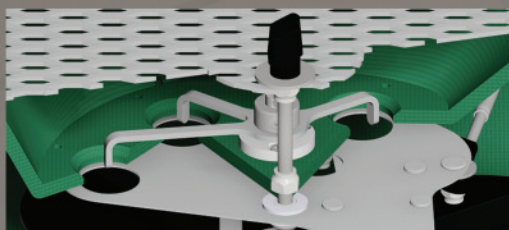


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“...in these cool spring days, ester formulations provide excellent activity...”

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Jessica Milligan, GM & VP, Strathmore Integrated Grounds Management, LaSalle, Quebec, Canada.

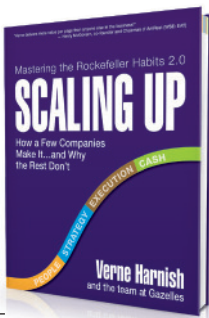
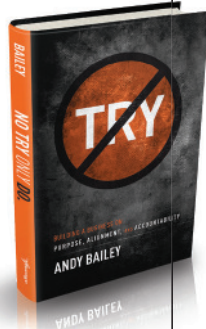
BY SARAH WEBB

ON THE COVER: PHOTO BY LOU FERRARO, WALLFROG.COM



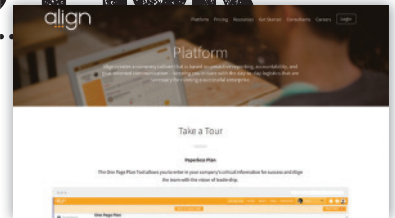
ENTER TO WIN A PAIR OF BOOKS!

➔ In this month's cover story, we highlight some of the lessons learned at the 2017 LM Growth Summit, including a few tips on how to align your company culture to grow your business from Andy Bailey and other team members from Petra Coach. We came back from the Summit with more than knowledge; we also brought back about 40 extra copies of "No Try Only Do" by Andy Bailey and "Scaling Up: How a Few Companies Make It...and Why the Rest Don't" by Verne Harnish to share with you! Want copies for yourself? Head over to **LandscapeManagement.net/WebExtras** and fill out a short form to be entered to win this pair of books.



WEB PICK

Align Going hand in hand with the lessons taught by the Petra Coach team, this web-based tool found at AlignToday.com helps users manage their one-page plan, daily huddles, task assignments and key performance indicators, as well as track the company's overall progress and team engagement. Find it at AlignToday.com **\$5, per user, per month**



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	Vehicle	Odometer	Miles Driven	Fuel Cost
3	121	3854	88	\$263.12
4	122	199	12	\$35.88
5	123	32565	398	\$1,190.02
6	124	10003	100	\$299.00
7	125	49987	600	\$1,794.00
8	126	97825	454	\$1,357.46
9	127	44862	520	\$1,554.80
10	128	32511	125	\$373.75
11	19	9663	325	\$971.75
	130	279	0	\$0.00
	131	5544	123	\$367.77
	132	58962	0	\$0.00
15	133	98123	410	\$1,225.90
16	134	54287	385	\$1,151.15
17	135	63555	460	\$1,375.40
18	136	87111	288	
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EDITOR'S NOTE

MARISA PALMIERI
EDITOR

Contact Marisa at 216/706-3764 or
mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net



HEADQUARTERS

1360 East 9th St., Suite 1070,
Cleveland, OH 44114

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor Marisa Palmieri
216/706-3764 | mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net

Managing Editor Abby Hart
216/706-3756 | ahart@northcoastmedia.net

Associate Editor Sarah Webb
216/363-7932 | swebb@northcoastmedia.net

Art Director Tracie Martinez
216/280-6127 | tmartinez@northcoastmedia.net

Graphic Designer Courtney Townsend
216/363-7931 | ctownsend@northcoastmedia.net

Digital Media Content Producer Kelly Limpert
216/363-7933 | klimpert@northcoastmedia.net

ADVERTISING STAFF

Group Publisher Bill Roddy
216/706-3758 | broddy@northcoastmedia.net

Group Associate Publisher Craig MacGregor
216/706-3787 | cmacgregor@northcoastmedia.net

Eastern Regional Sales Manager Dan Hannan
216/363-7937 | dhannan@northcoastmedia.net

Western Regional Sales Manager Jake Goodman
216/363-7923 | jgoodman@northcoastmedia.net

Classified Accounts Manager Chloe Scoular
216/363-7929 | cscoular@northcoastmedia.net

BUSINESS STAFF

Administrative Coordinator Petra Turko
216/706-3768 | pturko@northcoastmedia.net

Sr. Marketing & Event Manager Michelle Mitchell
216/363-7922 | mmitchell@northcoastmedia.net

Marketing & Event Manager Angela Gibian
216/363-7936 | agibian@northcoastmedia.net

Manager, Production Services Terri Johnstone
216/978-9622 | tjohnstone@northcoastmedia.net

Senior Audience Development Manager
Antoinette Sanchez-Perkins
216/706-3750 | asanchez-perkins@northcoastmedia.net

MARKETING/MAGAZINE SERVICES

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CORPORATE OFFICERS

President & CEO Kevin Stoltman
216/706-3740 | kstoltman@northcoastmedia.net

VP, Finance & Operations Steve Galperin
216/706-3705 | sgalperin@northcoastmedia.net

VP, Graphic Design & Production Pete Seltzer
216/706-3737 | pseltzer@northcoastmedia.net

Director of Audience Engagement Bethany Chambers
216/706-3771 | bchambers@northcoastmedia.net

Editorial Directors Marty Whitford & Marisa Palmieri
216/706-3766 | mwhitford@northcoastmedia.net
216/706-3764 | mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net

Agree to agree

I don't typically like to ask readers to immediately skip all the way to the end of the magazine, but this issue, I encourage you to make your way to the "words of wisdom" section at the bottom of the Backstory department on page 40. This month the advice is delivered by Jessica Milligan, general manager and vice president of Strathmore Integrated Grounds Management in LaSalle, Quebec.

One of her insights—"to stop being frustrated by people's 'lack of common sense'"—stuck out to me as excellent advice, possibly because it's in sync with a concept I hope to focus on in the new year.

Have you heard of "The Four Agreements," from the book of the same name by Don Miguel Ruiz? (Confession: I haven't read the book, I've only read about the agreements.) They are simple precepts the author says will bring happiness and peace of mind. I bought in quickly to the ideas, which apply to so many situations in our personal and professional lives.

The four agreements are:

1. Be impeccable with your word. I've asked a lot of landscape business owners what their best business advice is for others. Without a doubt the most common reply is, "Do what you say you're going to do." It's essentially the same message. Remember, this rule applies to the commitments we make to ourselves. On another level, this agreement reminds us to use our words only as a positive force.

2. Don't take anything personally. On a business trip last month, I talked with a former small business owner who told me that owning a company had "hardened"

him because of the many times he was taken advantage of by employees and clients. He said he's more guarded because of these experiences, but he didn't seem upset, and I asked him how that could be the case. He said he realized none of the offenders were out to get *him* personally. It's a relief to remember that other people's actions are never about us.

3. Don't make assumptions.

This is the agreement that reminds me of Milligan's advice. We cannot assume common sense—or anything, really. Instead of being disappointed about someone else's behavior, it's up to us to communicate better to avoid misunderstandings. We also can't assume we have all the sides of every story. We must ask better questions to get to the root of problems.

4. Always do your best. Like the others, this one is simple but not necessarily easy to follow. If we strive for our best, understanding that "our best" sometimes changes based on the circumstances, we'll avoid disappointing ourselves and others.

I'll add to the last agreement something I'm working on: to believe others are doing their best—to give people the benefit of the doubt. Do they deserve it? Maybe not. Are they always doing their best? Who knows. But I once read that although it feels safer to judge people and assume the worst, we're happier when we believe people are doing their best.

To me that feels like advice worth taking, and I intend to focus on it and the four agreements in 2018. Happy New Year. 🍷



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Optional equipment may be shown.



BIG PICTURE

CONTEMPORARY INSPIRATION

LOCATION Vienna, Va.

COMPANY Surrounds
Landscape Architecture +
Construction

THE DETAILS Prior to construction, this backyard had poor soil conditions, making it a challenge to grow plants, and it lacked hardscape or additional structures. The homeowner's goal was to have entertaining space for family and large gatherings—a space with a modern and contemporary style.

The new design added two acres of hardscape and planting improvements to the property. Natural stone finishes tie the terrace, pool house and pool to the existing home. The paving was laid in a striking running bond pattern, and the step treads, wall caps and pool coping all match. Linear stone edging at the plant beds and continuous masses of plantings reinforce the contemporary design. Large evergreen holly and *Cryptomeria* plantings at the edges of the property provide a sense of privacy.

The project earned Surrounds Landscape Architecture + Construction a 2017 Grand Award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program.

PHOTO Travertine stone paths and flagstone planter walls contrast with lush green plants.

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

PHOTO: GREG HADLEY



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²Offer available from 28 October 2017 to 28 February 2018. Subject to approved installment credit with John Deere Financial, for commercial use only. Up to a 10% down payment may be required. 0% APR is for 60 months only. Taxes, freight, setup and delivery charges could increase monthly payment. Some restrictions apply, so see your dealer for complete details. Available at participating U.S. dealers. Prices and models may vary by dealer.

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NEWS HOW-TO'S

LANDSCAPE
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VIEWS
AND TIPS

RECOMMENDER

ISSUE BRIEF

STEP BY STEP

NEW STUFF

SAFETYWATCH

RECRUIT WITH VIDEO

LABOR
TIP

Employee video testimonials are one way companies are branding themselves as a great place to work, according to the article “Attract Talent by Telling Your Employees’ Stories” on the Society for Human Resource Management website.

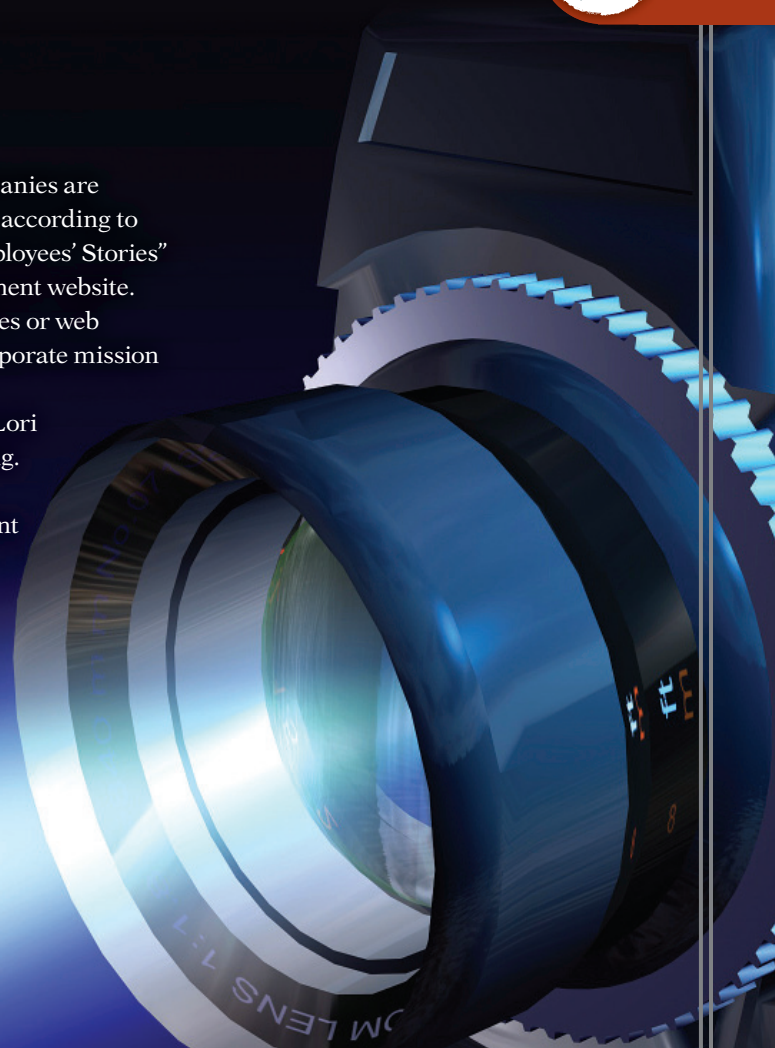
These short videos, which may populate career websites or web pages, blogs and social media accounts, seek to turn corporate mission statements and core values into personal stories.

“We all love a good story, and so do candidates,” says Lori Sylvia, founder and CEO of Rally Recruitment Marketing. “That’s why storytelling has become an important recruitment marketing skill for everyone in HR and talent acquisition.”

If you go this route, be sure to capture authentic stories from your staff’s point of view, experts say.

“Be true to your employer brand—don’t try telling employees’ stories from their manager’s perspective or the company’s perspective,” Sylvia says. “Employees and candidates will see through it.”

“Storytelling has become an important recruitment marketing skill.”



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RECOMMENDER

What **mobile apps** do you use for irrigation and why?



Other manufacturers, such as Toro, offer smartphone based controls.



JASON STEELE

OWNER, STEELE'S LANDSCAPES
WICHITA, KAN.

"I mainly use the Rain Bird mobile app because of the presence of Rain Bird controllers in my area. This app works well."



JEREMIAH EWING

OWNER, GROUND EFFECTS LAWN & LANDSCAPE
DENTON, MD.

"I like the Hydrowise app because it gives me total access and control over an irrigation system from my phone. Our motto is 'efficiency with proficiency,' and Hydrowise saves us a lot of time."

ISSUE >>> BRIEF



BY MISSY HENRIKSEN

The author is vp of public affairs, National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP).

2018 PREDICTIONS

Looking into government relations for the upcoming year, we see the ripple effects of the election of President Donald Trump working their way through the regulatory state.

If your business relies on the H-2B seasonal guest-worker program, you can anticipate much more competition for the 66,000 available visas. We continue to work for visa cap relief in 2018, but Congress has not yet authorized it. Despite our efforts to educate Congress members that H-2B is a workforce issue that has nothing to do with the overall immigration reform debate, the issue gets conflated with illegal immigration.

Also notable is the effort to reduce the role of the Environmental Protection Agency at the federal level and return some of the functions to the states. We anticipate a significant uptick in activity from environmental activists at the state level targeting the use of fertilizers, pesticides and small engines by landscape contractors. Nutrient management legislation seeks to limit the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus that can be applied. Other legislation seeks to restrict the use of neonicotinoid insecticides.

The services you provide also may be a target of activists. That's why it's vital to get involved with advocacy efforts, especially at the state and local levels where so many legislative decisions can have a direct impact. Not being involved politically at these levels increases the potential for the passage of policy and regulations that can hurt your ability to conduct business. Actively joining advocacy efforts, whether at the national level or in partnership with your state association, is an excellent investment in your company's future. 

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STEP BY STEP

How to do a microinjection

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Visit LandscapeManagement.net/StepbyStep to download a PDF of this page to use as a training tool for your team.


Tree care professionals are turning to microinjection units to keep trees healthy and free of pests and diseases. Microinjection units allow applicators to administer a product directly into a tree's vascular system using a single-dose applicator that's manually pressurized. This method eliminates spray drift and reduces groundwater contamination, while reducing applicator exposure. It's also an alternative in areas where spraying is impractical or undesired.

To determine how many microinjection units a tree will require, measure the circumference of the tree 1 ft. above the ground. Units should be spaced 6 in. apart. For example, a tree with a 96-in. circumference will require 16 microinjection units.

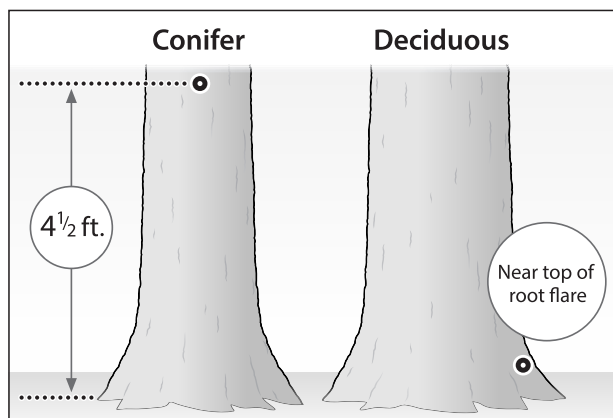
Keep microinjection units cool and dry prior to use (above freezing, but under 100 degrees F).

Tools needed to install the units include a cordless drill; a sharp, 11/64-in. drill bit; and a plastic-faced hammer or rubber mallet.

When handling, installing or removing microinjection units, be sure to wear personal protective equipment, including safety goggles and chemical-resistant gloves.

Follow these steps to properly microinject a conifer or deciduous tree. 

SOURCE: Tree Tech Microinjection Systems

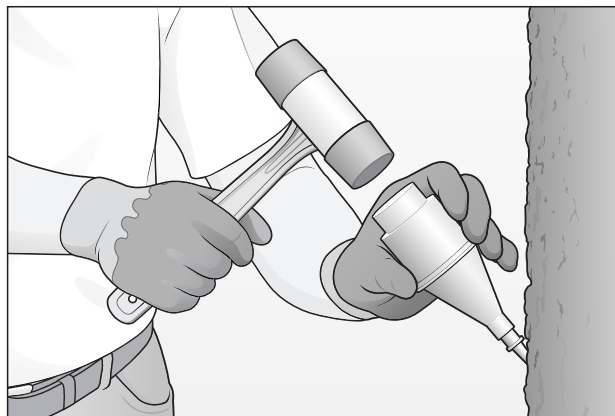


STEP 1

Drill a hole between the fissures of the tree's bark plate at the proper location: 4½ ft. from the ground in conifer trees and near the top of the root flare in deciduous trees. Drill the hole at a 45-degree angle through the bark and approximately ½ in. into the wood.

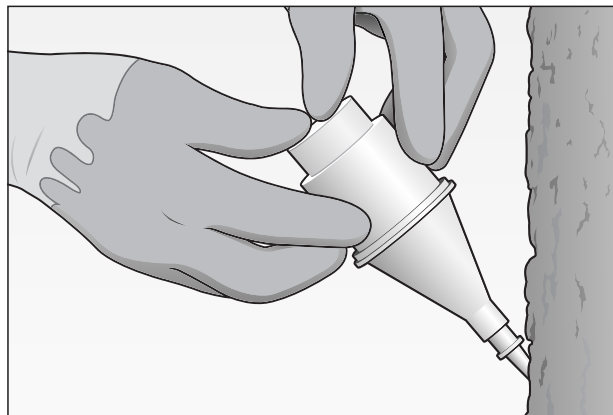
STEP 2

Add the tip to the microinjection unit and place it into the hole. Place the solid PVC installation cap over the microinjection unit and then seat it by gently, but firmly, tapping the cap until the unit is snugly seated against the bark and the internal seal is broken.



STEP 3

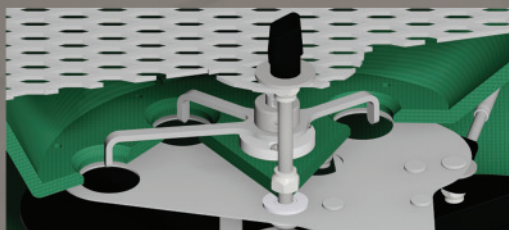
Pressurize the microinjection unit by pushing the end with your thumbs. Remove the unit when it's empty but not more than 72 hours after the installation. Twist and withdraw carefully and place into a collection bag. Consult the product label for advice on proper disposal.



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NEW STUFF



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CHECK OUT MORE NEW STUFF ONLINE

To stay up to date on all the latest landscape industry products and services, visit LandscapeManagement.net/tag/product-news.

1. HPC FACE PANEL

COMPANY: Hunter Industries

URL: HunterIndustries.com

The HPC Face Panel by Hunter Industries is a Wi-Fi-enabled upgrade for Pro-C modular and fixed controllers manufactured since March 2014. The full-color touch-screen HPC uses Hydrowise technology to offer automatic watering schedule updates based on real-time climate data. It also delivers instant alerts to contractors in the event of a system problem. To make the switch to the Environmental Protection Agency WaterSense-approved face panel, users have to swap out the dial face panel on any Pro-C.

2. CARBONIZPN DJ FINE GRADE

COMPANY: Mirimichi Green

URL: MirimichiGreen.com

Mirimichi Green's CarbonizPN DJ Fine Grade is a powderlike soil amendment containing 50 percent premium organic compost and 50 percent biochar that is U.S. Department of Agriculture certified. According to Mirimichi, the product aerates soils, reduces compaction, optimizes pH, decreases nutrient leaching and increases nutrient uptake, root development, soil health and residual value. It can be blended into sand mixes, topdressing and aerification and is available in 40-lb. bags and 1-yd. sacks.

3. TACTEC AIRLESS TIRES

COMPANY: Toro

URL: Toro.com

Toro introduced its TacTec flat-free tires for 48- to 72-in. Z Master models. According to Toro, the 24-in. tires will eliminate the possibility of flats, absorb bumps, improve comfort and reduce operator fatigue. The product features a higher payload and a greater contact area than conventional tires, resulting in a more even wear. The tires also can be used in conjunction with powered bagger attachments and will be available in spring 2018.

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SETTING TARGETS

Setting expectations is an important process for a safe and efficient job site.

Once you have your goals established, share them with your crew. Make sure everybody knows what's expected of the crew and of each team member. Get everyone thinking about this target. Aim high—people get more work done when they have a goal.

Reassess and comment to your crew frequently throughout the day. For example, you might say, "We need this area excavated and the new base installed and compacted when the concrete arrives at 2 p.m." Or, "We need to have topsoil and plants installed

today because we are planning to lay sod, water and clean up tomorrow."

Don't negotiate targets with your crew. Take your crew's input and have a discussion, but ultimately targets should be firm, which makes them a commitment. When your crew members know you plan to keep commitments, they will push to meet them.

Remember to be specific about each crew member's goals and timelines. If you think a job should take 20 minutes, don't say, "About 30 minutes."



WATCH AND LEARN

Visit LandscapeManagement.net/SafetyWatch to view a video about setting targets and use it as a training tool for your team.

For example, you might say, "We should have mowing, beds, pruning and cleanup done by 11:45 a.m.; we'll take a break at approximately 10 a.m. for 15 minutes."

Be specific, but also make sure your timelines are reasonable.

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OFF THE WALL

Learn more about
green walls and
how they might be a
useful add-on service
for your business.



PAGE 22

A clear direction

Meet one LCO who isn't afraid to make hard decisions today to improve his lawn care company for tomorrow.

BY EMILY SCHAPPACHER



NEW DIRECTION
Nathan Brandon started fresh once his vision diverged from his business partner's.

When asked for advice on how to succeed in the green industry, Nathan Brandon often thinks of one of his favorite quotes.

“Never sacrifice the permanent on the altar of the immediate,” says the owner of Pure Green in Nashville, Tenn. “Meaning, don’t do something now for immediate gratification to the detriment of where you want to go.”

These words of wisdom have guided Brandon’s green industry career, which began at age 12 when he started mowing his neighbors’ lawns for \$45 per cut. In fact, he still remembers which home belongs to his very first client.

“I got into it for the sense of obligation to have my own money and not have to ask for it (from my parents). As far as why I stayed in the industry for this long, I guess I’m a glutton for punishment,” he

says with a laugh. “But it’s been a good industry. It’s provided a good living for me and my family and gives me the flexibility to do the things I want to do.”

Brandon and a business partner started a full-service landscape company called Turf Managers in 2000. After more than 10 years in business, Brandon says he and his partner began to have different visions of what the company should be. Brandon wanted to start shedding the types of services that require time-consuming consultative selling, such as maintenance and installations, and instead focus more on lawn care, which he says is quicker and easier to sell online or over the phone. About four years ago, Brandon made the difficult decision to sell his portion of Turf Managers to his partner and started Pure Green.

Today, Pure Green is a \$1.3-million company that provides lawn care

services to an 85 percent residential, 15 percent commercial clientele. Pure Green has seven employees, with an eighth set to join the team in early 2018.

“It came down to where we were as business owners and how we saw the growth and development of the business,” Brandon says. “Our two paths were diverging and were not coming together.”

Brandon decided to build Pure Green’s lawn care program using Holganix, an organic, plant-based product that incorporates soil microbes, microbe food and nutrient enhancers to build resilient plants and healthier soils. This approach reduces his use of synthetic products by 50 to 80 percent, he estimates. Brandon markets Pure Green as an organic-hybrid company and says it’s a designation his customers appreciate.

“I started doing research and reading about and understanding soil biology,”

he says. “The organic products make the synthetic products work better. When you’re using organics, you are taking care of the soil and, in turn, you are taking care of the turf.”

After starting Pure Green, Brandon’s initial goal was to reach \$10 million in 10 years. He has since shifted that goal to \$5 million in 10 years after realizing he was undercapitalized to get where he wanted to go in that time frame. Part of his growth strategy is through the acquisition of other lawn care companies. Two years ago, Brandon stumbled upon an opportunity to acquire a local lawn care company that was a “virtual perfect fit” for Pure Green. The company’s customer population increased his route density by about 35 percent, and he has retained 80 percent of its clientele.

“I went to talk to (the business owner) about a truck he had for sale and told him that if he ever thought about selling his business to give me a call. Within 30 minutes, he sent me an email,” Brandon says, adding that it took about nine months to secure the deal. “I wasn’t planning on doing an acquisition until year three, but that one came in year two, and it was too good to pass up.”

Brandon is currently working toward a second acquisition. He says any potential deals have to make sense both logistically and financially for him to consider them. He passed on an acquisition opportunity in 2017 because the customer base didn’t align with his routes.

“It didn’t make financial sense to pay good money and have my customer base spread out even further—I would rather just focus on marketing and sales,” he says. “It’s all about density—the more customers you have clustered together, the more money you can make.”

R&D

One challenge Brandon has faced as his company has grown is implementing the systems and processes necessary to keep things running smoothly. He acknowledges that he doesn’t have a background—or an interest—in this aspect of running a business. He employs a process he calls R&D, or “rip off and duplicate”—he tries to mimic what other business owners have done. He has gotten invaluable guidance and feedback through his membership in the Entrepreneurs’ Organization (EO), a network of business owners who are happy to share how


their businesses operate. EO’s Nashville chapter has more than 200 members, and Brandon has been an active participant for 14 years. He also uses a consultant, paid on a monthly retainer, to help with this aspect of the business.

“It’s something that I’ve struggled with personally because I don’t have a background in it. It takes me a lot of time and effort, and I don’t enjoy it,” Brandon says. “What is the process when you get into the office? What is the process of loading up your truck every day? All of those things have to be consistent.”

Like many LCOs, Brandon says labor is a challenge for him, and he is always looking for quality technicians to add to his team. He finds his crew members “all over the place”—he has recruited them from competitors and from sister industries like pest control. He also runs ads on sites like Craigslist. Brandon makes it a priority to always have at least one or two potential workers in mind to avoid being placed in a predicament should someone leave the company during the busy season.

“I am constantly recruiting and looking for people,” he says. “I have found that if I don’t have one or two people in the hopper, it never goes well. You get rushed, and you end up making less-than-ideal hiring decisions.”

While Pure Green’s future looks bright, Brandon isn’t sure he wants to stay in the green industry indefinitely. He doesn’t know exactly what he would do if he wasn’t running Pure Green, but he believes it would have something to do with helping other young entrepreneurs grow their businesses. Through EO, Brandon acts as a mentor and leads classes and forums to help startup companies get up and running—work he finds very rewarding. But for now, Brandon will continue to make the best decisions for his company and where he wants it to go in the future.

“I have a lot of customers asking for full-service work, but that’s just not my business anymore. If I did that, I would be taking away time and resources from my true business,” Brandon says. “There were a lot of things we used to do so we could make a dollar now— young businesses tend to just see the dollar signs. But it makes you lose direction of where you want to go.” 

Schappacher is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.

NEWS- FEED

MIRIMICHI PRODUCTS

Mirimichi Green released four “natural” insect control products: Mirimichi Green Pest Control for use on landscapes; Mirimichi Green Growers Pest Control for use in gardening and crop production; Mirimichi Green Irrigation Pest Control for use in irrigation systems; and Mirimichi Green Personal Repellent for use on oneself.

BRIGGS ACQUISITION

Briggs & Stratton Corp. acquired the assets of Ground Logic in Lincoln, Neb., a designer and manufacturer of stand-on commercial spreaders and spreaders/sprayers for fertilizer and pesticide applications.

TRUGREEN AWARDED

The Commercial Appeal, a newspaper in Memphis, Tenn., named TruGreen one of the city’s Top Workplaces for the fourth year.

SJ WARD DIVERSIFIES

Spring-Green Lawn Care welcomed a new franchise owner, Steve Ward of SJ Ward Landscapes in Longmont, Colo.

MOWING+LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

Mulch madness

You know the benefits of mulching, but do you know how to troubleshoot these common problems? **BY MARISA PALMIERI**

Most landscape professionals understand mulching is one of the most important ways to maintain healthy landscape plants. When applied correctly, mulch prevents water evaporation from the soil, reduces weed growth, helps maintain an even soil temperature and provides many more benefits.

But, mulching is not without its problems. Here are a few common mulching pitfalls and fixes, courtesy of Joey Williamson, Ph.D., horticulture extension agent with Clemson University. 🍄



BAD LOOK
Toadstools are unsightly and potentially toxic to humans and pets, so it's best to remove them.

PROBLEM	SOLUTION
SLIME MOLDS: Fungus-like organisms that can be a nuisance in mulch, they typically appear suddenly during warm, damp weather. The resulting masses may be several inches to a foot or more in diameter and vary in color, including bright yellow or orange. They are unsightly but harmless, feeding on decaying organic matter such as that found in new hardwood mulch.	→ No pesticides are recommended. Simply scoop up with a shovel or pitchfork and remove.
MATTED MULCH: When thick layers of dry mulch are applied or existing mulch dries, some nuisance fungi can grow, forming a mat of mycelium (a mass of fine threadlike structures that make up the body of the fungus). The mycelial mat is hydrophobic (repels water). As a result, the mulch is not easily penetrated by water, which can prevent plants from receiving adequate water.	→ Water newly installed mulch to prevent this problem. If existing mulch is matted, break apart the matted layers with a rake or claw cultivator.
ARTILLERY FUNGUS: Occasionally, microorganisms in mulches can become a nuisance. The shotgun or artillery fungus (<i>Sphaerobolus stellatus</i>) may cause serious problems. While it decays the mulch, it also produces fruiting structures that resemble tiny cream or orange-brown cups that hold a spore mass resembling a tiny black egg (1/10 inch in diameter). This fungus shoots these spore masses high into the air. They stick to any surface and resemble small tar spots on leaves of plants, on cars or on the siding of homes. They are very difficult to remove.	→ To avoid damage to cars and houses, don't use mulches that contain cellulose (wood). Use pure bark mulches, especially pine, or if the mulch is already in place, cover the hardwood mulch with pine needles.
STINKHORN FUNGI: Stinkhorn fungi, such as <i>Mutinus caninus</i> , <i>M. elegans</i> and <i>Clathrus ruber</i> can colonize hardwood bark mulch. The fruiting bodies or mushrooms often come up in the fall and exude a very unpleasant odor.	→ Scoop up and dispose of the mushrooms as soon as they appear. Consider replacement of hardwood bark mulch, which contains a lot of wood, with another choice, such as pine needles, pine bark, leaf compost or other composted mulch.
TOADSTOOLS + MUSHROOMS: Some fungi found in mulches produce toadstools (mushrooms), and some of these are toxic to humans.	→ It's a good idea to destroy them when small children or pets have access to the mulched area.



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DESIGN/BUILD+INSTALLATION

Growing upward

Experts discuss green walls as an add-on service. **BY SARAH WEBB**

As cityscapes expand outward, some landscape contractors have decided to grow upward by including green walls as an add-on service.

Green walls—also known as living walls—are vertical gardens that are attached to the interior or exterior of a building. These applications have gained some traction in the past five to 10 years, particularly with commercial and retail clients, but also with residential clients. Landscape professionals and green wall suppliers offer up their advice for those looking to add green walls.



"I think it's a really good fit for those who want to offer something beyond the traditional landscape, especially in urban areas, as the footprint available for traditional gardening shrinks," says Amber Ponce, business development manager for LiveWall, a supplier of green walls.

The service may be one way to earn revenue besides snow removal during colder months, she adds, when many landscape companies lack installation and maintenance opportunities.

Green walls provide a variety of human benefits. In addition to the aesthetic quality, experts cite lower stress levels, increased productivity, lower noise levels within buildings, increased oxygen levels and decreased common cold ailments as just a few of the positive takeaways.

Professionals also mention the importance of a biophilia connection, referring to the human tendency to seek a connection with nature.

← CREATE
Greenscape replaces the designs for its shopping center walls twice a year to engage retail customers.

"It's bringing nature indoors to our living spaces," says Chris Raimondi, president and CEO

of Raimondi Horticultural Group. "So, by providing these walls, we're seeing that connection come to fruition and the benefits of that."

Whitney Griffin, a lecturer in the department of horticulture sciences at Texas A&M University, adds that many firms try to use green walls as a symbol of their commitment to sustainability.

While green walls provide many benefits and may give off a sense of sustainability, some professionals are concerned about the cost—financially and environmentally—of these systems.

DESIGN/INSTALL

In terms of design, there are many options, including soil-based, pocket plant, fabric-based and tray systems. Some variables to consider when designing and installing green walls include irrigation, lighting, monitoring systems, location, wall size and plant palette.

"Trial and error is really the only way to figure out what works best for your application," says Leslie Herndon, president of operations for Greenscape,

↑ GREEN SPACE
Green wall suppliers like LiveWall offer a solution to the limited green space in urban areas.

NEWSPEED

CONTRACTORS OPTIMISTIC

The Q4 2017
USG Corp. + U.S.
Chamber of
Commerce

Commercial Construction Index shows that optimism remains high in the commercial construction industry,

with 57 percent of contractors expecting to hire in the next six months and a majority reporting stable or increased revenue expectations in the next year.

NEW TOWABLE EARTH DRILL

Little Beaver, a manufacturer of drilling equipment, unveiled the towable hydraulic earth drill. The balanced frame design reduces operat-

ing weight by roughly 50 percent compared to traditional hydraulic drills and requires less than 20 pounds of force to pivot into digging position, said the company.

a commercial landscape company based in Raleigh, N.C.

“For landscape contractors to add green walls, they need someone who is going to own it and make it happen,” she adds, noting that the systems require a high level of creativity and inventiveness.

Greenscape’s living walls are primarily located in outdoor shopping malls and are replaced every October and May.

“The outdoor living retail (setting) works really well because you’re adding value for people and keeping people at the shopping center longer,” Herndon says.

The company has been offering exterior green walls for about five years and does all the design, installation and maintenance work for its walls.

Contractors may approach green walls several ways:

- The contractor designs the wall from scratch, installs and maintains it;
- The contractor buys a prepackaged system, assembles it and then installs and maintains it; or
- The contractor buys a preassembled design, installs and maintains it.

Some suppliers like LiveWall offer resources such as video guides and design service packages that include custom drawings for each project.

Ponce says it’s important to thoroughly research the supplier before presenting a project to clients because some suppliers have exclusive installation and/or maintenance rights in certain regions. If a contractor wishes to work with such a supplier, he would have to subcontract the installation to the supplier or the supplier’s exclusive local contractor.

When calculating price, many contractors charge by the square foot. Factors include wall size, location and height, plant selection and installation equipment—such as large ladders or lifts. Some contractors use a dedicated crew for every installation.

“The systems aren’t super difficult to install. It just takes time,” says Herndon. “Our installation is done by our irrigation technician because irrigation tech-



NALP’s living wall

The National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) recently moved its headquarters to a new space in Fairfax, Va. Upon hearing the news, NALP members Chris Raimondi of Raimondi Horticultural Group and Connie Hom, president and CEO of Buckingham Greenery, donated a living wall for the new reception area.

“We wanted to give them a taste of the interiorscape sector,” Raimondi says.

The project was funded with equal donations from Raimondi Horticultural Group, Buckingham Greenery and living wall supplier Architectural Supplements. Raimondi and Hom met at the headquarters, and in less than three hours, NALP had a new—and aesthetically pleasing—conversation piece.

The team used the Next Gen modular system and three types of plants: ‘Emerald Beauty,’ *Philodendron* and the ‘Neon’ *Pothos*. For irrigation purposes, the plants stay in the pots and sit in trays of water that have “sipper” straws to deliver the water. Track lighting was installed to supply the plants with an even light source, says NALP.

nicians are very good troubleshooters.”

In addition to retail centers, apartments and hotels are target clients for landscape contractors, as is the residential sector.

Raimondi notes that young members of the workforce are demanding green elements within the workplace.

“The younger people work in a different regimen than older people. And green walls fit that category,” he says.

MAINTAIN

Green wall suppliers and landscape contractors alike cite the importance

of diligent maintenance for any green wall system.

“You have to maintain and monitor it,” says Raimondi. “Otherwise, you’re just asking for failure.”

Monitoring systems can be as complex as using web-based applications or as simple as a biweekly in-person inspection.

Environmental factors such as wind and temperature—especially for outdoor systems—need to be monitored as well.

Irrigation is also key. Techniques include hand watering, drip irrigation, reservoir systems, sprinkler control valves and drip-free systems.


Another important maintenance factor to consider is lighting. For interior walls, a window doesn’t always provide enough light for the plants to thrive due to the window’s glazing, according to Griffin. Therefore, contractors may need to install LED lighting systems, adding electric to the list of maintenance costs. For outdoor applications, proper pruning is also vital.

To compensate for such maintenance services, many contractors bill clients monthly, based on variables such as service time, plant varieties, lighting and accessibility. Others include one to two years of maintenance fees in the installation contract.

“I think there’s a lot of potential market there, but I think the reason no one has really thrived at (green walls) yet is because no one’s making money at maintenance because eventually, something’s going to happen, and that wall’s going to die,”

Griffin says.

But there are ways to prevent living wall failures. For example, Griffin advises that landscape contractors not only budget for maintenance but also revisit their warranty language to account for potential maintenance issues.

Additionally, it’s important for landscape contractors to interview the potential client and visit the site beforehand to ensure the desired system is plausible. 

WEB EXTRA

To learn more about green wall options, visit the Web Extras section at LandscapeManagement.net.

IRRIGATION+WATER MANAGEMENT

5 fleet expenses—and how to manage them

A fleet management expert shares his tips for savings and success. BY BETHANY CHAMBERS

A landscape or irrigation contractors' annual fleet management expenses are as much about the management as they are about the fleet, says Enterprise Fleet Management's Don Duckworth, who provides customized fleet recommendations for businesses on the west coast of Florida.

Presenting at the 2017 Irrigation Show Education Conference in Orlando in November, Duckworth shared his practical tips for fleet management success.

EXPENSE #1: FUEL

Small businesses have an average vehicle age of three or more years; yet, even though their maintenance costs are increasing, fuel is still the largest line item under fleet expenses, Duckworth says. If you don't have a business fuel card program, you don't need to spend a lot of money to join; some are free. Signing up will help you identify your costs and take advantage of savings.

EXPENSE #2: NEW VEHICLE PURCHASES

Introductory pricing at the beginning of the model year—July or August—is typically \$1,200 less than later in the model year, Duckworth says.

There are also incentives for buying new, like loyalty or conquest programs, where the manufacturer will either reward the buyer for repeat business (loyalty) or for taking away business from the competition (conquest).

Buying more than one vehicle at once or proving you meet fleet standards also will lead to more incentives. VIP orders—those with 25 or more vehicles—can qualify for incentives of \$4,000 per vehicle.

Duckworth also recommends going to a dealership with a dedicated commercial sales department.

EXPENSE #3: DEPRECIATION

The lowest resale values are from December through February. A proper resale strategy can save you \$1,500 per vehicle.

"If you have a vehicle sitting there growing weeds up around the tires in this time frame, don't sell it. Wait. It will be worth more in April than it would have in January," Duckworth says.

If you are debating selling a vehicle in the early summer, "go ahead and get rid of it" before the late-summer months, says Duckworth. By August, a vehicle will be considered a full year older based on the model year.

EXPENSE #4: MAINTENANCE

Duckworth recommends owners create an expense history for each truck to see how the maintenance cycles happen, based on the specific model. When you identify the lows, you've identified when you should sell in the future.


To keep maintenance costs in check, track your expenses monthly.

"Most companies cannot define their average monthly cost on maintenance for each vehicle," Duckworth says. "Look at your P&L, pull out the fleet line item, divide it by the number of vehicles and then divide it by 12. Then go back and look at the last three years."

EXPENSE #5: ACCIDENTS

If your crews have been accident-free, insurance should be a place where your business qualifies for insurance company discounts. And don't ignore the potential for future accidents, Duckworth warns.

Some new vehicle safety features that could save you money on insurance by making your crews safer are blind-spot warning, rear video and adaptive headlights, Duckworth says.

He also recommends using telematics and fleet tracking programs. These services make owners and managers more educated and, ultimately, their drivers safer. 

NEWSPEED

RAIN MASTER'S DX3

Rain Master debuted the DX3 Satellite Central Control System, powered by Laguna software. The

DX3 can operate up to 96 conventional stations or 200 two-wire stations and can accommodate up to 16 programs. The

DX3's Laguna software features a global programming function and a simple grid and table user interface.

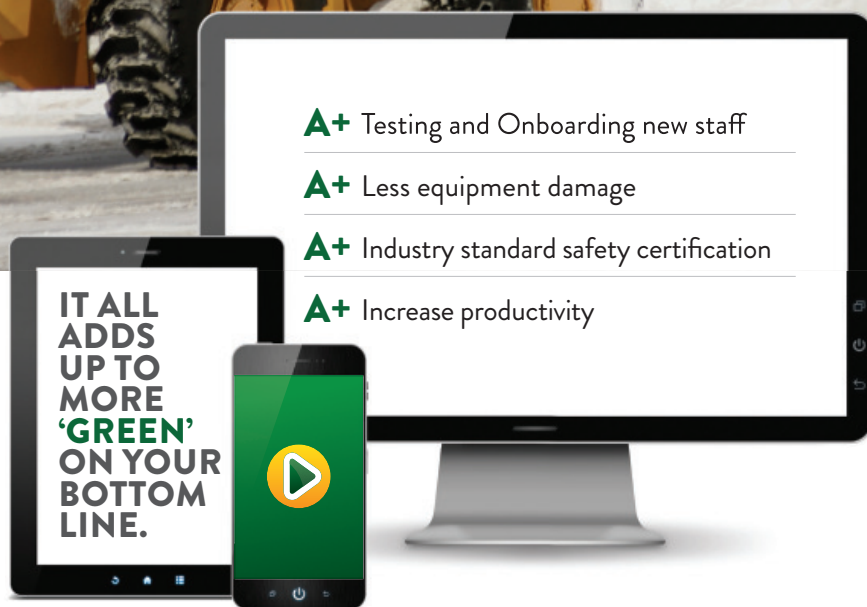
EWING ED PROGRAM

Ewing Irrigation &

Landscape Supply has restructured its education program to run during a regular calendar year. In addition, Ewing will offer more classes and include custom train-

ing options in 2018. The changes will provide more options year-round for contractors who are trying to obtain continuing education credits, Ewing said.

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Geared up for growth

‘Scaling up’ was top of mind at the 2017 LM Growth Summit, an event for turf + ornamental care professionals focused on education, networking and 1:1 partner meetings. BY MARISA PALMIERI



Entrepreneur, coach, author and speaker Andy Bailey kicked off his keynote session at the LM Growth Summit with a quote credited to legendary NFL coach Tom Landry: “A coach is someone who tells you what you don’t want to hear, who has you see what you don’t want to see, so that you may become what you have always known you could be.”

Then, during his three-hour session, Bailey challenged attendees on their goals and pushed them to think bigger.

“We tend to set future targets based on past performance,” Bailey said. “The other thing we do is we think too darn small.”

Bailey, who operates Petra Coach, a Franklin, Tenn.-based consulting firm, was joined during the presentation by his colleagues JT Terrell and David Pierce and client Jeremy Durgan, owner of GreenEarth Landscape Services in Santa Rosa Beach, Fla. The team shared strategies for creating core values and setting aggressive growth goals. The Petra Coach philosophy follows the tenets of the Verne Harnish book “Scaling Up: How a Few Companies Make It...and Why the Rest Don’t,” a revision of “Mastering the Rockefeller Habits.”

CORE VALUES

Core values are guiding principles that should be behavioral, be unique to the company and use “real” words.

“Don’t say ‘integrity,’” Bailey said.

Describe what you mean by a word like “integrity,” he said, and have that description be your core value.

Terrell said owners must be willing to stand by their core values. You must hire, reward for and reprimand by them or they’ll quickly become meaningless.

Durgan added that he wasn’t a believer in core values until his company went through the process and he saw them become embedded into the company

culture. He notes the culture shift has helped mitigate people leaving for \$1 an hour more.

SETTING GOALS/CREATING FOCUS

Bailey showed attendees the “Monkey Business Illusion” video. In the video, two teams, one in black shirts and one in white shirts, pass a ball. Bailey asked attendees to count how many times the players in white shirts pass the ball. Midway through the video, a gorilla walks through the game, stands in the middle, pounds his chest, then exits. After the video, Bailey asked how many attendees saw the gorilla. Most missed it, showing people’s ability to ignore distractions when they are intently focused on a task.

“We want you to do the exact same thing in your business,” Bailey said. “Get so clear about what you want to do that you don’t see anything else.”

Bailey advocates for multiple goals, including a “big, hairy audacious goal,” three to five annual targets and three to five quarterly priorities.

The quarterly priorities, when met, will make a significant contribution to achieving the annual goals and move you closer to your long-term goals. They should be measurable; someone must own their outcome; they should be big enough to cause you to stretch, but attainable in a quarter; they can be part of a longer-term project; you should invest time on them daily; at least one should be focused on revenue and/or profits.

Common mistakes include getting too granular, setting too many initiatives, not being fully committed to them and not sharing them with your team. ☐

LEARN MORE!

Interested in attending the 2018 LM Growth Summit? The “hosted” event format means attendees receive a complimentary conference package, including hotel accommodations, meals, recreation and 1:1 meetings with vendor partners. Visit LMGrowthSummit.net to learn more and apply to attend in 2018.



Summit attendees discuss their business goals during the Petra Coach-led workshop.

Reaching for revenue

At the LM Growth Summit, three lawn care operators discussed their growth goals for 2018. Here are some of the ways they're expanding. BY ABBY HART



TV AND RADIO: Rodney Creech, owner of Lawn Plus in West Alexandria, Ohio, invests his sales and marketing dollars in TV and radio ads to help get his company's name out. "We cover 12 different counties in Ohio," Creech said. "We're on three different TV channels, and it's huge for us."

REFERRALS: Lawn Plus also requests referrals from current customers and offers incentives of \$15 credits for new customers and \$30 credits for current customers providing the referral.

SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING: LCOs also can look to social media advertising to build their brands. "We're deploying a lot of dollars on Facebook, and we're moving a lot over from pay-per-click," said Kendall Hines, CEO of Lawn Doctor of Grand Rapids, Mich. His company takes advantage of Facebook's "look-alike audience" feature, in which a business would upload its customer list, Facebook finds those customers online and mirrors a similar audience, so the business can then target its advertising to that new audience.



TELEMARKETING: Lawn Doctor is also turning to an unexpected marketing option: telemarketing. Hines said he's in the process of hiring staff to contact current, canceled and pitched-not-sold customers. "We sent letters, but we never had the manpower to call behind it," said Hines. "And now inputting that telemarketing division, we have the power to do that."

NETWORKING WITH CONTRACTORS AND SUPPLIERS:

Nathan Brandon, CEO of Pure Green in Nashville, Tenn., uses a range of marketing tactics including Facebook, Google, pay-per-click advertising, organic search and networking events. Partnering with contractors in his network is also a part of his growth strategy. "I've got (a contractor) specifically who does high-end installation work," Brandon said. "And he's constantly growing. He hates maintenance, but does it because he has to maintain the properties that he installs." Brandon also connects with suppliers such as nurseries for leads on potential contractor partners who may refer business to him and vice versa.



WEB EXTRA

For more from the LM Growth Summit LCO panel, visit the Web Extras section at LandscapeManagement.net to watch the entire discussion.



Expert advice

Words of wisdom from the consultants and association professionals who supported LM Growth Summit attendees as experts.

“Exit planning is a key phrase right now. Only about 50 percent of this room is going to leave their business willingly. It doesn’t matter if you think you’re going to retire in six months or in 25 years, you still should have everything set up.”

Kent Kohn • Consultant, Pro-Motion Consulting

“(Don’t) become ossified in your thinking about how you approach a business. What makes our business so exciting is that it changes and you have to adapt to it in ways you never thought would need to be done. Even from five years ago, this is a completely different business.”

Bob Mann • Director of state and local government relations, National Association of Landscape Professionals

“Thank goodness we live in today’s world where technology allows you to see your peers and people you admire. Learn from what they’ve done well—we can see how their pay-per-click programs work, we can see how their websites are built and what keywords are driving leads—then plan and set those metrics and goals.”

Shaun Kanary • VP of marketing, Kuno Creative

“Build your leadership team. Everything starts and ends with the leadership team. It should be three to five people. The smaller the group, the better.”

Phil Harwood • President, Pro-Motion Consulting

“You have to have a great coach in your corner; you have to have somebody holding you accountable. And move that business forward—for yourself, your teams. To carry out that vision is very important.”

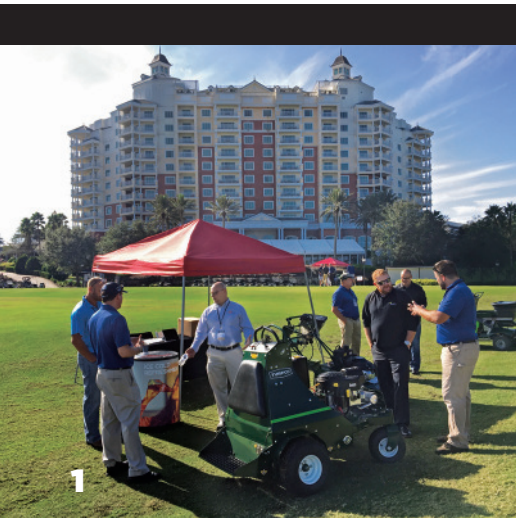
Jeremy Durgan • Owner, GreenEarth Landscape Services

“Plan for engagement. Put it in your business plan. Be engaged with your state association, be engaged with your national association, make sure you’re present and available when questions arise, but also be out there proactively talking about the great things you do and why your customers love them.”

Karen Reardon • VP of public affairs, Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment



GROWTH SUMMIT



1



2



3



4



5



6



7

SAY CHEESE! 1. Turfco reps demonstrate their equipment in the Outdoor Demo area at Reunion Resort. 2. Seven industry experts, including NALP's Bob Mann (right), address Summit attendees during a breakfast panel discussion. 3. Some attendees enjoyed an afternoon golf tourney on Reunion's Palmer course. 4. Kent Kohn of Pro-Motion Consulting and attorney Kara Youngblood offer their expert advice on growth strategy and staffing issues. 5. Petra Coach's Andy Bailey and Jeremy Durgan proudly display Durgan's July 2017 cover of *LM*. 6. A group of attendees enjoy an afternoon airboat excursion. 7. During the Petra Coach workshop, LCOs were hard at work developing their strategic growth plans.

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Anuvia Plant Nutrients, headquartered in Zellwood, Fla., is a company focused on a new, innovative and patented way of manufacturing an enhanced efficiency fertilizer for the turf and agricultural industries. Anuvia addresses the three pillars of sustainability—social, environmental and economic—simultaneously by providing an avenue for organic materials to be used in a resource-efficient and environmentally friendly manner that helps people, plants and the environment thrive.

Turfco

TURFCO.COM



With more than 50 years of turf maintenance experience, Turfco Manufacturing is a trusted industry innovator, providing professionals with the most advanced and productive equipment for a variety of turf applications. Turfco manufactures a wide range of professional lawn, golf course and sports turf maintenance equipment, employing the latest technology. The company prides itself in listening to customer needs and ideas and continually improving equipment in order to provide the high-quality, efficient results professionals rely on. Turfco's product line includes overseeders, edgers, sod cutters, aerators, spreader/sprayers and debris blowers.



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As a leading supplier to the lawn and landscape market, Nufarm's U.S. turf and ornamental team delivers a portfolio of products meeting the value, efficacy and innovation demanded by the market to solve the daily pest and disease issues you face. Trusted products such as Escalade 2, SureGuard, Arena and Aloft have been your go-to products for years, and innovative solutions such as Last Call and Change Up are more recent Nufarm solutions. An unsurpassed customer service team coupled with our sales and technical resources, all with a mission to solve your problems, sums up the personality of your Nufarm team. We are here to help you grow a better tomorrow, today.



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Founded in 1947, Private Brands, Incorporated's (PBI's) primary focus was on formulating



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products for leading firms in the agriculture industry. Through a commitment to quality manufacturing processes, dedication to customer service and integrity in its day-to-day business, PBI grew through strategic partnerships, acquisitions and mergers. In 1968, Private Brands, Inc. became PBI-Gordon Corp.

The Gordon's line includes more than 40 proven professional solutions, including industry favorite Trimec Herbicide and leading-edge innovations like T-Zone SE and Avenue South herbicides. The Gordon's name continues to stand for quality, service and integrity.



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Quali-Pro has been a leader in the development of innovative and post-patent formulations, offering professionals the industry's widest array of active ingredients. Quali-Pro provides solutions for lawn care professionals, sports turf managers and golf course superintendents that are backed by university research and a dedicated staff of professionals.

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BUSINESS BASICS: PEOPLE

LET'S GROW

CASE STUDY: OUR WAY

GET TOUGH

INTERVIEW
IN PROGRESS

Mel Kleiman shares his approach for covering your bases and hiring star employees.

 PAGE 32

ABCs of hire tough, manage easy



BY MEL KLEIMAN

The author is the founder of Humetrics. He helps companies build high-quality, frontline, hourly workforces. Reach him at mkleiman@humetrics.com.

Managers who hire tough know exactly who they're looking for and refuse to lower their standards. They cover all the bases—from A to Z—and create a win/win situation for the new hire and employer alike. Here's what they do.

Attitude. Hire for attitude, train for skills. The main reason clients leave is an indifferent attitude on the part of an employee.

Body language. If you don't pay attention to an applicant's posture, facial expressions and body movements, you'll miss more than half of what's being communicated.

Capacities. Define the mental and physical capacities needed. It's senseless to spend time with any applicant who can't meet basic requirements.

Decision making. Most interviewers make a hire/no hire decision within 30 seconds of meeting an applicant. Weigh all the information gathered before dismissing or hiring any candidate.

Employees. A great source of new employees is all the good employees you already have. Ask them if friends, family or people they've worked with elsewhere might be interested.

Former employees. Another source of new hires is all the good people who used to work for you. Call and ask if they want to come back.

Gut feeling. If your gut says, "Don't hire this person," then don't. If it says "Hire this person," doubt it.

Always get objective verification through reference checks.

Hire tough.

Tough hiring sys-

tems are the best insurance against negligent hiring lawsuits and workers' compensation claims.

Interview tough. Don't interview with the application in front of you or you'll end up simply confirming information instead of finding out what you need to know.

Job. The most important job you have is hiring. If you put the right people in the right jobs, managing is easy.

Knowledge. There are only two sources of knowledge about a potential new hire—the applicant and the people who know the applicant. Check them both out thoroughly.

Listen. The most common mistake interviewers make is talking too much.

Maintain control. Tell applicants what you're going to cover. Let them know they'll have an opportunity to ask questions after you've told them briefly about the job and the company and have asked your questions.

Notes. Take notes, but never on the application. It's a legal document you need to keep on file whether or not the applicant is hired.

Open-mindedness. Be aware of your personal biases; don't rule out anyone because of them. You're looking for the best person to do the job—not the person you like best.

Personality. Try to get a good fit between the applicant, manager, job and company. People with good attitudes will manage their personalities (do things they don't really like to do) to get the job done.

Quality assurance. Once you've identified the capacities, attitudes, personality traits and skills necessary to do the job well,

don't lower your standards. Your best people often leave because they tire of working with your hiring mistakes—those with poor attitudes who aren't team players.

Recruiting. Recruiting is an ongoing activity and the best time to recruit is when you don't need anyone.

Skills. If you have to hire for skills, the only way to ensure you get what you need is to test for them.

Test. Every step in your hiring process should be viewed as a test, and each test should get progressively more difficult.


Upgrade. Every time you have to hire, it's a chance to improve the whole organization. Keep raising the bar.

Verify references. Always check references. The only way to avoid negligent hiring lawsuits and bad hiring decisions is to verify the information the applicant gives you.

Who, What, Where, When and Why? You can't hit the target if you don't know what it looks like. Write a job analysis that answers these questions, and you'll score a bull's-eye every time.

X-out unsuitable applicants. Do a short phone screening before asking anyone to come in for testing or an interview. This limits your legal exposure and ensures applicants meet all your basic requirements.

Yield. Don't make an offer before you have all the facts. What you see in the interview is better than anything you'll ever see again.

Zero in. Identify the mental and physical capacities, attitudes, personality traits and skills you need. Test for what's needed and interview only the best of the best. 

WEB EXTRA

Find out how you can win a copy of Kleiman's book, "267 Hire Tough Proven Interview Questions" at LandscapeManagement.net/webextras.

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LET'S GROW

Get started with Google Ads, part 2



BY SHAUN KANARY

The author is director of demand generation for Kuno Creative, a digital marketing agency. A green industry veteran, he's also an adjunct professor of marketing at Baldwin Wallace University. Reach him at skanary@gmail.com.

In the past year, Google has changed the format of the ads it shows to make them look more like the organic listings that appear below them. The company has done so because searchers are 60 percent more likely to click on the organic listings rather than a paid ad. However, this percentage can be misleading, and a well-written ad can lead to many clicks.

It's important to note that each ad represents a group of keywords you choose. That's why you want to make sure you group your keywords together in small groups. This way, your ad makes sense no matter the keyword used in your group. For example, you'd want to keep your keywords for patio installation and sprinkler systems separate.

When creating an ad for the first time, it's important that you know the different parts of a Google ad and the character limits for each.

A Google ad consists of:

- Two headlines limited to 30 characters each;
- One description line limited to 80 characters; and
- Your website URL.

Writing a well-performing ad means using your keyword as much as you can in the copy. This tells the searcher that if he clicks on your ad, he is going to a website that more



than likely has what he's looking for. Additionally, a strong offer can help persuade a searcher to click on your ad over the others that appear next to it. It's important that you know exactly what others are offering, so you can make sure your offer is in line with theirs—or even better.

CHECK YOUR ACCOUNT SETTINGS

Finally, you need to choose the settings that apply to control your campaigns. These settings often are the easiest way to ruin a good pay-per-click effort. Google often defaults to basic settings that could cost you a lot of money, so I recommend the following:

- **Choose “search network” only and “all features.”** Google allows you to choose which network to display your ads on, either the search network (the standard Google search page) or the display network (where visual banners show on websites across the Internet). Since you're creating “text” ads, it makes sense to deliver your ads to the search net-

work only. Additionally, selecting “all features” allows you to use ad extensions, which we'll discuss below.

- **Narrow your location and schedule ads.** Google defaults its location settings to the U.S. when you set up your account. Change this setting to either a service radius you cover or the individual cities you serve. It's also important to consider ad scheduling—in other words, choosing what time of day to show your ads. Using this feature, you can “turn off” your ads during the middle of the night to avoid wasted spending.

- **Consider ad extensions.** Google allows you to create ads larger than the set character limits by enabling ad extensions. Some of these extensions include your company address, links to important pages on your website, a click-to-call phone number and other features that can make your ad stand out from the others on the page.

Getting started with a Google Adwords account may seem like a daunting task if you're new to the world of digital advertising. However, it's a must in today's market so your business appears online when potential customers search for products and services like yours.

In addition to these tips, there are hundreds more offered by Google on its Adwords YouTube channel. Finally, Google even has a program called Google Adwords Express, where a representative will help you set up your first Adwords account at no cost to you.

Catch part 1 of this article at LandscapeManagement.net/GoogleAds1.

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Headline Two

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Website URL

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Google has changed the format of its ads because it found that searchers are 60 percent more likely to click on an organic listing than a paid ad.

CASE STUDY: OUR WAY

Seeding the future

An idea to donate gardens to schools has turned into a successful effort for one landscape company. **BY CASEY PAYTON**

One of Bruce Allentuck's missions since starting his business has been to get people outside more. It's what has kept him so passionate about the green industry, and it's what drives his landscape designs at Allentuck Landscaping, Co., in Clarksburg, Md. It's also what inspired an idea to work with kids—because, as Allentuck puts it, “What better place to start with getting people outside more than with kids?” Through the Gardens for Grade School Grants program that Allentuck created, he does just that.

“In talking to teachers over the years, often those who were our clients, we would hear that students don't spend as much time outdoors as they used to,” Allentuck says. “We came up with this idea to donate and install raised gardens to schools through what we called our Gardens for Grade Schools Grants. It's a great reason to get kids outside.”

Entering its fourth year, the program continues to gain traction. Allentuck promotes the grants through social media and other marketing channels, typically in March, asking the community to nominate schools for the grant. Next, the company holds a vote on Facebook to determine the winning school. The school with the most votes wins the installation of a cedar raised garden, complete with the company's own organic soil mix,

plants and an age-appropriate presentation for the kids, based on grade level.

In terms of what plants are installed, the schools can choose from a vegetable garden, an herb garden or a butterfly garden. However, due to allergies and food safety regulations, Allentuck says the past three winning schools have chosen butterfly gardens. Some of the plants used for the butterfly gardens have included salvia and coreopsis, though Allentuck says it can vary.

Of all the aspects of this project, Allentuck says the presentation he does for the kids is his favorite part. He sees it as a fun, educational opportunity. It's also fulfilling his mission of getting kids outside.

“One year, the third graders had just finished a butterfly unit, so they had the opportunity to attend our presentation,” Allentuck says. “We talk about why it's important to have butterfly gardens and how they can also provide food for caterpillars or a place for them to store their eggs. We keep it short but often get a lot of questions from the kids.”

Overall, Allentuck says it's been a very modest investment to start this program. The company makes the cedar boxes in-house, which Allentuck says is a good “rainy day project” when crews are stuck at the facility with downtime. The organic soil is also made in-house. So, the only real investment is donating the

Allentuck Landscaping's school garden contest teaches kids about gardening.



Gardens
FOR GRADE SCHOOL GRANTS™
BY ALLENTUCK LANDSCAPING CO.

plants and the time for the installation and the presentation.

Allentuck says he has learned a few valuable lessons since starting this initiative, including the fact that social media is a key tool for promoting it. Initially, he hadn't done much to blast out the message, but he says that involving the community has been valuable in making the effort work.

He has also branded the program with a logo. “It's something we feel good about doing, and it's something that fits into our mission and our branding perfectly, and for that reason, the logo lets people know it's something that we value,” Allentuck says. “But it also has the added benefit of letting people know about our business. They might hear about the contest before they hear about the business, and it's an added marketing opportunity. Ultimately, it's a win-win for us and for the community.”

Payton is a freelance writer based in Philadelphia.

BUSINESS BREAKDOWN

COMPANY: Allentuck Landscaping

HEADQUARTERS: Clarksburg, Md.

EMPLOYEES: 30

REVENUE: Not reported

SERVICE MIX: 100 percent residential

CLIENT MIX: 50 percent design/build, 50 percent maintenance

PRODUCT FOCUS

UTVS



MAXIMUM DUTY VEHICLE (MDV)

COMPANY: Hustler Turf Equipment

URL: HustlerTurf.com

The MDV features LeveLift, a labor-saving cargo box that allows the user to lift up to 750 lbs. from the ground and dump material from any point in its arc of motion. The machine saves time by turning a two- or three-person job into a one-person job. With a simple flip of a switch, the LeveLift brings the cargo box up, back and down, enabling loading at ground level or at any point.



RUSTLER 850

COMPANY: New Holland

URL: Agriculture1.

NewHolland.com

New Holland's Rustler 850 includes a 62-hp EFI engine and a 1,500-lb. total load capacity. Four-wheel double A-arm suspension ensures a comfortable ride. Safety features include a rollover protective structure, a three-point seat belt system, a front-mounted steel brush guard, headlights and brake lights.

protective structure, a three-point seat belt system, a front-mounted steel brush guard, headlights and brake lights.



GATOR HPX815E & HPX615E

COMPANY: John Deere

URL: Deere.com

The gas-powered John Deere Gator HPX615E and the diesel-powered Gator HPX815E (pictured) models offer 4WD for improved terrain capability and superior payload, cargo capacity, towing and overall stability. Both new models boast sleek styling and a 1,000-lb. cargo capacity, 1,300-lb. towing capacity and 1,400-lb. payload capacity.



CUV82 & CU102D

COMPANY: Caterpillar

URL: Cat.com

Caterpillar's gas-powered CUV82 (pictured) and diesel-powered CU102D feature a rugged steel cargo bed, a four-wheel independent suspension system, a long swing-arm suspension and custom-tuned springs and shocks. The CUV82 is powered by a 0.8L three-cylinder gasoline engine delivering 50 hp, while the CUV102D is powered by a 1.0L three-cylinder diesel engine delivering 25 hp.



WALK-BEHINDS



WG6-21

COMPANY: Kubota

URL: KubotaUSA.com

An addition to Kubota's W Series of commercial mowers, the WG6-21 features a cast aluminum 21-in. deck with steel edge guards and cast aluminum wheels with dual ball bearing and replaceable, wide rubber tires. The mower also boasts a three-speed, heavy-duty transmission and a Kawasaki FJ180 commercial duty engine.



REVOLT

COMPANY: Mean Green Mowers

URL: MeanGreenProducts.com

The all-electric, cut dual drive wide-area Revolt features a 48-v battery that offers a peak hp of 24 and charges completely over four to 10 hours. Available in deck sizes of 48 or 52 in., the walk-behind comes with the option of two Green Monster battery packs, built to last through a full day of mowing on one charge, according to the company. The super-wide battery packs hover 8 in. above the ground, allowing the Revolt to hug slopes.

PRO-WALK

COMPANY: Gravely

URL: Gravely.com

The redesigned Pro-Walk features Gravely's X-Factor II Deck, a 10-gauge, all-steel welded deck with an integrated wear bar on the front and two additional gussets. The new deck level system's design requires a four-point adjustment and eliminates deck hanger welds for a flat deck. The machine boasts adjustable handlebars, a wide wheelbase, a flip-up side discharge chute and a constant-belt tensioning system. It also includes the Hydro-Gear ZT-2800 transmission, 20-in. rear tires and puncture-proof semi-pneumatic front tires.



VELKE HYDRO-POWERED WALK-BEHIND

COMPANY: Wright Manufacturing

URL: WrightMfg.com

The Velke hydro-powered walk-behind mowers can be specified with either a fixed or floating cutting deck, with deck sizes available in 32, 36, 48, 52 and 61 in., depending on whether the mower is an HC or LC Series model. The HC series is ideal for mowing medium-sized properties and tight spaces, but the larger LC models, with larger tires, reinforced frames and a wider stance, still offer low impact on commercial properties. Each model is ideally balanced to mow on slopes and climb curbs. An integrated Velke sulky latch is provided on all models.



PRO HW HYDRO WALK-BEHIND

COMPANY: Cub Cadet

URL: CubCadet.com

Available in 36-, 48- and 54-in. cutting widths, the Pro HW Hydro walk-behind mower features a fixed floating 10-gauge deck design with seven-gauge steel top and bottom reinforcements.

Its Easy-Trac steering technology provides smooth steering and stability on slopes and hillsides. The rugged design includes a thick steel beam, yokes and control centers. Higher clearance and weight balance allow professionals to easily maneuver forward or reverse over curbs.



TURF TRACER X SERIES

COMPANY: Exmark

URL: Exmark.com

The Turf Tracer X-Series walk-behind mower's Enhanced Control System significantly increases operator comfort, Exmark said. An electromagnetic PTO clutch and single-belt deck drive system offer increased durability and ease of maintenance. Fifty-two- or 60-in.

UltraCut Series 4 cutting decks feature welded seven-gauge deck reinforcements, maintenance-free, Lazer Z-style sealed bearing cutter housings and splined blade drivers for maximum durability. Twin-cylinder Kawasaki and Kohler engine options are available, including carbureted gasoline, EFI gasoline and EFI propane configurations.



FOR INFORMATION ON ADVERTISING IN THE
LM SHOWCASE SECTION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Jake Goodman
jgoodman@northcoastmedia.net, 216-363-7923

Dan Hannan
dhannan@northcoastmedia.net, 216-363-7937

Chloe Scoular
cscoular@northcoastmedia.net, 216-363-7929

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RESOURCES

Correction

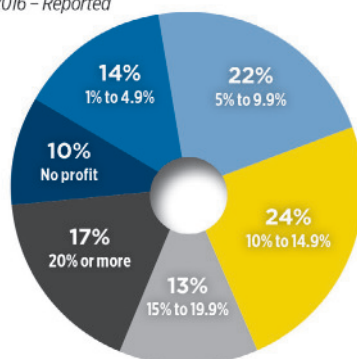
The December 2017 LM Industry Pulse feature contained an incorrect chart on page 41. The correct Profits charts are shown here. We apologize for the error.

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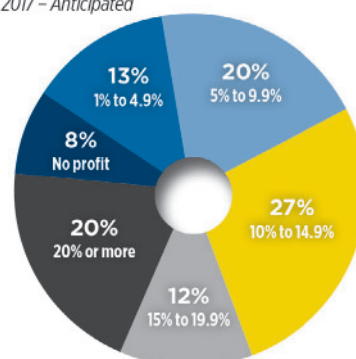
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Profits
2016 - Reported



2017 - Anticipated



LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT (ISSN 0894-1254) is published monthly by North Coast Media LLC, IMG Center, 1360 East 9th Street, Suite 1070, Cleveland, OH 44114. Subscription rates: For US, Canada and Mexico, 1 year \$39.95 print and digital; two years \$95.95 print and digital. All other countries, 1 year print and digital \$169.95; two years \$255.95. For air-expedited service, include an additional \$75 per order annually. Single copies (prepaid only) \$10 plus postage and handling. For current single copy or back issues, call 847-513-6030. Periodicals postage paid at Cleveland OH 44101-9603 and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Please send address change to Landscape Management, PO Box 2090, Skokie, IL 60076. Printed in the U.S.A.



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BACKSTORY

INTERVIEW BY SARAH WEBB



Jessica Milligan

**GENERAL MANAGER & VICE PRESIDENT
STRATHMORE INTEGRATED GROUNDS MANAGEMENT
LASALLE, QUEBEC, CANADA**

"We're having really rapid growth, so knowing what the next role or challenge or position is isn't always easy. It's sometimes a question of trying to motivate people and get them on board to the overall mission without knowing what their actual role is going to be in that."

"My grandfather started the company in 1963, so we're third generation. My brother (Gordon Milligan, center) and I are taking over from our father (Danny, left)."

"I was in university in my early 20s and then stopped to have a family. But as soon as my daughter was born, I started going to night school, so I'm slowly working toward a bachelor's degree (in business administration). One course at a time, I'm hoping to have my bachelor's degree by the time I'm 40."

"At this point, I support all the different departments where they need it at any given time."

EDUCATION

St. Thomas High School
Pointe-Claire, Quebec, Canada
Class of 1998

McGill University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
2003-2007

University of Montreal
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
2012-Present

WORK EXPERIENCE

1993-1997
Paper girl
Montreal Gazette
Sainte-Anne de Bellevue,
Quebec, Canada

1999-2001
Gardener
Strathmore Integrated
Grounds Maintenance
LaSalle, Quebec, Canada

2004-2015
Administrative assistant,
operations management, human
resources and finance
Strathmore Integrated
Grounds Management

2015-Present
General Manager & Vice President
Strathmore Integrated
Grounds Management



"I had a paper route all through high school. I learned the responsibility of getting out there every day."



"We're a family of six kids. That's an important part of the legacy that we're trying to build for the company. It's been really important to have clearly defined roles to know who's doing what, to make sure that nothing gets missed and also that there's no overlap."

WORDS OF WISDOM: "As managers, we need to stop being frustrated by people's 'lack of common sense.' We need to break down our instructions in such a way that we do not assume 'common sense' will help people fill in the gaps." •
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