Drost (right)
and GM Dale
Drier

DIVIDE + CONQUER

At Drost Landscape, well-defined owner/GM roles will help the firm grow 25 percent this year.

BY SARAH WEBB

Drost Landscape existed long before its founding in 1991—if only as a handful of potential logo drawings on the dining room table of founder and owner, Bob Drost.

From the time Drost began working as a landscape laborer in the late 1970s, he knew he wanted to start his own company. He waited until he had more than a decade of experience to make the move.

"I thought it was important to learn and watch because there was so much to figure out," he says.

Now with 39 years of industry experience under his belt, Drost leads the Petoskey, Mich., company, which employs more than 110 people, boasted \$9.6 million in 2017 annual revenue and has projected \$12 million for 2018.

Growing pains

Founded by Drost and his partner at the time, Tom Gleason, Drost Landscape started out with a mere four employees.

Gleason approached Drost with the idea of going into the business together after Drost, still working for his previous employer, performed landscaping work at Gleason's house. A partnership was formed.

After 14 years of what Drost calls "unbelievable growth," Gleason retired, and Drost purchased the remainder of company in 2005.

Shortly after becoming the company's sole owner, Drost says he needed help running the business, which was doing about \$5 million in revenue.

"I knew the company was big enough that I would have a very difficult time trying to manage the whole thing myself," Drost says. "I didn't know business, but I knew landscaping. Without somebody giving me direction, I would have failed miserably."

He solicited help from one of his employees at the time, Dale Drier—who had been employed by Drost Landscape since May 1997.

"I trust Dale more than I trust myself," Drost says. "We just know that we're going to support each other and that neither of us is going to throw the other one under the bus."

Continued on page 32

BUSINESS BREAKDOWN

COMPANY: Drost Landscape

HEADQUARTERS:

Petoskey, Mich.

FOUNDED: 1991

REVENUE: \$12 million (projected for 2018)

SERVICE MIX: 17% mowing + maintenance, 2% turf + ornamental, 61% design/build, Less than 1% snow + ice management, 6% irrigation, 13% tree services, greenhouse and other retail sales

CLIENT MIX: 100% residential

PHOTO: MOLLY HAUXWELL CURRIER

Continued from page 31

To date, Drier has 25 years of green industry experience, 21 of them working for Drost Landscape.

While Drost says he sees himself as the visionary and salesperson, he credits Drier for the behind-the-scenes work that keeps the company afloat—a responsibility that previously fell on Gleason.

“There’s a lot of spokes to this wheel, and it takes a lot of organization to keep those spokes tight and the wheel moving forward,” he says. “That’s what Dale does well. He really watches the books.”

Drier manages nearly everything that deals with finance and production, such as profit sharing, insurance matters and 401(k) plans. He also acts as a direct report for project managers.

Drost and Drier managed running the business for several years, but the acquisition of Willcome Tree Service in 2014 expanded the company by 25 percent, saddling the two with a bigger operation than they could handle.

“We were at a crossroads in our organization and needed a turning point,” Drier says.

A company turnaround

In 2014, Drost Landscape enlisted the help of business coach, Jeffrey Scott.

“Dale had been talking to me for a number of years about bringing in a consultant to help us tie down the corners of the tent,” Drost says. “We could see it was getting to the point where we needed some order and direction.”

Drost adds that he—along with several other Drost Landscape team members—was reluctant about calling in a business coach at first.

“People don’t want somebody to come in and tell them how to change some things,” he says.

However, Drost says pairing with a business coach helped make 2014 a decisive moment for the company—in part because it was during the ini-

tial consulting meetings that Drost officially named Drier as the general manager. Previously, Drier had held roles including laborer, foreman, softscape supervisor and project manager.

Throughout the first few sessions, Drost and Drier prioritized specific needs of the company and laid out expectations.

For example, the two agreed upon a dollar amount that Drier can spend without consulting Drost. Drost says this helps keep the business moving along.

“There’s a lot of spokes to this wheel and it takes a lot of organization to keep those spokes tight and the wheel moving forward.” —BOB DROST

Then, within the past year, the two created a written understanding: Drost and Drier individually filled out forms detailing their responsibilities before combining the documents into an official agreement.

“This way, Bob knows what I’m going to be taking care of and what he can expect from me, and then the same goes for me,” Drier says. “It’s going to be an evolving process because of how the company is changing all the time.”

In the meantime, Drost and Drier meet once a week or more for at least 30 minutes to keep one another in the loop.

“The agreement between Bob and I and making time to talk about the things we need to is what’s making our relationship successful,” Drier says. “Now, we’re not without our own hiccups and stresses that come along, but any business is going to be like that.”

They also attend peer group meetings to stay accountable and to discuss challenges and opportunities with other landscapers.

Delegate + coach

In addition to defining the roles of owner and general manager, the con-

sultations led Drost Landscape to implement project manager positions.

The company now employs five project managers, many of whom are college graduates. Under each project manager are foremen and laborers.

“I use the term that they ‘own the job,’” Drost says, adding that he was formerly responsible for many of the tasks the project managers now handle.

Now, once a job is sold, the project managers help bid the job, meet with the client on-site, work with the billing department to ensure accounts are

accurate and field any calls or questions from that client.

“We’re trying to blend the process so that it meets more of a construction model as opposed to the homeowner having to talk to seven different people about a project,” Drier says.

Each project manager then reports directly to Drier, who sets up “coaching” meetings, where he reviews achievements, goals and objectives for that employee.

“We want to get away from handing out what we think is adequate pay and leave it more in the employee’s hands to achieve those goals,” Drier says.

Keeping with the coaching format, Drost Landscape has also developed a career training plan, detailing what’s expected of each position.

Items can include technical skill-sets, such as trailer setup, irrigation and light installations and equipment operation.

After the initial training period, the training format turns into a coaching setup, complete with tools such as the “10-minute checkup” review.

During the 10-minute checkup, the employee meets with his supervisor to talk about one thing he’s doing well, and one thing on which he can improve. Drost says the goal of these reviews is to generate meaningful conversation, as well as two key takeaways.

Drost Landscape also promotes employees and distributes pay

Continued on page 57

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for Contractors
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FOR CONTRACTORS**

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1:30 - 3 PM**

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See page 18 for details.

GIE+EXPO

DAILY SCHEDULE

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16

8:00 PM

FREE CONCERT: The Crashers

4th Street Live!

*Sponsored by BOB-CAT Mowers
on the Mercedes-Benz Vans stage*

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17

1:30 - 3:00 PM

**"KICK-OFF" KEYNOTE FOR
CONTRACTORS FEATURING
DR. ROBERT BALLARD**

Science, Exploration and the
Miracles of Human Achievement

3:00 - 7:00 PM

**INDOOR EXHIBITS
OPEN TO ALL INDUSTRY**

5:00 - 7:00 PM

**RECEPTION - EXHIBIT
FLOOR FOR ALL INDUSTRY**

8:00 PM

**FREE CONCERT: Colt Ford
with opener Kelleigh Bannen**
4th Street Live!

*Sponsored by BOB-CAT Mowers
on the Mercedes-Benz Vans stage*

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18

8:00 - 9:15 AM

*** HARDSCAPE WORKSHOP 1:**
Manage, Motivate & Prepare
Your Hardscape Team to Generate
Winning Projects
Jerry Gaeta

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

**INDOOR EXHIBITS AND
OUTDOOR DEMO AREA OPEN**

9:30 - 10:45 AM

*** HARDSCAPE WORKSHOP 2:**
Better Job Costing and Labor Controls
to Increase Hardscape Projects
Leslie Shiner

10:00 - 11:00 AM

*** HARDSCAPE DEMONSTRATION 1:**
Tools of the Trade

12:00 - 1:00 PM

*** HARDSCAPE DEMONSTRATION 2:**
Base Construction & Paver Installation

1:00 - 2:15 PM

*** NALP WORKSHOP 1: Commitment,
Accountability and Communication...
the Path to Keeping My Job Safe**
Art Marquez and Steve Hamilton

1:00 - 2:15 PM

*** NALP WORKSHOP 2: Inspiring a New
Generation of Landscape Professionals**
Phil Harwood

*** NOTE: Pre-registration and/or additional fees are required for activities marked with an asterisk. Visit your registration dashboard to add sessions.**

INDOOR EXHIBITS

Wednesday: 3 PM – 7 PM

Thursday: 9 AM – 5 PM

Friday: 9 AM – 2 PM

OUTDOOR EXHIBITS

Thursday: 9 AM – 5 PM

Friday: 9 AM – 1 PM

EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

2:00 - 3:00 PM

*** HARDSCAPE DEMONSTRATION 3:**

Raised Patios, Walls & Steps

2:30 - 3:45 PM

*** NALP WORKSHOP 3:** How Much
Equipment Do You Really Need?

Ed Schultheis

2:30 - 3:45 PM

*** NALP WORKSHOP 4:** Design Build
Systems That Start Clean, Finish Clean

Ken Thomas

4:00 - 5:00 PM

*** HARDSCAPE DEMONSTRATION 4:**

Outdoor Kitchens, BBQs & Fire Pits

8:00 PM

FREE CONCERT: Jana Kramer

with opener Mackenzie Porter

4th Street Live!

Sponsored by BOB-CAT Mowers

on the Mercedes-Benz Vans stage

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

OUTDOOR DEMO AREA OPEN

9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

INDOOR EXHIBITS OPEN

9:30 - 10:30 AM

*** HARDSCAPE DEMONSTRATION 5:**

Pools, Water Features
& Hardscape Lighting

9:30 - 10:45 AM

*** NALP WORKSHOP 7:** Turnaround
Tour Round 2: Stories of Success

Brian Horn and Panelists:

Ed Laflamme and Bill Arman

9:30 - 10:45 AM

*** NALP WORKSHOP 8:** Next Level
Marketing & Sales Strategies for Lawn
& Landscape Companies

Dana Davis

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

*** HARDSCAPE DEMONSTRATION 6:**

Permeable Pavers 101

12:00 PM

\$15,000 UTV GIVEAWAY

(enter by 11:30 AM)

1:00 PM

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19

8:00 - 9:15 AM

*** NALP WORKSHOP 5:** Customer
Relationships That Don't Stink

Jeff Korhan

8:00 - 9:15 AM

*** NALP WORKSHOP 6:** Getting the
Most Out of Your Managers

Bill Silverman

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18

8:00 – 9:15 AM

HARDSCAPE WORKSHOP 1:
Manage, Motivate & Prepare
Your Hardscape Team to Generate
Winning Projects

Jerry Gaeta

9:30 – 10:45 AM

HARDSCAPE WORKSHOP 2: Better
Job Costing and Labor Controls to
Increase Hardscape Projects

Leslie Shiner

1:00 – 2:15 PM

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the Path to Keeping My Job Safe

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9:30 – 10:45 AM

NALP WORKSHOP 8: Next Level
Marketing & Sales Strategies for
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Tools of the Trade

12:00 - 1:00 PM
Base Construction &
Paver Installation

2:00 - 3:00 PM
Raised Patios, Walls & Steps

4:00 - 5:00 PM
Outdoor Kitchens,
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Pools, Water Features
& Hardscape Lighting

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM
Permeable Pavers 101



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REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Pick up a free badge for them onsite. Children 16 and over must register at the adult price. Must have a valid drivers' license to operate equipment.

Photocopy the form on pg. 23 for additional registrations. Print clearly in black ink. After Oct. 12 fees are nonrefundable. See FAQs at www.gie-expo.com for refund policy.

Exhibitors: Please use the form for your customers only.

Editors/Publishers: Please visit www.gie-expo.com/media to register for media credentials.

REGISTRATION DEADLINES

Early-bird: Register by Sept. 6, 2018 and pay only \$15** per person.

Sept. 7 - Oct. 14, 5 PM Eastern time, and pay \$30** per person.

Register onsite and pay \$60** per person.

Online Registration - www.GIE-EXPO.com
Registrations cannot be taken over the phone.

GIE+EXPO REGISTRATION FORM

ATTENDEE INFORMATION (one form required per attendee)

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

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Title: _____

Company: _____

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Phone: () _____ Fax: () _____

Country if outside the U.S.: _____

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Check one that best describes your business.

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- ☐ 12 Equipment Rental Dealer
- ☐ 13 Retailer/Merchandiser/Buyer
- ☐ 14 Lawn & Garden Center
- ☐ 15 Distributor of Lawn & Garden Products
- ☐ 16 Power Sports Retailer
- ☒ 17 Non-Exhibiting Manufacturer/Supplier/Media Sales/Agencies**
- ☐ 22 Lawn & Landscape Pro
- ☐ 23 General Contractor
- ☐ 24 Golf Course Super/Equip Mgr
- ☐ 25 Educational Facility
- ☐ 26 Parks & Rec./Municipality/Cemetery
- ☐ 27 Forest & Land Management
- ☐ 28 Nursery
- ☐ 31 Sports Turf

**Through Sept. 6: \$350,
Sept. 7-Oct. 14: \$400, onsite: \$450.

EDUCATIONAL & OPTIONAL EVENTS

SESSIONS	CODE	DAY/TIME	COST	\$
HNA Demonstration Upgrade - 6 sessions	231	THU-FRI	\$50	
Hardscape Workshop 1: Manage, Motivate & Prepare Your Hardscape Team to Generate Winning Projects	230-1	THU 8-9:15 AM	\$50	
Hardscape Workshop 2: Better Job Costing and Labor Controls to Increase Hardscape Projects	230-2	THU 9:30-10:45 AM	\$50	
NALP Workshop 1: Commitment, Accountability and Communication... the Path to Keeping My Job Safe	240-1	THU 1 - 2:15 PM	\$85	
NALP Workshop 2: Inspiring a New Generation of Landscape Professionals	240-2	THU 1 - 2:15 PM	\$85	
NALP Workshop 3: How Much Equipment Do You Really Need?	240-3	THU 2:30 - 3:45 PM	\$85	
NALP Workshop 4: Design Build Systems That Start Clean, Finish Clean	240-4	THU 2:30 - 3:45 PM	\$85	
NALP Workshop 5: Customer Relationships That Don't Stink	240-5	FRI 8-9:15 AM	\$85	
NALP Workshop 6: Getting the Most Out of Your Managers	240-6	FRI 8-9:15 AM	\$85	
NALP Workshop 7: Turnaround Tour Round 2: Stories of Success	240-7	FRI 9:30-10:45 AM	\$85	
NALP Workshop 8: Next Level Marketing & Sales Strategies for Lawn & Landscape Companies	240-8	FRI 9:30-10:45 AM	\$85	

PAYMENT INFORMATION

TRADESHOW PASS: Through 9/6/18 \$15 ea. Through 10/14/18 \$30 ea. After 10/14/18 \$60 ea. or - Non-exhibiting Manufacturers/Suppliers/Ad Agencies/Media Sales: Through 9/6/18 \$350 ea. Through 10/14/18 \$400 ea. After 10/14/18 \$450 ea.		\$
Educational & Optional Events	Total from above	\$
TOTAL FEES (Checks should be made payable to GIE+EXPO.)		\$

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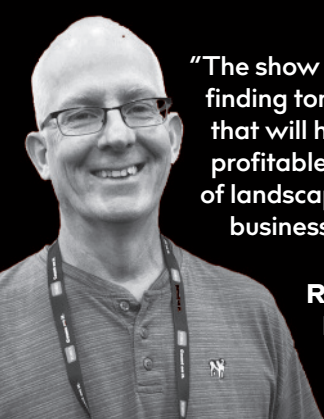
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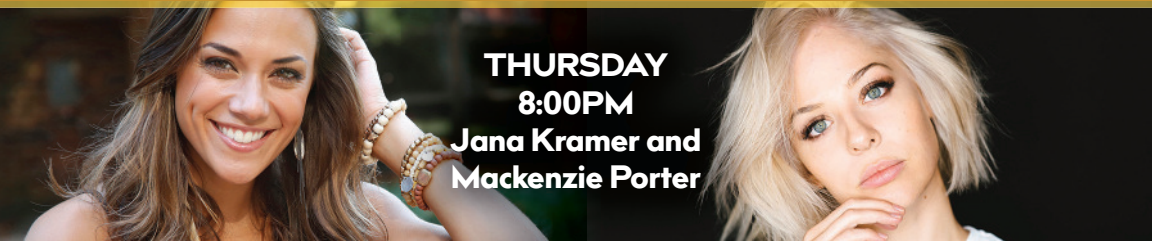
STAGE



TUESDAY
8:00PM
The Crashers



WEDNESDAY
8:00PM
Colt Ford and
Kelleigh Bannen



THURSDAY
8:00PM
Jana Kramer and
Mackenzie Porter

Continued from page 32

increases based on an employee's initiative to attain additional education and certification, such as nursery, hardscape and general green industry professional certifications.

"What we're trying to cultivate here is a high level of accountability," Drier says. "We don't want to sit back on our laurels and think that we're the best at what we do just because we're Drost."

Additionally, the company pays for the employees' classes, including continued irrigation classes, brick paving classes and more.

Drost Landscape also encourages its employees to take advantage of the Certified Green Industry Professional pretest course, offered by the Michigan Nursery & Landscape Association during its winter convention.

"I've never turned anybody away who's asked to go to classes and have it paid for," Drier says.

Challenge(s) accepted

"I started off as the lowest laborer," Drost says. "I was the guy at the bottom, and I worked my way up. And I said, 'If I ever get up there, here's how I want to be treated.'"

He adds, "We've spent the time and the money to build what Dale and I call a destination company. We hope that people come here, make it a destination and stay."

In the past, Drier says creating a positive company culture has proved to be a challenge for Drost Landscape.

The company tries to curate a family-like atmosphere with initiatives that include companywide activities, continuing education opportunities and profit sharing.

All-company events include holiday parties, employee field day, family-fun picnics and decorating floats for local parades.

Profit sharing is worked into the company's benefit package, and employees are assured a certain portion of Drost Landscape's profits, depending on their position and time with the company.

Another challenge the company must contend with is the unpredictable weather that often racks northern Michigan.

For example, this past year, much of Drost Landscape's nursery stock was destroyed by bitter cold temperatures that hit unexpectedly in April.

"Landscape construction in the North can be quite stressful," Drost says. "For being in an area that you have to make a living in eight months, we keep trying to figure out how to make a living in 12."

To keep busy in the winter, Drost Landscape performs shoreline restoration projects on the frozen lakes, works on designs and equipment repair and does snow removal.

Drost Landscape added snow removal to its portfolio about five years ago with one truck but has since expanded that segment to five trucks and a few loaders.

"It's nice to have multiple items going in the winter,"

Continued on page 58



Both of Bob Drost's sons, Travis Drost (left) and Dustin Drost (right), have followed him into the landscape business.

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SONS

Both of Bob Drost's sons, Travis Drost and Dustin Drost, have a hand in the family business.

Bob Drost's firstborn son, Travis Drost, works as a salesperson and as a project manager.

Bob Drost says Travis Drost grew up unsure about whether he wanted to be part of the company, but after a year away, he came back to Drost Landscape, starting on a maintenance crew and working his way up.

"Travis loves to meet people and walk them through the designs," Bob Drost says.

Dustin Drost, on the other hand, always had a calling to be in the business, according to his father.

"From the time Dustin was a mere lad, five years old, that kid was loading equipment on a trailer and operating," Bob Drost says. "He has always been eager to go with me and the crews to work."

A craftsman who's won several awards in Michigan for pools and hot tubs he's built, Dustin Drost serves as a project manager for Drost Landscape and deals mostly with the hardscape side of the company.

"I enjoy seeing the boys grow and make decisions for us at Drost," Bob Drost says. "Not every day is bliss, but I wouldn't trade it for the world."

Continued from page 57

Drost says. “It’s provided quite a few men the opportunity to work year-round, rather than experiencing the unemployment schedule.”

The company then kicks off its spring season in April, with planting, maintenance and irrigation projects.

Eyes on the prize

By 2020, Drier says he would like to see Drost Landscape grow to \$12.5 million. The company’s long-term goal is \$20 million by 2027.

Despite the lofty goal, the team remains confident.

“This is year 27, and we’ve never had a year yet of just being stagnant,” Drost says. “We just keep growing and growing.”

To hit the revenue goal, Drost says he wants to tap into other segments of the market, such as excavation opportunities.

Drier adds that further acquisitions are also a possibility, especially since several other companies have already contacted Drost to ask if Drost Landscape would buy out their companies.

“We’re going to have to be conscientious about future acquisitions so that we can stage ourselves for a really big growth spurt,” Drier says. “There are things that we will do

much differently on the next acquisition (than we did with Willcome). It’s a learning experience, just like anything else you do in life.”

For future acquisitions, Drier says he will analyze more closely the potential acquisition’s overhead recovery, gross profit margin and year-over-year budgets.

“If all that info comes back and the culture is similar (to ours), then we will move on the acquisitions,” he says.

He’s also considered monetary incentives for existing staff members to stay on during the transition period.

The incentives would be paid out at the one-year anniversary of the acquisition.

For the time being, Drier says the company will focus on continuously improving itself.

“We don’t spend a lot of time looking at what our competition is doing,” Drier says. “We’re not out there competing with somebody else. We’re competing with ourselves to improve every day.”

Qualities of a good GM, according to Bob Drost:

- Possesses background in leadership;
- Motivates crews to raise the bar;
- Is slow to anger;
- Keeps a close eye on the books; and
- Puts others before himself.



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BUSINESS BASICS: NUMBERS

LET'S GROW

CASE STUDY: OUR WAY

SOLAR SMARTS

The story behind one
landscape company's
major investment
in solar power.

▶ PAGE 64



BY DANIEL GORDON

The author is a CPA who caters to landscape and lawn care firms. Reach him at dan@turfbooks.com.

When the IRS comes knocking for a tax audit

Nothing strikes an emotional chord with small business owners like the prospect of a tax audit.

If you practice accurate bookkeeping and obey the tax laws, there's little to worry about. It's a matter of proving your company is in compliance. While the audit process may be intrusive, it's within the IRS's right to audit your tax returns.

When it comes to a field audit, start by contacting your tax preparer. If your return was prepared by someone other than a licensed public accountant, a certified public accountant or an enrolled agent, you should contact one of these professionals to determine the best way to proceed. Don't meet face to face with an IRS auditor without a professional representing you. Tax laws are complex. A carefully planned audit strategy may save you much more in potential taxes, penalties and interest than the fees paid to handle the audit.

An income tax audit starts with a sample period where the auditor tests the books and records to determine if they match the source documents prepared by third parties, such as bank statements, canceled checks, wire advice documents, loan documents, vendor invoices and more. He also may request a reconciliation of amounts reported on sales tax or payroll tax returns to the amounts recorded on your books and reported on your income tax return. The sample period is usually a month or several months. If the auditor finds exceptions in the sample, such as unrecorded cash or improper expenses that are material, or gross revenue reported on sales tax returns that don't match those reported on the

“Don't meet face to face with an IRS auditor without a professional representing you.”

books and records, he will expand the sample size to include several or all months covered by the return.

When an auditor finds exceptions, he also may audit all tax returns open under the statute of limitations. For IRS purposes, it's three years, unless there is gross negligence or fraud, which can be several more years. If the audit expands, be prepared to have at least three years of returns examined. This is where professional tax representation is extremely important. The tax professional will create or organize all schedules and reconciliations showing that all revenue and expense items trace and agree to the tax return. If they don't, the professional will document the reasons for departure. Based on the professional's experience, he also will anticipate which items create tax exposure and come up with a plan to handle them.

In my experience with tax audits for landscape and lawn care professionals, most accounts will be tested, but an auditor will look at the following items in depth.

1 Revenue. The auditor will look for evidence that all your sales are properly recorded through sales records that trace and agree to your bank statements and reasons for any departures.

2 Employee compensation. Compensation must trace and agree to payroll records, including forms such as 941s, 940s, W-2s and W-3s that are filed either by yourself or by your payroll company.

3 Outside contractors' expenses.

If you use outside contractors, you will need to show invoices, checks issued, 1099s issued and proof that the subcontractors are truly subcontractors and not W-2 employees. The 1099 versus W-2 issue is subtle but extremely important. If, in the auditor's opinion, the subcontractor is really an employee, you may be subject to employment taxes.

4 Professional fees. Again, an auditor will look for invoices, checks issued and 1099s issued for the same reason above—to prove that you did hire a professional rather than calling someone on your staff a professional and paying him without remitting payroll taxes.

5 Travel, meals and entertainment. Keep calendars, diaries, appointment books and logs to document any legitimate expenses. This is one of the most abused deductions and without such evidence, an auditor may disallow the entire deduction.

6 Office expenses. You should have receipts, canceled checks and credit card statements to substantiate office expenses. Auditors may look for large furniture and fixtures that were improperly expensed and should have been capitalized and depreciated over several years.

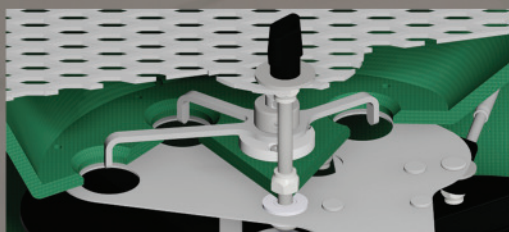
7 Other miscellaneous expenses. Often, this is a dumping account for expenditures that can't be categorized easily. If you have a miscellaneous expense account, make sure the items in it are legitimate, deductible expenses.

The most important thing is to come prepared and be organized in category and chronology.

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BY KEVIN KEHOE

The author, owner-manager of 3PG Consulting, is a 25-year industry veteran. Reach him at kevinkehoe@me.com.

Pricing, overhead tips

Even the most astute contractors struggle to understand and manage pricing. There are clear principles you can apply—with some amount of science and art—that can help you handle this more confidently.

The principles are:

- Pricing is a function of item costs (labor and materials) plus a markup and a profit margin.
- All overhead is recovered through markups on item costs (yes, subcontractors too).
- Profit is made by applying a margin to the product of the two above.
- Revenue volume will influence markups. Greater revenue volume can mean lower markups.
- Market pricing (competition) will influence markups. Lower pricing will mean lower markups.

Here's an example of a multidivisional and multiservice business we'll use to explore the science and the art. There are three steps.

1. Create a budget. Above is my budget for a company with two profit centers and two service lines within each profit center. The overhead of \$1.2 million includes all nonfield personnel, facilities, shop, equipment and administrative expenses for the year.

2. Allocate the overheads to determine markups. The allocations are crucial. They are a function of revenue volume as well as the relationship between labor and material cost. Service lines with more revenue should bear more overhead, and services with a higher percentage of material to labor should have less allocated to labor. There is some art to this. You have to run several scenarios to arrive at the right allocations and markups. Once you determine the allocations and splits, the markup is pure math.

1. Budget: SCIENCE


	Maintenance		Enhancements		Totals
	Mowing	Mulching	Planting	Hardscape	
Revenue / Sales Projected	\$2,000,000	\$500,000	\$400,000	\$200,000	\$3,100,000
Cost of Goods Sold (COGS)					
Labor Budget	\$1,000,000	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$40,000	\$1,190,000
Material Budget	\$ -	\$200,000	\$150,000	\$80,000	\$430,000
Gross Profit	\$1,000,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$80,000	\$1,480,000
	50%	40%	50%	40%	48%
Total Overhead Budget	\$1,200,000				\$1,200,000
Net Profit					\$280,000
					9%

2. Overhead Allocations: ART

The Allocations	70%	10%	10%	10%	100%
	\$840,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$1,200,000
Where Assigned to COGS Accounts					
Assigned to Labor	100%	60%	60%	60%	
Assigned to Materials	0%	40%	40%	40%	
	100%	100%	100%	100%	
The Result					
Assigned to Labor	\$840,000	\$72,000	\$72,000	\$72,000	\$1,056,000
Assigned to Materials	\$ -	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$144,000
					\$1,200,000

3. Apply margins and compare to the market. This last step combines item costs with the item markups plus a desired profit margin to arrive at a labor rate per hour in comparison with the market pricing you feel you know in reality.

In my example, it's clear there are a few pricing issues in reviewing the math to market comparisons. These can be addressed in two ways: 1). By reallocating overhead to produce a more sellable set of markups and margins, and/or 2). By increasing the budgeted revenue in some or all service lines.

This is what I mean when I say that pricing is both a science and an art. If you can apply this type of analysis every year to determine what your pricing should be, you can manage your estimating and sales process much better than just by pure hunch. Secondly, you are half-way to setting up a reporting system to manage actuals and budgets. 

3. Pricing: SCIENCE AND ART

Labor Markup Required for Pricing	84%	72%	144%	180%
Material Markup Required for Pricing	0	24%	32%	60%
Average Labor Rate / Hour	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$17.00	\$20.00
Break Even Labor Price	\$27.60	\$25.80	\$41.48	\$56.00
Net Margin You Want	10%	5%	10%	10%
Comparing Financial to Market				
Labor Sell Price / Hour	\$30.67	\$27.16	\$46.09	\$62.22
Market Sell Price / Hour	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$45.00	\$65.00

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CASE STUDY: OUR WAY

A bright idea

One company believes its solar panel investment will pay off big.

BY CASEY PAYTON

When Doug McGregor looked at adding solar panels to his landscape company five years ago, the return on investment (ROI) didn't make sense.

The tax breaks were not guaranteed, and the cost of installation was high. Since that time, a lot has changed. In April 2018, Earth Works installed 124 new solar panels to its garden center and McGregor, president of the Jacksonville, Fla.-based company, says he may add even more. This time, he says, the numbers made perfect sense.

McGregor's company invested \$98,000 to install the panels, and he says that he's looking at a seven- to nine-year ROI (weather depending) and that he secured a 30 percent tax break on top of it. With good financing from the bank, the project was a no-brainer, McGregor says.

"A salesperson from A1A Solar came to us, and (he) had all (his) ducks in a row—all the numbers made sense," he says. "We went out to visit the facility and were very impressed. We didn't even shop around. We were happy with what we saw."

It took a little more than a week for the company to install the 36.6-kW photovoltaic system. The system produces an energy offset of 50,508 kilowatt-hours per year, which provides approximately 50 percent of Earth Works' electric use. On a sunny day,

McGregor says you can watch the meter turn one way—feeding electricity back to the grid. On a cloudy day, it'll feed electricity back to the company. Earth Works' electric bills have gone down 40 percent as a result.

Of course, now McGregor wishing for a lot of sunny days.

"We just had the wettest May since 1895, so it's been more cloudy than sunny—but it's still worth it," he says. "Even if it took longer to get that full ROI, I would still do it. We've been really happy."

McGregor says his customers care, too. The company's garden center is highly visible from a main road, and McGregor estimates as many as 95,000 cars pass by the facility every day. He says that seeing the solar panels from the road is great PR for the company, which does its best to be environmentally conscious and a good neighbor.

In addition to the solar panels, the company has made other "green" moves before.

"When the recession hit in 2008 and my fuel bill went up to \$12,000 a month, I realized how silly it was to drive around in a four-wheel drive truck getting 10 miles to the gallon," he says. "I went from a big Chevy to a small Japanese vehicle—and that's what I still drive today. It's adapting to the times. You have to be flexible."

McGregor says that even if the sight of the panels brings in one extra customer a day, it's well worth it. He sees the addition of the panels as a differentiator, and he's considering adding them to the parking lot via the use of car ports.

For other landscape firms considering a similar move, McGregor says if the numbers add up, there's no reason not to go for it.

"When A1A came to us and said, 'If we showed you a way to get free electricity would you be interested?', I said, 'Absolutely,'" McGregor says. "We believe electricity rates are only going to go up. This makes very good business sense for us. In seven to nine years, we'll be getting free electricity. Why wouldn't we take advantage of that?"

Earth Works' solar panels provide about 50 percent of the company's electric use.

Payton is a freelance writer based in Philadelphia.



BUSINESS BREAKDOWN

COMPANY: Earth Works

HEADQUARTERS: Jacksonville, Fla.

EMPLOYEES: 62

ANNUAL REVENUE: \$6.5 million

CLIENT MIX: 80% residential, 20% commercial

SERVICE MIX: 40% garden center, 60% landscaping

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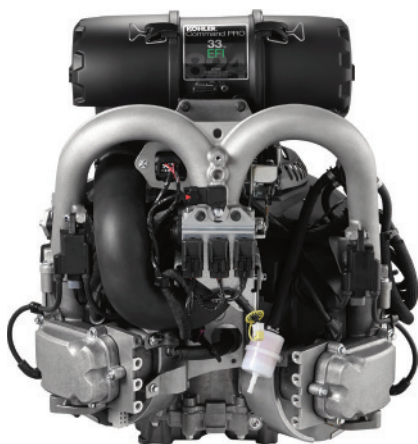
➤ MOWER ENGINES

FX850V-EFI ENGINE ➡

COMPANY: Kawasaki

URL: KawasakiEnginesUSA.com

Kawasaki's FX850V-EFI engine incorporates a fully integrated electronic governor and an advanced engine control tuning that instantly matches power to load, keeping blade tip speed constant and ground speed steady, Kawasaki said. Designed to support to professional landscapers, the engine provides 29.5 hp and is Society of Automotive Engineers-certified.



COMMAND PRO ENGINES

COMPANY: Kohler

URL: KohlerPower.com

The Command Pro EFI 824cc (pictured) integrates a highly tuned air intake system that enhances airflow to maximize power and torque, according to Kohler. The Command Pro EFI 999cc includes a new electronic throttle body, which electronically controls intake airflow to optimize power and load response, the company said.

➤ COMPACT EQUIPMENT

420 COMPACT LOADER ⬇

COMPANY: Avant Tecno

URL: AvantTecno.com/US

The Avant 420 loader features versatility and lightness, while still providing high power and lift capacity, according to Avant Tecno. It includes a standard telescopic boom and a 20-hp diesel engine and provides a lift capacity of 1,210 lbs., a lift height of 108.3 in. and a speed of 7.5 mph. It also can be matched with more than 190 attachments.



S925TX MINI SKID-STEER ⬆

COMPANY: Vermeer

URL: Vermeer.com

The S925TX mini skid-steer by Vermeer offers a tip capacity of 2,643 lbs., a rated operating capacity of 925 lbs. and maximum hinge pin height reach of 84.5 in. The radial lift path of the S925TX makes easy work of lifting and dumping heavy loads, said the company. It also features a dual auxiliary system, allowing the operator to switch between high flow for ground-engaging attachments and low flow for maximum control.



CK10SE SERIES



COMPANY: Kioti

URL: Kioti.com

Kioti's CK10SE Series now offers six premium models with a 35- or 40-hp, three-cylinder, in-line vertical, water-cooled Daedong diesel engine. The premium CK10SE tractor series features hydraulic power steering, a telescopic lower link and stabilizers and dual remote hydraulic valves. HST models include standard cruise control and a linked pedal for simplified tractor operation for a variety of utility and loader applications. Cab models feature a factory-installed cabin with heat and AC.

COMPACT LOADERS



COMPANY: MultiOne

URL: MultiOne.US

MultiOne compact loaders provide versatility and value for many uses, such as landscaping, nurseries, tree services, snow removal, construction and more. With hundreds of attachments available, MultiOne's compact loaders help make jobs easier and more economical and profitable, according to the company. Customers can choose from nine different series (7 Series pictured), which offer front or rear riding units that can handle many tasks without damaging turf and other sensitive surfaces, MultiOne said.



SNOW PRODUCTS



3X SNOW BLOWER



COMPANY: Cub Cadet

URL: CubCadet.com

Cub Cadet's 3x snow blower features a patented three-stage system and clears deep snowfall up to 50 percent faster than a Cub Cadet 2x two-stage snow blower, Cub Cadet said. The machine's skid shoes glide over any surface type and won't damage flooring or rust while storing. It comes with a one-year limited commercial warranty and five-year limited auger gearbox warranty.

DROP PRO 600 SPREADER



COMPANY: SnowEx

URL: SnowExProducts.com

With a 6-cu.-ft. material capacity and a 36-in. spread width, the Drop Pro 600 spreader offers controlled application of bagged ice melters and bulk rock salt, making it a sidewalk spreading solution for use with UTVs, tractors and other compact vehicles. The intuitive variable-speed digital control features minimal wiring and a compact design. It allows for precise adjustment of the spreader's material feed rate. The machine also includes LED indicator lights and a diagnostic display.



ST 230P SNOW BLOWER

COMPANY: Husqvarna

URL: Husqvarna.com/US

Husqvarna's ST 230P snow blower was developed for those who need a high-performing snow thrower with the capacity to clear large driveways and paths. It features adjustable skid shoes, power steering and extra large tires and is powered by an exclusive Husqvarna engine, which is backed a five-year limited engine warranty. Other features include

LED headlights, an electric starter, a 30-in. working width, an adjustable handle with heated grips, an efficient two-stage system for high throwing capacity and a multifunction dashboard.



785 LED WORK LIGHT REPLACEMENT

COMPANY: J.W. Speaker

URL: JWSpeaker.com

J.W. Speaker's Model 785 LED work lights are drop-in, plug-and-play replacements for halogen lamps used in Case skid-steers (SR and SV models), as well as compact track loaders (TR and TV models). Long-lasting, durable and weather-proof, the work light improves forward, rear and side visibility, enhancing productivity while reducing downtime, according to J.W. Speaker. It features a polycarbonate lens, with optics that create the ideal beam pattern for digging, loading, pushing and grading, the company said.



GRANDSTAND MULTIFORCE WITH POWER BROOM



COMPANY: The Toro Co.

URL: Toro.com

The GrandStand MultiForce stand-on mower features the ability to switch attachments for year-round productivity. The power broom is designed for lighter snowfalls or for properties that have zero tolerance for snow accumulation. The product line features a snow-only model for snow-focused contractors, as well as two models that come standard with the Turbo Force cutting deck.



VERSAPLOW

COMPANY: Fox

URL: FoxAttachments.com

Fox's VersaPlow for skid-steers and compact loaders combines the functions of a box-style containment pusher, a backdrag containment box and a conventional snow plow into a single unit. The unit is available with a 14-pin connector to fit most skid-steers and compact loaders, a seven-pin Canbus adapter for late-model Bobcat machines or a universal single-button diverter control and harness. Options include floating or standard mount configurations, 8-ft. and 10-ft. blade widths and a steel trip edge or urethane resilient edge.

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BACKSTORY

INTERVIEW BY MARISA PALMIERI



Luke Henry

OWNER
PROSCAPE LAWN & LANDSCAPE SERVICES
MARION, OHIO

EDUCATION

Mount Gilead High School
Mount Gilead, Ohio
Class of 2001

Ohio Northern University
Doctor of Pharmacy
Ada, Ohio
Class of 2007

WORK EXPERIENCE

1998-2005
Luke's Lawns & Landscaping
Mount Gilead, Ohio

2006-2009
2009-2017 (part-time)
Pharmacist
Rite Aid
Marion, Ohio

2005-Present
Owner
ProScape Lawn &
Landscape Services
Marion, Ohio

"I put myself through pharmacy school, so I needed to make a lot of money during the summers. I continued landscaping as a means to an end."

"I graduated, got a job at a pharmacy and started working full time. I kept landscaping, the company continued growing and I was passionate about it, but it was killing me. I would plow snow all night long and then go work a 12-hour shift ... I set up a buyer to sell the landscape business, but in the 11th hour, I couldn't do it. I wanted to give landscaping full time a go."

"It's not always easy, but it's very gratifying to have people say that this is the best place they've ever worked ... Creating opportunities for people is very challenging but very rewarding."



Henry and wife, Lindsey, with Emerson (left), 7, and Olivia, 6.

"I was in high school and wanted to make a buck, so I started mowing and continued branching out a little bit. In 2005, I incorporated and formed ProScape."

"Even though I have a doctorate, everything I've learned about business has been the hard way."

"Quarterly, I do a state of the company meeting. We started it in 2011 and have done it religiously once a quarter since then."



HENRY'S WORDS OF WISDOM "One quote I always go back to that I feel changed my life trajectory is, 'In five years, you will be the same person you are today except for the people you meet and the books you read,' by Charlie 'Tremendous' Jones." • "What we allow, we encourage. If we have a process and we allow people to break it, and we don't correct their behavior, then we allow them to continue that behavior." • "Another axiom is, 'Right energy, right time.' I utilize that from a standpoint of some things need to be said, but it might not be the right setting for somebody to receive the message in the way we intend. We were involved with LandOpt for six years. That was one of their mantras."



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