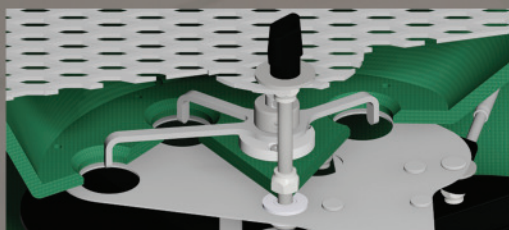


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YOUR GUIDE TO GROWTH™

Marty Grunder, president and CEO of Grunder Landscaping Co., kicks off his new *LM* column, *Grow with Grunder*, this month.



**2019 BUSINESS
PLANNER**
p.35

**GROW WITH
GRUNDER**
p.104

GROWTH MINDSET

Last year Marty Grunder learned he was holding his company back. Here's what he's doing to change.

October 2018 VOL 57, ISSUE 10

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ON THE COVER: PHOTO BY MATTHEW ALLEN, THEMATTHEWALLEN.COM





BLOG

Government Affairs: Will the H-2B returning-worker provision be approved by Congress this fall?

September 4, 2018 - By Gregg Robertson



U.S. Capitol. Photo: US staff

This summer, the landscape contracting industry has faced what may be the tightest labor market in its history. With the economy running at full tilt, the unemployment rate at over 4.5% and a labor market that includes many landscape contractors working outside in an ever-hotter climate, many landscape contractors are making hard decisions about whether they can even stay in business.

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS FROM THE PROS

➔ If you look forward to our Business Planner every year, you should check out our blog. Every week we have one industry expert—such as Jeffrey Scott, Jeff Korhan, Phil Harwood or Gregg Robertson—share their thoughts on issues, trends

and growth opportunities important to green industry professionals. Head over to **LandscapeManagement.net/blog** and bookmark the page now for weekly updates.

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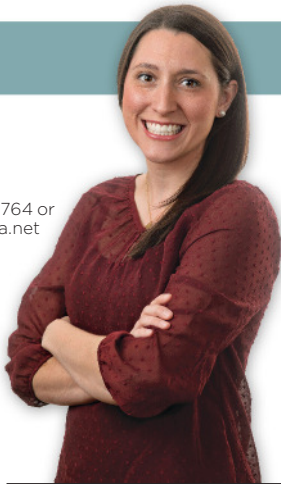
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EDITOR'S NOTE

MARISA PALMIERI
EDITOR

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Competitive spirit

The industry is being squeezed between lowballers and big national contractors," a reader wrote to me recently.

I have heard this dilemma before in several different forms. The question always comes down to, "How do I compete to win when I'm facing both larger competitors and lowballers?"

We selected this question as the theme of our 2019 Business Planner issue. We've lined up eight articles for you from various landscape industry experts all centered on this topic. You'll read about how a stable team is your competitive advantage, why you should measure it and how to do so from James Cali and Jason New (page 36). You'll hear from financial expert Greg Herring, who discusses a few key reports you may want to begin tracking and how they can help you make above-average profits (page 41). And there are many more, starting on page 35.

I couldn't have picked a more fitting topic to run alongside our cover story on Grunder Landscaping Co. this month. President and CEO Marty Grunder is a self-proclaimed "competitive S.O.B."

Many people who have achieved his level of success would be complacent and happy enough to run their award-winning, nearly \$6-million company with an "if it's not broken, don't fix it" mentality. But not Marty.

Grunder Landscape Co. certainly wasn't broken, but last year a few of Marty's friends shined a light on his company and several areas of opportunity. He didn't ask for their help. He could have politely declined their feedback and went about his business. But he didn't. He heard their critiques with an open mind.

“If we think we're so good that we don't have any work to do, that's a problem.”

"I'm not really wired to just be OK," Marty says. He talks about his wife, Lisa, and his four children: Grant, Lily, Katie and Emily.

"I want them to know that I'm trying every single day to be the best dad, husband, businessperson and person in general, that I can be," he says. "It's like Jim Collins says in *Good to Great*, 'Good is the enemy of great.' If we think we're so good that we don't have any work to do, that's a problem."

Talk about a competitive advantage. Check out the cover story on page 26 to learn more about Marty, his firm and the changes they're implementing to improve today and in the future.

Also starting this month, Marty joins *LM* with a new, monthly column (page 104). He'll share the unique insights he's learned from being both a landscape professional and an industry consultant.

We welcome his competitive spirit, and we look forward to growing together. 



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A large, lush garden with a swimming pool and a stone wall. The garden is filled with various plants, including tall grasses, shrubs, and trees. The pool is a long, narrow, rectangular shape with a stone wall on one side. The stone wall is made of large, irregular stones and has a flat top. The pool is surrounded by a paved area. The background is filled with dense foliage and trees.

BIG PICTURE

SERENE SECLUSION

LOCATION Annapolis, Md.

COMPANY Walnut Hill
Landscape Co.

THE DETAILS The clients' asked for a private space that would lend itself well to outdoor entertaining and also feature a dining area, spa, swimming pool, cabana and an outdoor kitchen. They also requested plants that would offer optimal spring and fall interest.

The site presented a challenge due to the relatively small space—roughly 6,000 square feet. The narrow streets and lack of parking made the management of multiple trades a tough task. The team and other contractors staged job materials offsite to help save time and prevent potential schedule disruptions.

To achieve privacy, 14- to 16-foot cryptomeria, Nellie Stevens hollies and arborvitae were planted along the property line to provide screening. The result is a stately and lush design that provides privacy and interest at every turn.

The project earned Walnut Hill Landscape Co. a 2017 Grand Award and a 2017 Judges Award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program.

PHOTO Opposing geometric lines balanced with a lush landscape gives the illusion of a larger space.

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

PHOTO: MICHAEL PROKOPCHAK



JOHN DEERE

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STEP BY STEP

NEW STUFF

SAFETYWATCH

SURVEY SAYS...



Within a few years of founding Stickle Lawn Care in 2012, owner Cody Stickle realized he couldn't be everywhere at once. That was when the Hampton, Va., company incorporated a client satisfaction software system called Quality Driven Software (QDS) into its operations.

"Being that we're continually growing, I'm not able to go out and look over every single client's yard," Stickle says. "QDS is an extra tool to help with quality control."

Each survey is emailed or texted to the customer, allows him to rate the service on a scale of one to five and asks an open-ended question about the quality of service.

If a customer gives a high score, QDS directs him to the company's website or a Google review page, granting the option to leave a review.

If a client is dissatisfied with a service, Stickle says QDS provides a drop-down menu listing items

"Being that we're continually growing, I'm not able to go out and look over every single client's yard."

that may have gone wrong. Stickle Lawn Care then follows up with the client.

"If clients aren't happy, then hopefully we can correct the issue before they go online and post something negative about our business," Stickle says.

In addition to reducing client complaints, Stickle says the surveys help pinpoint quality problems stemming from a specific crew or employee. In those cases, Stickle says he arranges for extra training or supervision.

Of the approximately 120 surveys Stickle Lawn Care sends out weekly, the response rate is about 30 percent. Stickle adds it's important to remember to send the surveys. They're not sent automatically.



BROUGHT TO YOU BY



JOHN DEERE



BY KEN THOMAS

The author is principal of Envisor Consulting. Reach him at kenthomas@envisorco.com.

LEADERSHIP ADVANTAGE

DOING THE RIGHT THINGS WILL SET YOU FREE

At Envisor, we have the privilege to work with landscape companies across the country. We are typically engaged as consultants to help our clients increase sales, increase profits, improve quality of life or a combination of all three. Our process is to help business owners identify their picture of success in business and in life and compare it to where they currently stand. With those two points in place, we can work together to formulate a strategic plan to achieve their ultimate success.

Typically, the steps to success in each company are not dramatically different and aren't that complicated to understand intellectually. The challenge is in implementa-

WEIGH YOUR OPTIONS
Writing out pros and cons can help with hard decisions.

tion. Unfortunately, while the plan may be simple, it's not easy. Here's why.

“Many times, the decisions you are most afraid of are the ones that will set you free and allow your company and your team to perform at its highest level.”

Implementing the plan takes courageous leadership. Leadership is doing the right things at the right time on a daily basis. I say “courageous” because it can be damn scary. Many times, the “right things” are counterintuitive for owners and leaders. Sometimes, it seems like decisions don't line up with the facts. These are the tough decisions leaders have to make to move the organization forward.

Some common right things are:

- We need to hire a key person to move us forward.
- We need to raise the price or fire some key clients that are holding us back.
- We need to replace an individual whose job has outgrown him or her.
- We need to spend money we don't have on equipment or software.
- We need to let a top performer go due to a poor attitude.

In the planning stage, all the right things make sense, but when the rubber hits the road in implementation, these decisions can become derailed by overanalysis and fear. The reason is each decision may come with some negative short-term consequences. For example, “How can I add overhead or fire customers when I am not making enough money?” Decisions relating to people

are complicated. It's emotional, we are dealing with people's lives and relationships are involved.

Here's the bottom line, folks: Many times, the decisions you are most afraid of are the ones that will set you free and allow your company and your team to perform at its highest level.

To overcome the fear of doing the right things and move your organization forward, we recommend the following.

- Outline the pros and cons of each decision. Many times, doing nothing is much more detrimental than enacting steps.
- Seek wise counsel from trusted advisers. Know that your teammate's advice is colored by his or her intimacy with the issue.
- Develop a reasonable worst-case scenario in terms of work and profits.
- Identify the return on investment (ROI) the decision will generate.
- Develop the sales and operations plan needed to generate more gross margin dollars to pay for changes.
- Rally yourself and your team to execute the transition plan.

It has been very rewarding watching business leaders make the tough decisions required to move their organizations forward and seeing huge ROI on growth, quality of life and profits. 🙌



STEP BY STEP

How to manage shady lawn areas

While shade trees are an important and prominent feature in many landscapes, they can be very competitive with turf, causing problems that can lead to the turf's decline. Trees compete with grasses for light, water and nutrients. Additionally, air flow under trees is usually restricted, increasing humidity and disease pressure. In response, the turfgrass stand density decreases as turfgrass plants become more succulent with elongated leaves and restricted roots. These factors make it a challenge to maintain dense, healthy turf in the shade.

Turf performs best with a minimum of four to six hours of full sun per day. Before struggling to maintain turfgrass underneath trees, evaluate the need for turf in that area. A better choice may be to use shade-tolerant ground covers, rock beds, mulch or pavers instead of turfgrass. If the shaded area is not trafficked, a ground cover or ornamental bed may be easier to maintain and be more attractive. If there will be heavy traffic in the area, consider stone pavers, rock pads or mulch.

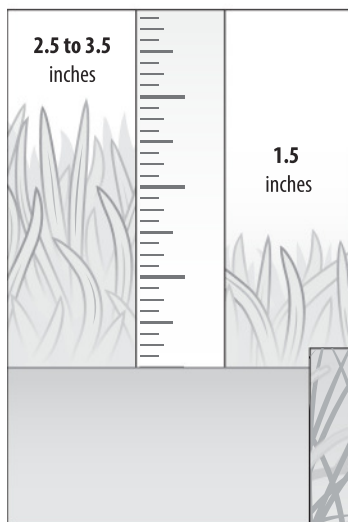
Though all turfgrasses perform better in full sun than in the shade, some grass species perform adequately in shade. Consider using the following mixes for planting in the shade: 100 percent tall fescue; 50 percent fine fescue with 50 percent Kentucky bluegrass; or a combination of 50 percent fine fescue, 30 percent Kentucky bluegrass and 20 percent perennial ryegrass.

Follow these steps to improve turfgrass grown in the shade. 

SOURCE: Purdue University Extension, Department of Agronomy

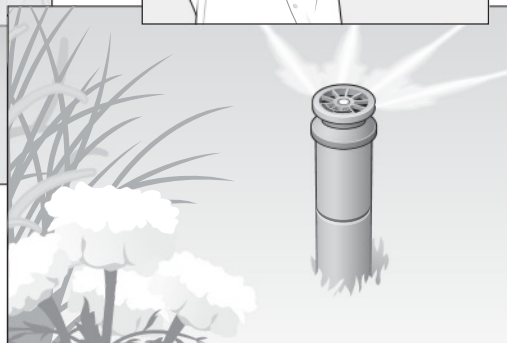
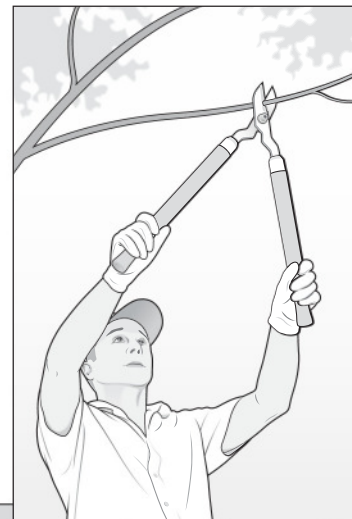
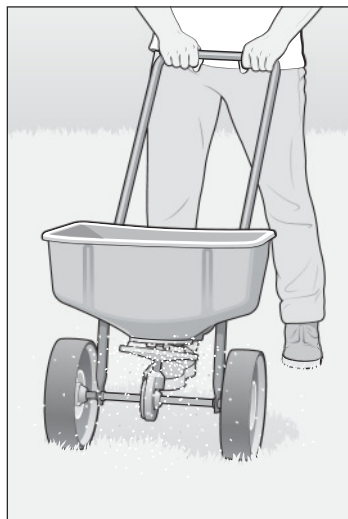
➔ STEP 1

Selectively prune and thin tree limbs to allow better penetration of sunlight and increase air circulation. This should be done every year or every other year as limbs regrow.



⬆ STEP 2

Mow shaded turfgrasses at a minimum of 2.5 inches, but preferably 3 to 3.5 inches to leave the maximum leaf area for photosynthesis.



⬆ STEP 3

Irrigate only as needed to prevent turf from becoming drought stressed. Deep and infrequent irrigation is preferred over shallow, frequent irrigation.

⬅ STEP 4

Grass plants in shade are slow growing and succulent, therefore needing less nitrogen than grass plants growing in full sun. In most cases, apply 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of turf in September and in November to provide adequate fertility for the entire year. Additionally, shade-loving broadleaf weeds, such as wild violet or ground ivy, and diseases (powdery mildew and dollar spot) thrive in shaded areas. Some control products have restrictions on use in the shade, so be sure to follow the label for most the effective use.

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Through OPEI's TurfMutt program and Save Living Landscapes campaign, we continue to promote the living landscape and defend it from attacks.

OPEI is an active, relevant, and vital association thanks to the engagement of its members. If you'd like more information on joining or getting more involved, see a member of our staff. Or contact us at info@opei.org.

JOIN OPEI: Support your industry—become a member today!

A snapshot of 2018

It's been a significant year for the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute.

- We purchased a new headquarters building due to record levels of membership and member engagement.
- Our new market statistics vendor is improving and expanding our longtime data collection program.
- And our trade show, GIE+EXPO, continues to break records in attendance and exhibit space.



Kris Kiser, President & CEO

The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) is an international trade association representing more than 100 power equipment, engine, and utility vehicle manufacturers and suppliers. OPEI is the advocacy voice of the industry, and a recognized Standards Development Organization for the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and active internationally through the International Standards Organization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) in the development of safety and performance standards. OPEI is managing partner of GIE+EXPO, the industry's annual international trade show, and the creative force behind the environmental education program, TurfMutt.com. OPEI-Canada represents members on a host of issues, including recycling, emissions, and other regulatory developments across the Canadian provinces.



TurfMutt is taking over

New at this year's GIE+EXPO is the TurfMutt adoption event MUTT MADNESS. Co-hosted with the Kentucky Humane Society, it takes place Thursday, October 18, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Freedom Hall, GIE+EXPO's new lunch venue. Trade show attendees are invited to find their next best friend and adopt their own backyard superhero at the event.

After three seasons of success on the CBS Saturday morning education program "Lucky Dog," TurfMutt will be the primary sponsor of "Ready, Set, Pet!". Produced in partnership with Hearst Digital Media and Litton Entertainment, the show, debuting on The CW this month, demonstrates the true value of the living landscape: a place for pets and families to play, an asset that filters rainwater, produces oxygen, cools the environment, reduces dust and debris, sequesters carbon, and provides habitat for pollinators.



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COMPANY: Grasshopper

URL: GrasshopperMower.com

Powered by an 810cc Vanguard engine (226V-G4) or a Kohler Confidant 747cc engine (225V-G4), Grasshopper's midmount mowers are driven by 12cc piston pump hydro-gear transaxles. The 5.5-in. deep cutting decks come in 52- or 61-in. width options. An optional PowerVac collection system deposits clippings or leaves into the 8-cu.-ft. twin mesh bag collector. The deck can convert to a down discharge mulching option.

2



2. STAND-ON RIDING MOWER

COMPANY: Exmark

URL: Exmark.com

Exmark's new stand-on riding mower delivers commercial-grade performance, durability, ergonomics and ease of service, according to the company. A low center of gravity design optimizes weight distribution for increased stability and traction. Exmark's UltraCut cutting decks are available in a range of cut widths, including a compact 32-in. model that's designed to fit through gates as narrow as 36 in.

3. RTV XG850 SIDEKICK

COMPANY: Kubota

URL: KubotaUSA.com

Kubota's newest gas-powered utility vehicle, the RTV XG850 Sidekick, is built with a 48-hp gasoline engine and delivers a top speed of 40 mph. It comes with continual variable transmission with centrifugal clutch, idle speed control, highland correction and electric power steering. The machine includes selectable full-time 4WD, can tow up to 2,000 lbs. and can carry up to 15.2 cu. ft. in its heavy-duty steel cargo box.



4



5



6

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.

4. PRO-LC IRRIGATION CONTROLLER

COMPANY: K-Rain

URL: KRain.com

The Pro-LC Irrigation Controller by K-Rain includes a full-program display that highlights watering days, number of start days, number of stations and any special programming; permanent memory, which saves program settings during power outages; a valve locate feature that aids in locating buried valves; short circuit protection, which identifies and isolates stations while the remaining program continues; and rain/freez sensor compatibility.

5. PREDATOR-PRO 7000 MOWER

COMPANY: Bob-Cat

URL: FiercelyIndependent.com

Bob-Cat's commercial zero-turn includes a new hitch, swing-away back bumper and Bob-Cat top-line AirFX mowing deck. It's powered by a Kawasaki FX1000V engine and delivers speeds up to 19 mph. Additional features include 26-in. zero-T drive tires; a larger dual-tubed frame; redesigned operator controls angled toward the operator seat; and almond-shaped handles featuring an ergonomic grip and single-bolt height adjustment. The mower's seat features weight and comfort adjustments, Bob-Cat said.

6. COMMAND PRO VERTICAL SHAFT ENGINES

COMPANY: Kohler Co.

URL: KohlerPower.com

Designed for larger mowing decks and faster ground speeds, Kohler's new Command Pro vertical-shaft engine for commercial walk-behinds comes in three displacements: 173cc, 200cc and 224cc. The CV173, CV200 and CV224 integrate Kohler's Consistent-Cut technology. Durability features include cast-iron cylinder bores, dual lubrication and Quad Clean cyclonic air filtration. The engine's blower housing and recoil are made of steel. All three models are backed by Kohler's three-year commercial warranty.

SAFETYWATCH

SAFELY SHARPEN BLADES

There are a few things to keep in mind when sharpening blades.

Make sure the grinder's guards are properly in place and the tool rest is about one-eighth of an inch from the stone and sitting at a 90-degree angle from the stones as they turn.

The blade needs to fit, but if the gap is too wide, the turning stone might suck in the blade—and possibly your fingers. The blade also could fly off the machine or get jammed.

As the grinding stones wear down, the distance between the stones and the tool rest will get wider and have to be adjusted. Check the distance every time you use the bench grinder. Unplug the grinder before making adjustments.

Next, check the blade you're going to sharpen for deep nicks or cracks. The sharpening process will take most of the small nicks out of the blade, but larger nicks may need to be repaired.

Once you're satisfied with the blade and wearing

personal protective equipment, you can turn on the bench grinder. Hold the blade firmly along the backside of the blade.

Set the blade on the tool rest and slide it along the grinding stone at about a 45-degree angle using a slow, deliberate movement. Notice the sparks. After three or four passes, the blade will be sharp again. Turn the blade around and do the opposite end.

The sharpened edges may be very hot when you're done sharpening, so you may want to cool the blades with water when you're finished.

WATCH AND LEARN

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

SOURCE: Greenius



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Get in **EARLY**

Lawn care operators share five considerations for participating in early order programs.

BY EMILY SCHAPPACHER

About five years ago, Brian Wiese began taking advantage of the early order program offered by his fertilizer supplier. Each December, Wiese, the turf division manager for SunCo in Omaha, Neb., preorders enough fertilizer for rounds one and two at a discounted rate and with delayed payment terms. Come spring, the product is waiting and ready to go. For Wiese, the cost savings and peace of mind that come with the early order program are too valuable to pass up.

"As long as our vendor offers this program, we will participate," Wiese says. "I think it is a win-win for both parties."

Lawn care operators (LCOs) share why they participate in early order programs, as well as a few reasons why the programs may not work for everyone.

1 Save money. The biggest reason most LCOs participate in early order programs is the cost savings. Chris Andersen, president of SunCo, says his company saves anywhere from 5-10 percent annually on the cost of its fertilizer. Early order programs also allow the firm to lock in fertilizer prices for the year and build the predetermined cost into the pricing structure, Andersen says. SunCo Lawns is a \$4.5-million company that provides 20 percent lawn and tree care, 30 percent maintenance, 30 percent irrigation



Brian Wiese



Chris Andersen

and 20 percent hardscape services to a half residential, half commercial clientele.

"The amount of savings really depends on the price of fertilizer," says Wiese, adding that he uses square footage of treated turf and the year's sales projections to calculate how much product to order. "This year, we are paying \$12.50 a bag on the preordered materials. It has since gone up to \$14 a bag, so we saved 12 percent this year."

Jerry Grutz, owner of a Lawn Doctor franchise in Dubuque, Iowa, also participates in early order programs for the cost savings. The company orders enough product for one and a half rounds and saves 7-16 percent each year. Grutz's firm provides lawn care and pest control services to 90 percent residential and 10 percent commercial clients.



Jerry Grutz

"The savings is significant," Grutz says. "I like to use any extra savings we have toward our employees' pay and benefits. We have a generous pay scale and time off, and we will be adding retirement and some health insurance in the near future. I recommend doing the early ordering for the cost savings, provided you have enough space (to store the inventory)."

2 Build relationships. Participating in early order programs has strengthened the relationship between SunCo and its fertilizer supplier. Andersen says being a loyal and committed customer has garnered some special treatment. For example, when the company unexpectedly acquired a large commercial account in the spring and needed more product on

short notice, the supplier was willing to help out.

"They take care of us and give us special attention for committing to ordering a certain amount of bags," Andersen says. "We like to lock things in before the season gets rolling."

3 Be prepared. LCOs agree that early order programs allow them to get organized and prepared prior to the start of the next busy season. Accounting for the amount of materials used the previous season plus the percentage of expected growth, Grutz calculates the amount of preemergent herbicide, fertilizer, grub control and postemergent weed control products crews will need for the first half of the season. He says this allows them to start the season with a plan in place and the materials ready to go.

"Getting our product early means one less thing to worry about when it gets closer to the season," Grutz says. "It enables us to have a game plan on the different materials we will be using."

Wiese completes his preordering in December, which is an otherwise quiet time for the company. He adds that preordering his fertilizer guarantees that he won't be impacted if a product shortage arises.

"Spring can sneak up on you quickly," he says. "If I preorder 30 pallets per round, I know that I already have that product. I don't have to worry about not having what I need because it's already been set aside for me."

4 Create cash flow. By preordering his product in December, Wiese is able to take advantage of his supplier's delayed payment terms and does not receive a bill for the product until June. SunCo relies on snow removal services to pay the bills during the winter, so not having to make a large product purchase at that time provides some financial security leading up to spring.

"We have so much more cash flow at the beginning of the year because we didn't have to put all that money up at once," Wiese says, adding that other divisions at SunCo also take advantage of early order programs. For example, the company's hardscape division preorders its pond installation and maintenance materials and receives a similar discount.

"It's industrywide that you can do this—not just on fertilizer," he says.

5 Consider space. For some LCOs, having the space to store so much extra inventory can be a deal breaker when it comes to early order programs. Chris Casselberry, CFO of GreenSeasons in Greenwell Springs, La., says his company participated in early order programs for about five years but no longer does, primarily because of space concerns. The company used to preorder its fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides and fungicides and saw a savings of about 5 percent each year. While he agrees that early order programs helped protect the company from potential product shortages, he says the cons outweighed the pros for his organization.



Chris Casselberry

"We used to participate in early order programs, but the cash outlay and the need for extra warehouse space outweighed the early order discount," Casselberry says. GreenSeasons is an \$8-million company that offers lawn care, maintenance and irrigation services to a 50 percent residential, 35 percent commercial and 15 percent industrial/municipal clientele.

Casselberry says storing so much product in the warehouse clogged up the company's production flow. Holding a large amount of inventory also made the company susceptible to theft. Inventory management was another issue. At times, the company ordered too much product and had to either hold the inventory for an additional year or pay a restocking fee.

Before deciding to participate in early order programs, Casselberry suggests LCOs first consider opportunity cost and an assigned cost-per-square-foot of warehouse space.

Grutz agrees that having too much product in inventory can backfire.

"Sometimes the weather is too dry or too wet, or we have different pests that need treated," he explains. "I wouldn't order some products too far ahead in case a situation would change your plans." 

Schappacher is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.

Bayer

Fall Solutions

With the 2018 Bayer Fall Solutions program, lawn and landscape professionals can expect big savings on industry-leading Bayer solutions such as Specticle® FLO, Celsius® WG and Tribute® Total herbicides—plus Merit® 75 WSP and Topchoice® insecticides. Offering both standalone products and an agroeconomic package now through Dec. 7, 2018, the customizable early order program provides flexible options for lawn and landscape professionals to help maximize savings per acre.

From crabgrass to doveweed, and from fire ants to grubs, lawn and landscape professionals manage a wide array of turf issues. But those with the right lineup of products—fungicide, herbicide and insecticide solutions—can better solve customers' current challenges and prevent new ones. Order early, save and prepare for a winning season with a lineup of proven solutions that include:

- **Specticle FLO**, a preemergence herbicide proven to provide warm-season lawn and landscape professionals with superior control of the most troublesome weeds, like goosegrass and *Poa annua*. And it even offers some postemergence control of crabgrass.
- **Celsius WG**, a postemergence, warm-season turf herbicide that handles conditions many other products cannot. It has one of the broadest spectrums of control on the market and controls more than 100 weeds.
- **Tribute Total**, which provides warm-season turf managers with a complete solution for postemergence control of the most troublesome weeds

including *Poa annua*, goosegrass, dallisgrass, Virginia buttonweed, doveweed, and sedges as well as kyllingas and many other broadleaf weeds on Bermudagrass and Zoysiagrass lawns.

- **Merit**, a time-tested insecticide for season-long grub control, as well as outstanding residual control of numerous ornamental pests. Merit has a broad-spectrum systemic action that delivers excellent preventive and curative results at low usage rates.
- **Topchoice**, an insecticide that provides control of fire ants for up to a full year. A single application controls existing colonies while also preventing new infestations from forming.

ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW LABEL INSTRUCTIONS

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NEED TO KNOW

Deadline: Dec. 7, 2018

Website: backedbybayer.com/fall-solutions-lawn

Nufarm

Nufarm Edge Rewards Program



The 2019 Nufarm Edge Rewards Program is the best way for lawn and landscape professionals to save on popular Nufarm products during the upcoming season. Whether it's Sureguard™ SC for long-lasting pre-emergence, Sure Power™ to clean up more than 250 broadleaf weeds (including ground ivy and wild violet), Celero™ for sedge, or Arena™ for grub control, Nufarm customers save on solutions that will improve the quality and efficiency of their operations.

New for Nufarm Edge Rewards

Nufarm's 2019 program is designed to bring lawn and landscape professionals an edge. Customers can earn valuable distributor credit on the largest lineup of products to-date, including more than 30 proven

Nufarm herbicides, insecticides and fungicides. Plus, rewards participants can extend their savings options with two early order periods.

- Save the maximum during Period 1: September 15 - October 31, 2018.
- Extend your time to save during Period 2: November 1 - December 7, 2018.



Registration is Quick and Easy

Registration is required to participate in Nufarm Edge Rewards. Visit www.NufarmInsider.com/Rewards and simply submit the registration form. Previous registrants are automatically registered and do not need to register again. At the rewards website, lawn and landscape professionals can easily browse eligible products and maximize their rewards potential using the convenient Nufarm Edge Rewards Calculator Tool.



NEED TO KNOW

Deadline: Period 1: Oct. 31, 2018; Period 2: Dec. 7, 2018
Website: NufarmInsider.com/Rewards

Quali-Pro

Simply Grow Together Early Order Program

Plan ahead and save with Quali-Pro. Promotion period for the Simply Grow Together Early Order Program is from September 1, 2018 – December 8, 2018. Order now while supplies last.

Simply Grow Together Promotion

NEW FOR 2018: You can now submit your rebate online at simplygrowtogether.com by using the online form and calculator. In 3 steps, your rebate is on the way!

Who Qualifies

End users in all U.S. Turf, Nursery & Ornamental markets who purchase Quali-Pro products through authorized Quali-Pro Distributors.

Terms

20% of rebate must consist of Platinum products to qualify. Minimum rebate is \$100. Maximum rebate per account is \$5,000.

QUALI-PRO



The Simply Grow Together Early Order Program has 3 easy steps:

Step 1 – Redemption

Complete the redemption form on the website

Step 2 – Calculate

Use the EOP calculator with product selections and unit quantity

Step 3 – Send materials

Upload all receipts and submit! Your rebate is on the way!

Visit simplygrowtogether.com to get started or call 281.892.2500 to locate a rep!

NEED TO KNOW

Deadline: Dec. 8, 2018

Website: SimplyGrowTogether.com

Syngenta

GreenTrust 365 Lawn & Landscape program

Take your business to the next level with the GreenTrust® 365 program from Syngenta. With savings on a broad portfolio of products including new **Manuscript®** herbicide, you can maximize your profitability when you order between **Oct. 1, 2018 and Feb. 28, 2019**. Below are just a few benefits that make GreenTrust 365 the best value of the year.



GREENTRUST REWARDS

Earn GreenTrust Rewards points on purchases made **Oct. 1 – Dec. 7, 2018** and redeem them for a variety of gift cards that can be used for your daily business needs. **Every dollar spent on Qualifying Products in October and November earns double points.** Don't forget to register for GreenTrust Rewards points at GreenTrust365.com/Lawn.



YEARLONG REBATES

Spend at least \$5,000 on Qualifying Products during the Early Order Period, **Oct. 1, 2018 – Feb. 28, 2019**, to lock in your yearlong rebate up to 9%.

Dollar Value of Qualifying Products purchased during the Early Order Period

Yearlong rebate percentage

\$5,000 to < \$10,000	5%
\$10,000 to < \$20,000	6%
\$20,000 to < \$30,000	7%
\$30,000 to < \$40,000	8%
\$40,000 +	9%

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NEED TO KNOW

Deadline: Feb. 28, 2019
Website: GreenTrust365.com



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Mature perennial weeds have met their match. Using a unique class of chemistry for turf, Manuscript herbicide can be effectively sprayed at any growth stage. It controls **tropical signalgrass, crabgrass** and other perennial grassy weeds any time they are actively growing.

Order during EOP to save on your Manuscript purchases.

To learn more, visit GreenCastOnline.com/Manuscript.



POINTS AND BRAND BONUSES

- Earn 10,000 GreenTrust rewards points by purchasing 2 gallons or more of Acelepryn® insecticide from Oct. 1 – Dec. 7, 2018.
- Earn an additional 3% rebate on top of your yearlong rebate on all purchases of Barricade® brand herbicides during the Program Year including Barricade on fertilizer.



PALLET SOLUTION

Apply intelligently with the right mix of products in the Warm Season Herbicide Solution, featuring Barricade® 4L and Monument® herbicides. Available **Oct. 1 – Dec. 7, 2018**.



SUMMERPAY™

Keep your cash flow in check by deferring payment until June 28, 2019. It's just one way to manage your expenses a little more easily throughout the season.



PRODUCT ASSURANCE PROGRAMS

Syngenta has Assurance Programs that guarantee results when used according to Syngenta agronomic recommendations.

CUSTOMER MARKETING

To help grow your business, take advantage of several free homeowner marketing materials from Syngenta. Learn more at **GrowWithSyngenta.com**.



CALCULATE YOUR SAVINGS

Save time and maximize your budget with our easy-to-use online rebate calculators. They can help you determine the best product configuration along with your yearlong rebate and GreenTrust Reward points. Visit GreenTrust365.com/lawn and click on the calculator icon to watch short instructional videos showing how to get the most out of the Rebate Calculators.

PBI-Gordon

PBI-Gordon 2018 Early Order Program

The Fall Classic is Back!

Fall means cool weather, changing leaves, and getting a head start on next season with the best deals on proven performers from PBI-Gordon.

The PBI-Gordon 2018 Early Order Program gives end-users great deals when they order qualifying products from a PBI-Gordon distributor between October 1 and December 15, 2018. And turf pros can increase their rebate by up to 25% when you reach qualifying rebate levels.

Level I: Rebates that reach \$500 - \$999 get a 15% bonus*

Level II: Rebates that reach \$1,000 or more get a 25% bonus*

Order by October 31 to get the best rebate!

The PBI-Gordon EOP features 13 of their newest and most popular products, including NEW SpeedZone® Southern EW – An advanced emulsion in water formulation delivering the same rapid broadleaf weed control of SpeedZone Southern.

Included in the PBI-Gordon EOP line-up:

- Avenue™ South Broadleaf Herbicide for Turf
- Katana® Turf Herbicide
- SpeedZone® Broadleaf Herbicide for Turf
- T-Zone™ SE Broadleaf Herbicide for Tough Weeds
- Surge® Broadleaf Herbicide for Turf

To see the full list of qualifying products, visit eop.PBIGordonTurf.com.



*Rebate bonus is calculated from the rebate amount. Example: If your rebate is \$750, your rebate bonus will be \$112.50 (\$750 x 15%). Added together, your total rebate will be \$862.50.



Always read and follow label directions.
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Katana® is a registered trademarks of Ishihara Sangyo Kaisha, Ltd.

NEED TO KNOW

Deadline: Dec. 15, 2018
Website: eop.PBIGordonTurf.com

PBI-Gordon 2018 Early Order PROGRAM

The Fall Classic IS BACK.

Fall means cool weather, changing leaves, and getting a head start on next season with the best deals on proven performers from PBI-Gordon.

The PBI-Gordon 2018 Early Order Program gives end-users great deals when they order qualifying products from a PBI-Gordon distributor between October 1 and December 15, 2018. And turf pros can increase their rebate by up to 25% when you reach qualifying rebate levels.

Level I: Rebates that reach \$500 - \$999 get a 15%* bonus

Level II: Rebates that reach \$1,000 or more get a 25%* bonus

The EOP features 13 of the newest and most popular PBI-Gordon products, including:

- Segway® Fungicide SC
- Kabuto® Fungicide SC
- Katana® Turf Herbicide
- Surge® Broadleaf Herbicide for Turf
- SpeedZone® Broadleaf Herbicide for Turf, including New SpeedZone® Southern EW
- TZone™ SE Broadleaf Herbicide for Tough Weeds

To see the full list of qualifying products, visit eop.PBIGordonTurf.com.

*Rebate bonus is calculated from the rebate amount.



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YEAR-LONG REWARDS

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Maximize your profitability when you order between **Oct. 1 – Feb. 28 of 2019**. By ordering early from Syngenta, you can maximize your budget with summer pay terms, free marketing collateral and top performing products, including a new herbicide. GreenTrust365.com/Lawn



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🐦 @SyngentaTurf #GT365 #Time4Savings

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experts say.



PAGE 22

TURF+ORNAMENTAL CARE

Well applied

These sprayers, spreaders and rigs will help you meet your clients' needs.

24V BATTERY-POWERED BACKPACK SPRAYER



COMPANY: Chapin
URL: ChapinMfg.com

Chapin's 24V battery-powered backpack sprayer features a 24-v lithium ion battery that provides two hours of continuous spraying—up to 58 gal. on a single charge, Chapin said. Operating pressure is between 35 and 40 psi, delivering a 35-ft. maximum spray stream. The product is equipped with Viton seals, providing a long life and chemical resistance, according to the company. The machine's spray wand has a cushion grip shutoff with a built-in, serviceable filter. The battery charger is included.



GRAHAM LAWNSCAPER

COMPANY: Graham Spray Equipment
URL: GrahamSE.com

The Graham LawnScaper combines versatility, efficiency and safety, said Graham Spray Equipment. The Isuzu NPR-HD truck's bed can accommodate a ride-on mower or spreader-sprayer, a removable Graham spray unit (300 or 400 gal.) and many other tools a lawn care operator may need. The Hannay reel and forkable steel frame provide flexibility, and fold-down bed rails make loading and offloading easy.



S25 SPRAY-PRO PUSH SPREADER



COMPANY: Earthway Products
URL: Earthway.com

The S25 Spray-Pro push sprayer is the newest model in the S-series product line and features a powder-coated steel chassis. Designed for spraying ice control products, pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers, the spreader has an adjustable spray system that makes sidewalks and parking lots easy to manage, according to the company. It also has the ability to apply precise amounts of liquid.

SS-300 ST SKID SPRAYER



COMPANY: Gregson-Clark
URL: GregsonClark.com

The Gregson-Clark SS-300 ST skid sprayer features a space-saving design that uses only 41 in. of bed space. Built to fit into full-size pickup trucks, the frameless design enables the pump/engine and hose reel to mount directly to the tank, providing the operator curb-side reel access. Top-mounted plumbing reduces leak potential. A 2-in. drain plug, located on the bottom rear of the tank, allows for easy flushing. The product is available with several different options and accessories.



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-Larkin Landscaping

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MOWING+LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

‘Burst’ of growth

A look at the numbers behind Nashville-based Color Burst Landscape’s success. BY SARAH WEBB

Brian Edwards, partner at Color Burst Landscapes in Brentwood, Tenn., began his career at McDonald’s, starting out as a burger flipper and ascending to area field consultant by the end of his tenure.

With dreams of owning his own business, he bought Color Burst Landscapes in 2003 with his business partner, Frank Chalfont.

Armed with strong branding skills and a knack for fostering relationships, Edwards and Chalfont transformed Color Burst from a \$1 million company with 20 employees to an organization employing more than 200 that projects an annual 2018 revenue between \$13 million and \$15 million.

Color Burst provides 54 percent landscape maintenance—including snow removal and irrigation services—13 percent floriculture and detail projects and 33 percent landscape installations and enhancements to a 75 percent commercial, 20 percent residential and 5 percent municipal clientele. The company currently operates out of five locations. Here’s a by-the-numbers look at a few facets of the company.



800 HANGING BASKETS

Color Burst provides more than 800 hanging flower baskets throughout downtown Nashville. Dotting many of the city’s main tourist streets, the baskets hang from May to October. The company took over the service for the Nashville Downtown Partnership in 2010, when only 310 baskets lined the streets.

Color Burst dispatches a crew of about a dozen workers to tend to the baskets every night between midnight and 6 a.m. The crew members—who were hired specifically to care for the baskets—water, prune and spin the baskets and replace any containers that are not looking up to par. Color Burst keeps extra baskets at its nursery, ready to go if one needs to be switched out.

“The downtown partnership is a tough thing,” Edwards says. “A lot of companies aren’t set up to do it.

We’re out there in the middle of the night working while everyone else is sleeping.”

In addition to the hanging baskets, the company services and maintains color displays in specialty gardens, on rooftops and in courtyards throughout the city.

4 HANGING AROUND TOWN
Color Burst’s flower baskets sprinkle the streets of downtown Nashville.

2 PARTNERS

Edwards and Chalfont bought the mowing and floral divisions of AAA Landscape Services in 2003 and began operations in 2004. Neither had ever owned a landscaping company before, although Chalfont, also a former McDonald’s employee,

NEWSFEED

LDI ACQUISITION

Enhanced Landscape Management, the maintenance division of Landscape Develop-

ment Inc. (LDI), with headquarters located in Valencia, Calif., concluded the asset purchase of Chateau

Landscape Inc. in Santa Clarita, Calif. The acquisition was LDI’s second in two months. The company acquired Quality Landscape Care in August. LDI is No. 18 on the LM150 list. With

this purchase, the company’s annual maintenance revenue now exceeds \$25 million.

AUTOMOWER + ALEXA

Husqvarna’s Automower, the company’s

robotic mower, is now compatible with Amazon Alexa. Automower owners can control their robotic mower by asking Alexa to start, park and pause the mower and resume sessions.

DYNAMIC DUO ➔
Color Burst Partners
Brian Edwards (left)
and Frank Chalfont.



once relandscaped all the McDonald's locations he oversaw. He also held part ownership of an irrigation-only company.

Over the next few years, the pair worked together to convert the company to Color Burst Landscapes and incorporated additional elements—such as irrigation and snow removal—to become a full-service landscape provider.

Since then, the partners have used their strengths to grow the company by \$12 million—Edwards favoring the people side and Chalfont leaning toward the numbers side.

"I'm the busy guy who's out there working on the brand and the people part of the business, whether that be the internal or external customer," Edwards says. "Frank has always been the bean counter and more on the business side. We complement each other."

200 EMPLOYEES

With relationship building as a major pillar of Color Burst, it's no wonder the company has managed to grow its employee base from 20 to more than 200.

"We've tried to develop within, so people have a path," Edwards says, adding that someone who ran

a mower last season may now be managing a team of up to eight people.

PATH FINDER
Color Burst aims
to help employees
chart their course at
work and at home.

To help set the course for employees, Color Burst provides optional life skills classes for employees. Topics have included how to create a home budget, how to create a will, how to pass a driving exam and more. The classes are held after-hours for about an hour, and employees are invited to bring their spouses.

"It's important to offer something that somebody might need but doesn't know where to get," Edwards says. "We've also tried to create unique benefits—things that are attractive to employees besides just the pay."

These benefits include the use of a credit union, life insurance, regular crew picnics and barbecues, holiday parties and more. The company also ensures every operations manager carries a cooler in his truck, stocked with cold drinks.

"Even that extra step of carrying beverages for the folks when they're hot and sweaty and working hard is appreciated," Edwards says.

1,200% GROWTH

To account for growing by \$12 million in 14 years, Edwards once again credits Color Burst's emphasis on relationships and branding.

For example, Color Burst has cultivated relationships with many local landscapers, who rely on the company to provide flowers on their accounts.

"They may want us to do it because of the brilliant displays that we're known for," Edwards says.

Of course, the company has not been without its challenges—particularly with labor and building systems. As the company quickly began to expand, it became clear that vital aspects were missing, such as an employee handbook.

Color Burst streamlined its systems by practicing open-book management—the company's entire management staff sees the full profit-and-loss statement—and incorporating software, such as LMN. And, of course, by developing an employee handbook.

With these practices in place, the company continually strives to both grow and be an ideal place to work.

When asked about long-term growth goals, Edwards is hesitant to predict what the future holds.

"Nashville is booming right now, but I don't think it can sustain that," Edwards says. "I think we'll still be in great shape, but things may slow down a bit. I err on the side of caution."

He adds, "I think we make small plans, take it off in small bites and see where God takes us." ■



Wonders of water

Suppliers share the ins and outs of popular types of water features.

BY SARAH WEBB

The outdoor living boom has created demand for water features to swell in recent years.

“People are drawn to water and naturally enjoy sitting by and listening to it,” says Demi Fortuna, director of product information at Atlantic Water Gardens, a water feature manufacturer based in Mantua, Ohio.

Water features can be a smart add-on for many landscape contractors. There are several types—even some that integrate extras, such as LED lighting and app-controlled settings.

“Offering water features is a great way to differentiate yourself from the competition,” says Jennifer Zuri, marketing communications manager at Aquascape, the St. Charles, Ill.-based manufacturer of water features, water gardens and ecosystem ponds.

We talked with three water feature suppliers—Kip Northrup, owner and president at Blue Thumb, based in Saginaw, Mich.; Fortuna; and Zuri—to get the scoop on the types of water features available.

FOUNTAIN

Definition: An ornamental structure that’s supported by an underground basin reservoir structure that holds water and a recirculating pump. The ornamental piece sits on top of the basin reservoir system and can be made from a variety of materials, such as stone, metal, concrete or resin.

Installation difficulty: Easy.

Installation time: Two to six man-hours.

Maintenance: Fill evaporated water loss, which can be accomplished through a garden hose or automatic fill valve. In colder areas, contractors can winterize by removing the pump.

Price tag: \$300-\$500 retail; \$1,500-\$2,000 installed.

Popularity: High.

Target customer: Mix, heavily residential.

Water feature wisdom: Avoid implementing sump pumps from big box stores; they’re designed for intermittent duty and don’t last as long.



“I encourage contractors to put a fountain on every project because (they) don’t break the budget of the overall project.” —KIP NORTHRUP

NEWSPEED

VECTORWORKS SOFTWARE

Vectorworks, a global design and BIM software solutions provider, released the 2019 ver-

sions of Vectorworks Architect, Landmark, Spotlight, Fundamentals and Designer, as well as Braceworks and

Vision. The release offers innovations and enhancements to improve the 3D and BIM modeling, 2D documentation and presentation workflows, said the company.

NEW HOLLAND SUPER BOOM

New Holland Construction rolled out its new C245 Super Boom compact track loader. The machine offers a rated operating capacity of 4,500 pounds, a

breakout force of 9,188 pounds and up to 40 gallons per minute of hydraulic flow with the high-flow option. The design provides long forward dump reach and fast cycle times.

PHOTO: BLUE THUMB



“Profitability is very high. The wall itself is already a high-ticket item. For a modest investment, you can add water to the wall.” —DEMI FORTUNA

FORMAL SPILLWAY

Definition: A stainless steel or metal spillway or spout fits into a newly constructed or existing wall. Water flows from the visible spout or spillway through a narrow half-inch lip. A basin collects the water at the bottom of the wall, and a pump recirculates it.

Installation difficulty: Easy to moderate.

Installation time: Three to six man-hours.

Maintenance: Clean off debris that falls into the basin. Insert a monthly bacterial application to keep water fresh. Contractors can winterize by removing the pump.

Price tag: \$1,000 retail; \$2,500 installed (excluding price of wall).

Popularity: Moderate.

Target customer: Mix, heavily commercial.

Water feature wisdom: These features can be installed in outdoor living areas, as well as pools.

POND-FREE WATER FEATURE

Definition: A waterfall and stream dump down into a bed of gravel with a system underneath that recirculates the water. No opportunity for fish, limited opportunity for plants.

Installation difficulty: Moderate.

Installation time: 15 to 20 man-hours.

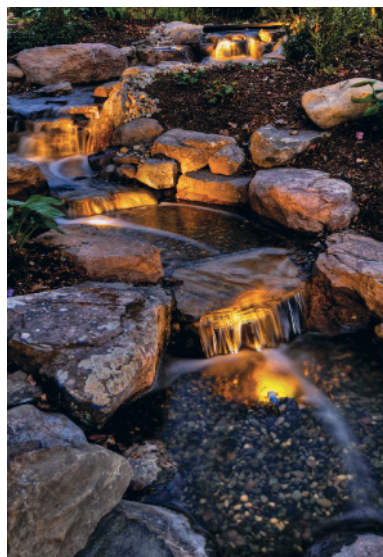
Maintenance: Refill evaporated water. Input algacide, as needed.

Price tag: \$1,000 retail; \$3,500-\$6,000 installed.

Popularity: Moderately high.

Target customer: Mix.

Water feature wisdom: Machinery is something to consider with any of these jobs, since many involve moving multiple-ton boulders.



“You still get the sights and sounds of a water feature without the maintenance and upkeep of a pond.”

—KN

“In many ways, (ponds) are more charming than other water features because of the biology involved.” —DF

POND

Definition: An open body of water that's naturally balanced. Incorporates fish, aquatic plants, waterfall and mechanical skimmer.

Installation difficulty: Difficult.

Installation time: 30 man-hours.

Maintenance: Fill evaporated water; add water treatments weekly, clean out skimmer box.

Price tag: \$1,000 retail; \$5,000-\$6,000 installed.

Popularity: Low to moderate.

Target customer: Residential.

Water feature wisdom: Locate the waterfall and skimmer on opposite sides of the pond. Consider permits and potential support structures that lie beneath the pond, as the depression of the pond may be steep or stepped. 🏠



IRRIGATION+WATER MANAGEMENT

The irrigation arsenal

These tools and accessories can help irrigation contractors get their jobs done quickly and efficiently. **BY EMILY SCHAPPACHER**

Every industry has an array of gadgets that aim to save time and labor, and the irrigation industry is no exception. There are many tools and accessories contractors can add to their arsenals to get the job done quickly and keep their clients' systems running efficiently. Irrigation contractors and industry experts share some of their favorite items that contractors should have on hand.

"New tools and accessories can help contractors be more efficient, reducing their time and efforts," says Paul Donofrio, owner of Outdoor Water Solutions in Sarasota, Fla. "This ultimately reduces their costs and makes their businesses more profitable."



PRESSURE GAUGE WITH ADAPTERS

One basic tool that irrigation contractors should use is a pressure gauge and the adapters to go with it, says Jeffrey Knight, director of learning and development for Ewing Irrigation & Landscape Supply, headquartered in Phoenix.

"I would think this is something most contractors know and have," he says. "But when I

am out in the field doing repairs with them, very few seem to have pressure gauges with the necessary adapters."

Pressure gauges are used to diagnose pressure problems in an irrigation system and help contractors isolate pressure restrictions. They also can be used to determine if the static pressure at the property is sufficient for the irrigation system before it's installed. There are a number of adapters—such as a hose thread adapter, a Pitot tube and a sprinkler tee adapter—that contractors can use to perform more specific

pressure testing. Pressure gauges and adapters cost around \$50, Knight says.

"This tool is important because one of the biggest components that ensures the functionality of a sprinkler system is proper pressure," he says. "A 15-foot sprayhead only sprays 15 feet at a certain pressure, so you have to make sure it's accurate."

MULTIMETER

"Irrigation contractors need a good multimeter, and they need to know how to use it," says John Taylor, president of Taylor Irrigation Services in Houston, a \$1.3-million company that provides 80 percent irrigation, 15 percent drainage and 10 percent lighting services to a 90 percent residential, 10 percent commercial clientele.

A multimeter can be used to test and diagnose all the electrical components of an irrigation system, including the power source, the transformer, zone connection ports or modules, wires and solenoids. It also can help contractors diagnose electrical issues, such as loss of power, dead modules, shorts, cut wires and bad connections. Basic multimeters can cost from \$20 to \$40, while higher-end units that can be used on two-wire jobs can cost from \$200 to \$300.

"Frankly speaking, a contractor who is good with this tool could make a living with it alone given the volume of electrical problems out there and the fact that many contractors bypass finding the source of electrical problems and instead suggest a client run new wire," Taylor says. "This is a disservice to the client and prevents many contractors from learning a skill that makes them very valuable, not to mention profitable."



NEWSFEED

JAIN ACQUIRES ETWATER

Jain Irrigation acquired ETwater. Terms of the deal were not disclosed. The transaction

will close shortly after certain customary conditions are met. Richard Restuccia will lead the team.

K-RAIN UNVEILS CONTROLLER

K-Rain Manufacturing released the Pro-LC irrigation controller. Features of the controller include a full-program display that highlights watering days, number

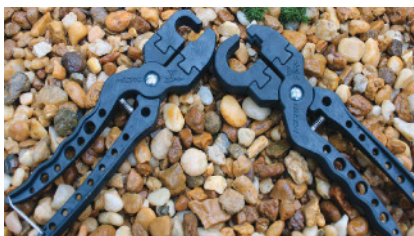
of start days, number of stations and any special programming; permanent memory, which saves program settings during power outages; a valve locate feature that aids in

locating buried valves; short circuit protection, which identifies and isolates stations while the remaining program continues; and rain/freeze sensor compatibility.

STATION MASTER

Another tool Taylor suggests is a station master, which is essentially a multimeter focused specifically on low-voltage irrigation that takes the guesswork out of troubleshooting electrical issues. Taylor says this tool is not as robust as a multimeter but does most of the same work. He advises contractors to also purchase a toning wand, which helps make sense of messy wires. Since most station masters do not come with a grounding rod, Taylor buys a small gauge steel rod from a big box store, cuts it into nine-inch pieces and then bends the last few inches of one end to make a mini grounding rod that fits in the pouch that the station master comes in. Contractors can expect to spend between \$100 and \$200 for a station master, which can be purchased with or without the toning wand.

“When toning wires, the grounding rod is a lifesaver on the job site,” Taylor says. “Electrical troubleshooting can be intimidating if you are not familiar with the base components, but learning to use this tool will make you a real pro and allow you to make some money while providing additional value to your client.”



MICRO-ZIPP

In addition to being an irrigation contractor, Donofrio is also the inventor of the Micro-Zipp, a handheld device

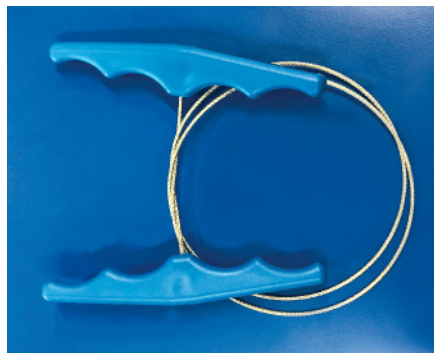
that allows technicians to quickly and easily insert drip emitters and barbs into a variety of polytubing. Unique to microirrigation installation, the tool inserts emitters directly into standard 0.5-, 0.75- and 1-inch polytubing in one step. Often, irrigation technicians have to prepunch holes into the polytubing with screw drivers or other sharp objects, which can be an unsafe, time-consuming task. For large installations, contractors also may experience hand soreness and fatigue. The Micro-Zipp handles cost from \$20 to \$25 and each individual Zipp socket costs around \$4.

“I was inspired to invent the Micro-Zipp through necessity,” says Donofrio, whose company provides 70 percent irrigation system maintenance and 30 percent installation services to a

half residential, half commercial clientele. “Having worked in the irrigation industry for 15 years, I felt there had to be a better, more efficient method to install drip emitters and barbs into polytubing.”

CABLE SAW

Knight says a cable saw is another useful tool always found in his bag. A cable saw is a thin cable with handles on either end that can be used to cut PVC pipe



by sliding it back and forth. It's especially helpful in tight spaces where contractors don't have enough room to work with a traditional saw or pipe cutter. Cable saws can also save contractors time by allowing them to work in the right area without creating a larger area to work in, which, in some cases, means removing concrete or other hardscapes. Knight says these inexpensive tools can cost as little as \$5.

“When contractors are in tight spots, or the piping or valve they're trying to fix is in concrete, a cable saw allows them to cut pipe,” Knight says. “While a pipe cutter is best, sometimes you aren't afforded that much room to work.”

FITTING SAVER

Knight also recommends a fitting saver, which removes pipe from glued joints so a new pipe can be inserted. A fitting saver saves fittings that would otherwise be unusable when a pipe breaks inside them. The accessory fits on most portable electric drills and comes in 0.5-, 0.75- and 1-inch sizes. Being able to save and reuse fittings allows contractors to do repairs a lot faster. Fitting savers cost around \$65 each.

“Sometimes you have a cut or a break where the pipe is solvent welded inside of a fitting,” Knight says. “The fitting saver goes on a drill bit, so contractors can drill the piece of pipe out of the fitting and use it again. If you can't save the fitting, you have to cut the whole thing out and reassemble the valve manifold, which takes a lot of time and labor.”



Schappacher is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.

GROWTH MINDSET

BY MARISA PALMIERI | LM EDITOR

Last year Marty Grunder learned he was holding his company back. Here's what he's doing to change.

Marty Grunder is a lot like many of you. He started his landscape business as a teenager with a used mower. His company's top challenge is hiring and retaining employees. He's a family man above all else. And he's made some missteps along the way.

What's unique about Grunder, though, is his self-awareness and his willingness to learn, accept feedback and act on it, which can be tough for a successful, hardheaded entrepreneur.

His growth mindset goes back to his childhood, he says. His mother, a teacher, and his father, a civil engineer, always wanted their kids to push themselves.

"They would never tell us no about anything related to work or making ourselves better," Grunder says, which is how he came to use his father's tractor to mow the neighbor's yard for \$10 and eventually start Grunder Landscaping Co. (GLC) in 1984.

He tells the story of introducing himself in 1989 to landscape industry icon Frank Mariani, CEO of Mariani Landscape in Chicago—a gutsy move for a 21-year-old.





“His operation was about 10 minutes from my (future) in-laws,” says Grunder. “I read about him in one of the trade journals and went over to see him when I was up there. I remember looking at that company and thinking, ‘I’m never going to catch Frank, but I’m going to keep chasing.’”

Mariani has been his mentor ever since.

Grunder is an avid reader of business books—he’s even written one himself—and he’s not ashamed to say he’s met with a counselor to sort things out after tough times in his life. He’s always focused on getting better.

That’s why it’s no surprise that he seized an unexpected opportunity to improve his company when it presented itself in 2017 at GROW!, the annual conference he runs as part of his landscape industry consulting firm.

That year’s conference drew about 300 attendees to Dayton, Ohio, and featured a tour of GLC and an auction to raise money for the National Association of Landscape Professionals’ Industry Growth Initiative.

Up for auction were two-day sessions attendees could bid on to win a visit with Grunder or with so-called “industry giants,” including Mariani; Mike Rorie, board member of GroundSystems; Todd Pugh, CEO of Enviroscares; and Jim McCutcheon, CEO of HighGrove Partners.

When the Grunder session came up for bid, Mariani—having toured the Grunder facility and recognizing some untapped potential—raised his hand. “I thought, ‘What the hell is he doing buying me?’” says Grunder, who was unclear at that moment that Mariani was turning the tables on him. “Then Frank grabs the mic and in front of everyone says, ‘Marty,

Continued on page 28

BUSINESS BREAKDOWN

COMPANY: Grunder Landscaping Co.

HEADQUARTERS: Miamisburg, Ohio

FOUNDED: 1984

REVENUE: \$5.5 million (2018 projected); \$5.3 million (2017)

SERVICE MIX: 33% landscape maintenance (LandKeeping); 66% design/build + installation; 1% snow + ice management

CLIENT MIX: 13% commercial; 85% residential; 2% government/municipal

“IF YOU FIND OUT THAT YOU COULD DO BETTER THAN WHAT YOU’RE DOING, NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE, WHY WOULD YOU NOT TRY TO DO THAT?”

—MARTY GRUNDER, PRESIDENT AND CEO, GRUNDER LANDSCAPING CO.

Continued from page 27

‘industry giants’ Todd Pugh, Mike Rorie, Jim McCutcheon and myself are going to bid \$5,000, and the four of us are coming to see you and show you how to take your company to another level. You’re doing great things, but you can do a lot more.”

On Dec. 21, 2017, Mariani, Rorie, Pugh and McCutcheon returned to GLC. “We showed them everything in the company,” Grunder says. “And those four men showed me how I was stifling growth. We had the infrastructure to do a lot more than \$5.5 million to \$6 million, and I needed to get out of the way.”

HOW GRUNDER GOT HERE

Grunder was raised in Dayton, Ohio, on a gentleman’s farm with horses, a dog, an orchard, a lot of grass to cut and the equipment to do it with.

“I was always enthralled with equipment,” Grunder says. “When dad said I could use our tractor to mow the neighbor’s lawn and they would pay me \$10, I thought, ‘This is great.’”

At age 16, he founded Grunder Landscaping Co. with his brother, Rich (who is no longer involved in the business), to fund his tuition at the University of Dayton.

By his senior year at UD, the company grossed \$400,000. Grunder was

paying for school and had money in his savings account, but he also experienced uncertainty about his future, as he saw his business school buddies earning sign-on bonuses and buying suits and cars, while he wore grassy boots and drove a pickup truck. Always seeking counsel, he went to a local entrepreneur asking if he should get out of the landscape business.

“He looked at me and said, ‘Are you kidding me? Do not quit this business yet. You are so close to being very successful—don’t give up,’” Grunder recalls. “He was right. Within a couple of years, we did

Continued on page 30



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\$800,000 in business, and I made a lot of money for a 24-year-old kid. I put money down on the property that's still our location today."

Though GLC had some early success, it hasn't always been easy.

In 2000, Grunder's life changed when his father died unexpectedly.

"I was 32," he says. "That was a wake-up call for me. Anybody can be gone anytime."

As a result, Grunder doubled down on his dreams and focused on being the father, husband and leader he wanted to be. To reach his goals, his business became more sophisticated, operating with budgets and adding processes. He became involved with Dayton-based Aileron, formerly known as the Center for Entrepreneurial Education. He attended the "Course for Presidents" there, among other training opportunities.

PEER PANEL

Marty Grunder's peers helped guide his firm to a new structure. From left: Frank Mariani, Grunder, Mike Rorie and Todd Pugh.

"Prior to that time, we hustled, tried to sell everything and worked hard to get it done," he says. "We didn't have near the systems and procedures we have today that have enabled us to scale and grow."

Grunder also grew his consulting firm during the early 2000s and wrote a book, "The 9 Super Simple Steps to Entrepreneurial Success," which is dedicated to his dad.

"Losing my father like that without having a chance to say goodbye was a difficult experience, but like a lot of things that are difficult, you end up

learning a lot. The lessons I've learned from that have made me a better person and a better business person."

Grunder learned another tough lesson in the mid-2000s when he decided to part ways with his cousin, a minority partner in Grunder Landscaping Co. It resulted in a lawsuit that lasted for two years. Grunder knows now he was in a predicament common among entrepreneurs—they fear upsetting one person rather than doing what's best for everyone.



PHOTO: GRUNDER LANDSCAPING CO.

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He knew his partner wasn't getting the job done for several years before he had the courage to let him go.

"That whole experience has made me a better leader and coach," he says. "When you hire someone, you have to be very clear

with expectations and career paths, and if they're not cutting it, you have to do what's best for the whole team."

Grunder calls that move one of the biggest turning points in his business.

"Once we made that change, I was able to move people in the places they needed to be in," he says.

The company clipped along for more than a decade of steady growth. Being the biggest company was never a priority. Grunder is a proponent of the "small giants" concept—an idea he picked up from the book "Small Giants: Companies That Choose to Be Great Instead of Big" by Bo Burlingham.

"So many people get caught up in the size of your company," he says. "We're more worried about being the best, and we're proof that you can have a smaller company, make a great living and impact a lot of lives."

'GIANT' WAKE-UP CALL

The pursuit of being the best is what convinced Grunder that Mariani's crazy idea to bring the "industry giants" to GLC to offer feedback was more than worth doing.

"If you can imagine Frank, Mike, Jim and Todd doing a tour of our operation, I couldn't argue with them," Grunder says, noting their companies combine for around \$120 million in revenue and decades of experience.

It was humbling and eye-opening to hear their advice, Grunder says. The feedback centered on his role in the business, the bottlenecks

it created and how it was holding the company back.

"Mike, Todd, Frank and Jim told me the structure we had wasn't conducive to growth, that I had my hands in too many things and if I would let go of some of this stuff and get in the lane where I have strengths,

WEB EXTRA

Building a board of directors is one of the top pieces of advice Marty Grunder offers other landscape contractors, and it's been a game-changer for Grunder Landscaping Co. Learn more about Grunder's advice for building a board in the Web Extras section at LandscapeManagement.net.

there's an opportunity for us to double or triple the size of the company," he says. "That got my attention."

As he mulled over the suggestions with his longtime Vice President of Operations Paul Stoll and Seth Pflum,

Continued on page 33



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What's your background?

After my husband, Colin O'Neill, developed a rare form of cancer and died in April 2016, I was determined to continue to promote his company and his philosophies. I accepted his partner's offer to come into the business and be the chief strategic officer. My partner Ryan Foudray—Colin's biggest fan—said, 'I would love to start a scholarship in Colin's name if you think that would be the right thing to do.' We started "The Colin O'Neill Scholarship" through the Department of Horticulture at the University of Minnesota in 2016, and we are just awarding it for the first time this year. It's exciting for us.

What advice do you have for women in the landscape industry?

Horticultural science is amazing and is perhaps one of the most important areas of science because it's the health of the planet. In the landscape industry, a huge barrier has historically been physical strength, but with equipment as it is today, that barrier is removed. Brain power is much more important to lawn and landscape innovation than it has been in the past. We will see women entering this field in greater numbers.

Who is your hero?

Colin. He lived the way he wanted to live and left this world on his own terms. In doing so, he gave me an incredible gift. It was a hard one to receive, but it was nonetheless quite amazing. He worked very hard, but he always made time to play. He was a kind and patient man who loved life and did a lot of good in this world.

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Continued from page 31

his then-production manager, he saw no logical reason not to make the recommended changes to the company's structure to position it to scale up.

"It made so much sense once the picture was painted for me by these gentlemen," Grunder says. "If you find out that you could do better than what you're doing, no matter where you are, why would you not try to do that?"

Based on their advice, less than two weeks later, he promoted Pflum to general manager and instated a five-person leadership team.

It includes Pflum at the helm as general manager; Stoll, now director

of LandKeeping; Amber Fox, director of human resources; Michael Ericson, director of financial operations; and Dalton Yates, director of design/build.

Pflum was a natural choice for general manager, Grunder says, noting he's young, hungry and detail-oriented. He joined Grunder Landscaping Co. about six years ago after moving to Dayton from Indiana. The "industry giants" also unanimously thought Pflum was the right person for the job.

It's nine months into the new structure, and the reorganization is

Continued on page 34

TRAINING = CULTURE

If you stop by Grunder Landscaping Co. on a Tuesday at 8 a.m. and wonder why the trucks are still in the lot, it's because the team is training.

"You have to be deliberate about training if it means something to you," says Grunder Landscaping Co. President and CEO Marty Grunder. The past three years, the company has shut down for an hour on Tuesday mornings while managers instruct team leaders on a new concept or an important fundamental. "We've always done training, but not like we do now. We're constantly investing in our people, helping them get better and learn new or better ways to do things."

Like many landscape companies across the country, Grunder Landscaping Co.'s top challenge is finding and keeping good workers.

"The best way to get new people and retain people is to make your company a great place to work," Grunder says. "We work very hard on the elements of keeping people engaged, sharing information and showing them a career path."

Now that Grunder has moved into the chairman role, he calls "culture keeping" his primary responsibility. Increased training is just one way Grunder Landscaping Co. is enhancing company culture.

"What company would you rather work for, the one that trains or the one that doesn't?" Grunder asks, rhetorically. "What company would you rather have your 18-year-old son work for? The one that's safe or the one that isn't?"



TRAINING DAY
Grunder Landscaping Co. trains team members every Tuesday to keep employees engaged and quality high.

PHOTO: GRUNDER LANDSCAPING CO.



Continued from page 33

going well. It has allowed Grunder to focus on the company's long-term strategy and do what he does best—networking, selling and overseeing the company culture.

Pflum, who reports to Grunder and is now responsible for the company's profit-and-loss performance, says the team already has accomplished a lot. They went from ground zero—devising a plan to roll out the changes to the team in January—to checking several major projects off their list.

"Marty and I are both perfectionists," Pflum says. "We're both driven but very different on how we're going to achieve that perfection, so I think that's why it's working so well."

In addition to leadership changes, Grunder Landscaping Co. is working towards implementing a paperless office and is adding key staff, including an experienced horticulturist. Technology and process improvements have been a big focus. Today,

TEAM EFFORT The Grunder Landscaping Co. leadership team, from left: Seth Pflum, general manager; Amber Fox, director of human resources; Paul Stoll, director of LandKeeping; Marty Grunder, president and CEO; Michael Ericson, director of financial operations; and Dalton Yates, director of design/build. "One thing I've learned from Marty about being a leader is you don't have to have all the answers," Pflum says. "There's not a problem with being honest about that and facilitating a team to jump in and help you when you don't."

the accounts receivable process is almost all digital, as are new hire packets and employee onboarding information. Accounts payable was at 10 days, and now it's down to three.

Long term—after the team eliminates duplicated efforts and is running efficiently in the new structure—the focus will turn to building a model that is scalable from a sales and production standpoint.

"We are getting very strategic about everything," Grunder says. "We're asking, 'What types of projects and work do we need?' For example, our goal is to grow our LandKeeping department 10 percent per year. That's where the most potential is in our business."

Part of what's making it a smooth transition is Grunder's support and

trust of the new leadership structure, Pflum says.

"It's reaffirming when we're making changes, and the whole team is accepting those because Marty is," Pflum says. "He's allowing us to do our jobs by supporting us and changing, as well."

Suffice it to say Grunder is energized about where the business is today, even if a year ago, he didn't know such a drastic change was on the horizon. "I'm very excited about the company," Grunder says. "I'm probably more excited than I was 30 years ago because I see how it all doesn't have to fall on me to get done. I have people who really want to take the ball and run with it." 📌

Starting this month, Marty Grunder brings his growth mindset and unique insights gleaned from being both a landscape professional and industry consultant to the pages of *LM*. See the debut of his new monthly column, "Grow with Grunder," on page 104.

COMPETE TO WIN

**OUR EXPERTS SHARE
STRATEGIES FOR PULLING AHEAD
AMID TOUGH COMPETITORS,
LARGE AND SMALL.**

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COMPETE BY

MEASURING YOUR TEAM'S STABILITY

BY JAMES CALI & JASON NEW



Every week we hear the same issue from our clients: “We can’t find team members.” Some questions come to mind when we hear this comment. Why can’t you find them? How can you be competitive if you can’t find them? How much time have you spent looking, or haven’t you? Where are you looking? Is this your top issue at the office?

When it comes to recruiting and human resources in general, we find second- and third-level management personnel at landscape industry firms are tasked with leading the charge. When things aren’t going the way we think they should, company leaders ask questions, provide advice—

and do nothing else. If the lawns were not being mowed or the pools were not being dug, we guarantee you would respond differently.

So where do you begin? The first step is acknowledging that a stable team is one of the most important goals to drive competitiveness, client satisfaction and your firm’s success. A stable team has low turnover, prioritizes training and allows friendships among teammates and with clients to flourish.

You likely already measure hours, sales and profitability. Do you measure your team’s stability? Few companies do. If a stable team is key to your relationship-driven firm’s success, then you must measure it.

To cultivate stable teams, we recommend our clients measure the following areas.

TEAM MEMBER TURNOVER RATE

The first indicator, team member turnover rate, is easy to measure and manage. To measure the rate, you need to know the following numbers monthly: how many team

members (you included) you have at the beginning of the month, how many you have at the end of the month and how many have been dismissed during the month.

“Dismissed” includes anyone who has left the company, whether he or she was fired, quit, moved, retired, etc. Take the number of team members dismissed and divide it by the month’s average number of team members (beginning of month team members plus end of month team members divided by two). That number multiplied by 100 will equal your monthly turnover rate.

Once you have your turnover rate, what do you compare it to? In the professional green industry, we’ve seen this rate as high as 65 percent and as low as 5 percent. In our experience, the best firms with net profits over 10 percent average a 14 percent team member turnover rate. Average firms with net profits of 4 percent average a 35 percent team member turnover rate.

TEAM MEMBER REFERRAL RATE

Your team member referral rate reveals the percentage of current team members who are employed by your firm because another team member recommended them. Simply divide the count of referred employees by the average number of team members for that month. Multiply it by 100 to get your referral rate.

Once you have your referral rate, what do you compare it to? We have seen this rate as high as 50 percent and as low as 5 percent. The best professional green industry firms with net profits over 10 percent average an 18 percent referral rate. Firms with net profits of 4 percent average a 6 percent

**THE BEST FIRMS
WITH NET PROFITS
OVER 10 PERCENT
AVERAGE A
14 PERCENT
TEAM MEMBER
TURNOVER RATE.**

referral rate. Your goal should be 50 percent or more.

In our experience, referred team members are ones who are happy to be there and learn what to do. Also, we know that team members refer family and friends they like and not people who may cause us problems, so a natural selection process has already taken place.

Consider referral reward programs for your team members and base it on the longevity of stay. Once a team member is on board for six months, the likelihood of him or her remaining a team member is high, and it gets even higher at one year. Consider a referral bonus at the point of hire, another at six months and another at a year if the employee remains at those milestones. Don't make it complicated. Do make it lucrative. One option to consider is \$100 at the point of hire, \$200 at six months and \$300 at a year—all net of tax.

LONGEVITY

Finally, we recommend our clients measure longevity. Add everyone who has been with your firm longer than a year to a marker board or spreadsheet displayed on a TV screen.

Remember, no one is going to celebrate a company anniversary but you. Birthdays are great, but you're not the only one to have that covered. That's why we practice and ask our clients to measure company anniversaries. Call attention to the anniversary dates for your team members by posting pictures in the break room or publishing them in the company newsletter. Provide rewards for certain milestones like five, 10, 15 years and so on—and make it a big deal. As we mentioned earlier, we are in the relationship business. Making sure you retain your team members is important, and recognizing anniversaries will result in increased longevity for your team.

Suggestions for longevity rewards include an extra day off that year, the milestone year times \$100, a watch or a new work vehicle. Whatever you choose, be consistent with this recognition, and it will build your culture and ultimately pay dividends.

To sum it up, we encourage you to start measuring your team's stability and use the measurements we described as a starting point. These three indicators are a direct reflection of your team's stability, your culture and you. If you make it a priority to improve your turnover rate, referrals and longevity, you will create the momentum needed to take your firm to the next level and be competitive. Add these metrics your management dashboard today. Remember, you can't manage what you don't measure. 

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COMPETE BY

BUILDING A COMMITTED TEAM

BY ROBERT CLINKENBEARD

Most people think of golf when they think of a sport in Scotland. As a kid growing up in Edinburgh, it was the grass rugby pitch that defined my lifelong appreciation for resilience.

Over years of debate about which football game is tougher, runs faster or plays harder, I'm here to tell you, rugby is totally hard core.

From Sunday leagues to premier divisions, playing rugby taught me three things I practice every day: 1). there's no whining on the field of play; 2). if you stay patient and keep your head in the game, you'll succeed; and 3). there's no padding in the real world. Rugby is

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the original school of hard knocks—you've got to make and take the hits before pivoting to the next play.

The current market we're in reminds me of my competitive days, especially when my team had been promoted into the premier league and we were facing bigger, more formidable players—the “big boys”—with better funding and better training.

During the preseason, players were stressed and worried about being destroyed by more impressive teams. We knew we didn't have to be physically tougher, we just had to be smarter. Our mindset sucked. We forgot that the game is thrilling and beautiful and the best sport in the world. And we forgot, for a minute, that we knew we could go out onto the field and play like a beast. When we changed our attitude, we changed our game.

The overall problem my coach and teammates had to overcome was a lack of confidence. Even though our team had dominated last season's league and won the majority of our matches, there was a look of fear in most of the players' eyes—which the coach didn't immediately recognize. It was only after two convincing defeats in preseason games that the coach quickly realized that he had a mindset problem on his hands and we had to regroup.

What I quickly realized during that period was that, even though we were at peak fitness, unless we had a solid strategy to reboot our confidence, our team was not going to measure up. What I saw next was my coach transforming into a leader as he moved his focus away from pure fitness to work with our team on the following three areas—each of which works equally well in business.

● **Strategy.** This area does not only need to be formulated for the whole season but also going into each game. The coach developed a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of each team to detail where we had blind spots and what plays we could use to take advantage of our opponents' weaknesses.

● **Discipline.** This focus is essential as you start to roll out your strategy. Attendance at training sessions and briefings, communication among teammates and working to improve weak links are all areas where discipline is needed.

● **Execution.** This is game time. Have the strategy plan, the endless training, the continuous communication and motivational speeches been enough to give your larger opponents a run for their money?

All three, plus a little luck, are needed to compete at the highest level and come away with a fair share of the rewards, while keeping motivation high and the team spirit intact.

LEARN TO BEND, NOT BREAK

Many business owners and CEOs complain about other companies or get intimidated by what they imagine the bigger companies have that they don't. Many run scared, make poor strategy decisions, opt for short-term defensive positions or get paralyzed and make no decision at all. Suddenly, fear is rife throughout the company and performance withers. In the workplace or in a scrum, one person being in a negative mindset affects everyone.

A culture of positivity starts at the top. Every team needs a captain—someone to call the plays and encourage the team to victory, or as we say in rugby, learn to bend, not break.

As captains of businesses, leaders need to inspire their employees with a winning strategy and then build a robust framework around discipline and accountability to ensure success.

When employees are hesitant or lack confidence, whether selling big jobs, working important leads, taking on new business or new roles, company leaders can help them overcome their attitude obstacles by reminding them that in a team it takes 15 players to score and every player knows how to play all 14 positions. No one goes into the play alone.

In rugby, players must play all 80 minutes of the game and push through. Your team must be committed to the whole game. It's easy to get intimidated by the reputation of a rougher team or a bigger business or going face to face with another player who is twice your size. I encourage you not to bury your head in the sand, fold under pressure or go into reactive mode. Setbacks are inevitable, but with the right attitude, they can be a driver of innovative new ways to win.

As I say in my coaching business, “Everything you want is on the other side of fear.” Carve out your own reason for winning, focus on the biggest opportunity in front of you and do the one thing you do insanely well and then do it better. 🏉

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COMPETE BY

ENGAGING YOUR EMPLOYEES

BY PHIL HARWOOD

They say competition brings out the best in people. Is that true? In my experience, it's not. There are other factors at play. If you want to compete to win, you should understand these factors.

First and foremost, it's important to recognize that people who are highly engaged in their employment situations are more likely to be interested or motivated to compete to win. Those who are less engaged may not really care much and aren't all that interested in putting forth extra effort to help the company compete to win. Those who are disengaged may even sabotage or undermine efforts to compete to win out of bitterness, anger or apathy.

It would be ridiculous to assume everyone on your team is highly engaged. Some may be, but others most likely are not. Do you have a good sense of the engagement level of your people?

According to a 2018 report by Gallup, 70 percent of American workers are not engaged. Does that surprise you? The report also states that only 29 percent of frontline managers are engaged, and, even more surprisingly, only 45 percent of executive managers are engaged. This lack of engagement among managers creates a cascade effect throughout the organization. If the leaders aren't engaged, why would anyone else be?

Employee engagement is a primary factor affecting success in a competitive environment. There are endless examples from every walk of life that illustrate the power of a team that is unified, committed to each other and fully engaged. Can you name a single member of the 2015 Kansas City Royals team that won the World Series? Most people can't. That was not a team of future Hall of Famers. Rather, it was a team of unmemorable players who unselfishly worked together as a team to win it all. As they say, "The best team wins."

One way to measure employee engagement is by using an online assessment tool from Gallup called Q12. This tool measures engagement in 12 areas, giving management insight into what needs attention. A best practice is to establish a baseline measurement and then compare future measurements to monitor progress.

One of the 12 areas of the assessment has to do with professional development. Gallup data show that a lack of development and career growth is the No. 1 reason employees leave a job. With today's labor shortage, it

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THE PEOPLE WHO ARE HIGHLY ENGAGED IN THEIR EMPLOYMENT ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE MOTIVATED OR INTERESTED TO COMPETE TO WIN.



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has never been more important to invest in professional development. When people are being invested in, learning and growing, they are more likely to be engaged. They are more satisfied, less likely to be recruited away and more likely to care about the company's competitive position and ability to win in the marketplace. Of course, the opposite is true, as well. What are you doing to promote deeper engagement levels among your people?

DIFFERENT STROKES

Another factor in play is that not everyone is wired the same way when it comes to competitiveness. It's likely that you have people on your team who represent each of the following types of individuals. Each category of person presents a challenge for leaders to elevate the engagement level. Understanding which category your people fit into is a good starting point.

The first type is the person who is highly competitive—the person who has to win at everything. To them, losing is never an option. A loss is the end of the world. They can't stomach seeing someone else being recognized for what should have been theirs. They don't just want to win, they have to win. Who do you know that falls into this category? Leaders of highly competitive people should be aware that competition sometimes brings out the worst in them. Find opportunities to use their competitive spirits to motivate and inspire others on the team.

The second type is the person who enjoys competition and winning but isn't upset by losing. They want to win, but losing is not the end of the world. As long as everyone gave his best effort and nobody got hurt, it's all good. They are just happy to be part of the team. My grandmother used to watch every Detroit Tigers game religiously. If they lost a game, she would inevitably proclaim, "You can't win 'em all." She never lost any sleep over a loss. Who do you know that falls into this category? Leaders of this second type of person should look for opportunities to link incentives and rewards to winning.

The third type of person is not at all competitive by nature. For them, life is not about winning; it's about building relationships, finding harmony, being kind and putting forth the best version of yourself each day. Who do you know that falls into this category? Leaders of this third type of person should look for ways to utilize them in support roles where their noncompetitive nature will not be an issue. Every company needs to have some solid role players.

It's a competitive environment, and engaged employees compete to win. How engaged are your people? 

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COMPETE BY MINING YOUR FINANCIALS

BY GREG HERRING

How can average companies compete against large companies and lowballers? That's the question.

Here's the short answer: They can't. Average companies are just that—they're average. Middle of the pack. Not special. Neither good nor bad. Just average.

Polls have shown that in America, the majority of people consider themselves above average—a mathematical impossibility.

If you are average, then competition will always be difficult.

Here's the question I will answer as a CFO: How can a landscape company thrive against large companies and lowballers? Another short answer: Treat your data as if it were gold.

In the landscape industry, we are fortunate to have software programs available that will collect and organize tremendous amounts of data.

Large companies must serve many types of customers and properties—or they could not be large. Even though they have software to help them identify the most profitable type of customers and properties, they are too big to focus on a limited segment of the market.

The lowballers do not understand their true costs,

which is why they are lowballers. They cannot afford to buy software, much less contract with the people who can find the gold in their data.

And between those two types of competition, there's a nice market where above average companies can dominate—if they have a plan to mine the gold in their data.

I ENCOURAGE
LANDSCAPE
COMPANIES TO PLAN
FOR 12 PERCENT
NET PROFIT MARGINS
AND SETTLE FOR
10 PERCENT.



Here are three reports that I use to find the gold. I encourage landscape companies to plan for 12 percent net profit margins and settle for 10 percent. My research proves it is possible, showing that the average landscape company's net profit margin is 5 percent, but some companies are above 10 percent. Net profit margin is a percentage calculated by subtracting all expenses, including depreciation and owner's salary, from revenue and dividing by revenue.

● **Division profitability.** Divisions may include construction, maintenance, enhancements, irrigation and snow. You can export this report from most software to Excel. It shows revenue and direct job costs for each division. Then you allocate all other costs to each division based on each division's estimated use of that cost. These costs include indirect job costs (e.g., fuel and repairs), sales and marketing costs and general and administrative costs (e.g., rent, office salaries). After these costs have been allocated, you can calculate the net profit and the net profit margin for each division. Be ready for some difficult discussions. I have seen many instances where one or two divisions show losses.

● **Portfolio analysis.** Each company has a portfolio of customers or jobs. You will need job cost software to perform this analysis. You can export the job cost report to Excel and then sort the data to make it easier to analyze. I generally sort the data from largest customer or job to smallest. I use Excel's conditional formatting to highlight customers or jobs where the gross margin is below average. Be sure to consider the proportion of your revenue that comes from small customers. It is difficult to be above average and serve both small and large customers. In performing your portfolio analysis, analyze construction and ongoing contract work separately.

● **Cross-selling/upselling analysis.** The least expensive and most profitable way to acquire more revenue is by

selling additional work to existing customers. For example, if your company does construction and maintenance, then every construction customer should become a maintenance customer. Which company is the best company to maintain the value and appearance of the customer's investment in a new landscape? Obviously, the company who built it. Would customers want to risk their investment with a lowballer?

Generally, I use data from the last 12 months so seasonality does not create issues.

These reports should generate a discussion of the following questions among the management team or key employees.

- Which division is most profitable? Why?
- Which division is least profitable? Why?
- How much can we improve the profitability of each division? In other words, what is our standard of profitability (gross and net margins) for each division?
- What actions do we need to take now to get the divisions closer to their profitability standards? (Do not try to do too much at once.)
- What characteristics do our most profitable customers or jobs share?
- What characteristics do our least profitable customers or jobs share?
- Considering those common characteristics, what do our ideal customer or job segments look like?
- What upselling or cross-selling opportunities do we have?
- How do we change our sales and marketing efforts based on the answers to the questions above?

There is great power in this combination of reports and spirited discussion among a team. Using the reports and discussions, the team can create a plan to dominate a segment of a market and enjoy a net profit margin well above average.

A CFO's job is to create and execute a plan for greater profitability. If you do not have someone who can mine the gold in your data, contract with a CFO so you can become or remain a company performing well above average. While owners are smart enough to do most of this work themselves, most owners did not start a landscape business to look for gold by digging in numbers. 

Herring has served as a CFO of both public and private companies. He is the CEO of The Herring Group, an operational and strategic finance consultancy that offers services such as "Path to 12%" and an annual "Landscape Industry Peer Benchmark Report." He has experience in the landscape industry, where he serves business owners challenged by growth by installing financial dashboards and systems that provide more margin for their businesses and their lives. Reach him at greg.herring@herring-group.com.

COMPETE BY

DELIVERING SUPERIOR SERVICE CONSISTENTLY

BY KEVIN KEHOE

How do I compete with these guys? This is a common question I hear from our clients. The concern behind the question is real. It's mostly expressed in terms of competing with contractors who may lowball their prices or when going head-to-head in bids with regional or national companies.

The simple answer is deliver a superior service experience consistently. It sounds cliché perhaps, but service is the competitive advantage. In fact, you could argue that high-service local companies already have a competitive advantage over regional or national companies and lowballers. Really? Certainly. That's why regional and national companies target these companies for acquisition and avoid the lowballers. They want these companies because they already have what they want and need: loyalty and repeat business.

THREE ELEMENTS OF SERVICE

Delivering a better customer experience and doing it consistently drives retention, loyalty and upsell business. Higher retention and upsell business increase profit margins. Higher profit margins provide the means necessary to attract better people and customers. Better people and customers are the building blocks of competitive advantage.

What are the building blocks of a superior customer experience? There are three.

● **Responsiveness**—the way you respond to problems and requests. Let's say a customer calls wanting the removal and replacement of some dead flowers. Is it clear who in the company handles this call? Is there a process for documenting the request? Is there a procedure for assigning ownership as well as a process for responding? Is there a management report that monitors the

responses and the response times? I pose these questions because high-service companies do these things as a matter of course. For these companies, service is more than a slogan. It's a system.

● **Delivery**—the way you do the work. To continue with our example, let's say the customer signs off on the proposal. The proposal clearly states the services promised and when the work might be completed. This service building block is like the first one in that it consists of an activity and a time attribute. The customer's experience always has a "what" and a "how fast" expectation. When you get the customer's go-ahead, is it clear who schedules the work and how it's communicated to the customer? Is there a process for providing the crew with all the information and means to do the work? And what if something changes the original schedule? When the work is done, who checks the quality and approves the work for billing? And how do you ensure the customer receives an accurate invoice? It's clear from these questions that it's the little things not done consistently that color the entire customer experience.



● **Anticipation**—the way you do something without being asked. This is the most challenging building block. Let's say the customer never had to call you in the first place to request replacement of the dead flowers. You called him instead. You not only called, but you provided a proposal and delivery date. To make this happen, who recognized the need in the first place? Then, like the customer response system, who delivered and monitored the process? This, too, is a system, and one that especially requires time, expertise and an investment in technology and people to execute it consistently at a price that is likely higher than the competition.

THREE SERVICE SOLUTIONS

● **Responsiveness solution**—issues management. This is a system married to technology that has the capability to capture and document a request with text and pictures, record the request date and location and automatically communicate it to the responsible person. That person can then link it to an estimate and proposal that's emailed to the customer and track it in a sales report. It allows the customer to sign and accept it electronically. That's a system that is both easy and fast for the customer.

● **Delivery solution**—integrated proposal/schedule/crew mobile management. This is a system and technology that produces a proposal from a request; communicates it to the scheduling, purchasing and the shop/yard people; and at the same time communicates job details with photos and documents to a crew. The crew uses the same technology to report job time and material for automatic payroll, job cost and invoicing, so the invoice arrives on time and accurately in the customer's email inbox to be paid online. This is a system that's convenient for the customer and good for the company's cash flow.

● **Anticipation solution**—site inspection management. This is a system with the technology to document a property review with text and photos, all linked to a geoproperty map for the customer's use for review and budgeting, which is then linked to proposal creation referenced in the other solutions. This is the beauty of systems and technology—the power of marrying service slogans with business processes integrated in such a way that the customer feels like you know what you are doing and that the left and right hands of your company are working in unison to make the customer's life easier.

This is how you compete. Invest in the people and technology to develop and manage the building blocks that create a competitive difference. Those who don't will have a hard time matching. 📌

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COMPETE BY

ASSESSING YOUR RECRUITS

BY MARK BORRASSO

People tend to feel strongly about issues that are relevant or personally meaningful to them, their lives and their unique circumstances. When appropriately channeled, these feelings can be inspirational and motivational to others.

In the workplace, though, a person's promotion and manifestation of strongly held beliefs can alienate other team members and cause friction. This tension is what Hayden McLaughlin proactively works to manage and reduce in his business. The owner of Belknap Landscape in Gilford, N.H., is continually on the lookout for unhealthy team dynamics that affect the strong internal culture he has tried for years to build and foster. As McLaughlin has discovered, this vigilance must begin well before a team member steps foot through the door for the first time.

One way the Belknap team identifies behavioral traits before bringing a candidate on the team is with a behavioral assessment. By requiring this assessment as part of the recruiting process, the company can determine which

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behavioral categories a prospective team member falls into. Belknap uses behavioral assessments during the recruiting process, and McLaughlin makes a point to revisit the results as often as needed during a team member's tenure with the business.

"If we understand why others behave the way they do, we can be more tolerant of perspectives that are different from our own," McLaughlin says.

Belknap uses the Activity Vector Analysis, but there are a wealth of options for businesses looking to implement a behavioral assessment tool. The most effective assessments determine where prospective recruits fall on the spectrum in five critical areas.

✓ **ASSERTIVENESS**

Assertive people willingly approach environments perceived as risky to reach goals. They tend to need to be directly confronted when situations arise, and subtlety does not work well. Communication with assertive people can pose a challenge because they often believe they possess authority and are highly motivated to have their points heard, acknowledged and addressed. Traits of assertiveness include impatience, self-centeredness, desire for change and fear of others taking advantage. While a degree of assertiveness is vital to every thriving team, leaving it unchecked can lead to issues down the line, as less assertive team members feel threatened or unheard. Still, some level of friction can be productive and even necessary.

✓ **SOCIABILITY**

Sociable people activate or approach environments perceived as favorable and involving others. Because sociable people are highly motivated to have others like them, they are apt to take it personally if they are excluded or not shown clear favor.

Although personable, sociable people may not always be forthright and truthful to win favor and please others. Capitalizing on a social person's enthusiasm is a good way to keep a conversation moving forward toward a specific, shared goal. Individuals with high sociability tend to be emotional, disorganized and strong collaborators, which can result in rich, innovative ideas that benefit the whole team. It's important to help sociable team members take decisions in stride.

✓ **CALMNESS**

People who are calm remain patient and avoid environments involving unexpected change. They balk at fast-paced, aggressive actions and prefer to take a deliberate, moderate approach toward achieving a goal. The calmest people tend to be constant and steady in their approach. Communicating with a calm person requires avoiding pressing issues and rushing conversations or discussions. Focusing on known data and facts helps communicating with someone calm. While typically slow to embrace change and fearful of loss or security, calm people tend to be highly loyal. Belknap boasts a healthy employee retention rate owing to its commitment to keeping things even keel, especially for team members who do not fall on the calm side of the spectrum. "We take the emotion out of meetings and other business discussions as much as possible," McLaughlin says.

✓ **CONFORMITY**

Conformists are chameleons who often go to great lengths to avoid standing out. These people avoid unfavorable environments that increase the risk of criticism. Conformists seek many explanations to make sense of a situation. While not particularly revolutionary in their thinking or their actions, conformists are sensitive and intuitive. They

ASSESSMENT RESOURCES

Here are five tried-and-true personality and behavioral assessments you can employ in your business to make better recruiting decisions.

Activity Vector Analysis (AVA) Behavioral Assessment:
AVA-assessment.com

International Personality Item Pool (IPIP-NEO) Test:
personal.psu.edu/~j5j/IPIP/

Kolbe Index: **Kolbe.com/assessments/**

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator:
MyersBriggs.org

Predictive Index Behavioral Assessment:
PredictiveIndex.com/behavior

also strive for accuracy, which makes them ideal candidates for technical or data-driven roles.

✓ **CONSCIOUS RESTRAINT**

The person who shows conscious restraint does things with rational, intentional and careful forethought and consideration of the consequences their actions have on themselves and others. Logical, linear thinking is a hallmark of this category. These people do their utmost to uphold principles, values and standards, making them powerful allies in maintaining a strong internal culture. McLaughlin says the culture of his business is so important that he's not willing to compromise on it.

As recruiting tools, behavioral assessments are becoming increasingly popular. One study estimates that at least 60 percent of major corporations use behavioral assessments as part of their decision-making process when hiring a candidate. The data from these assessments is invaluable for helping hiring managers determine where prospective team members fall on the behavior spectrum.

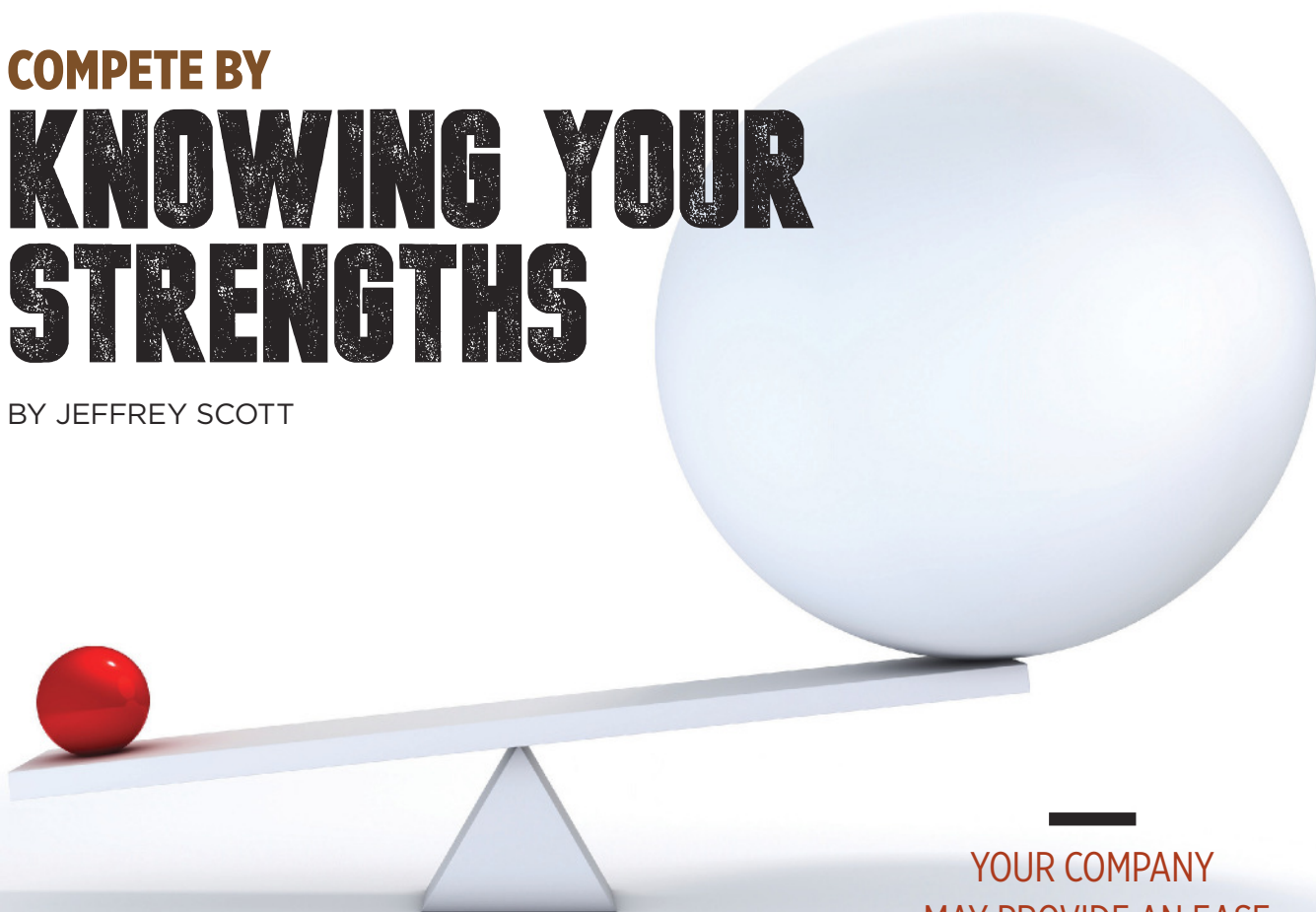
A behavioral assessment tool just might be the missing link that makes your team more competitive. 

Borrasso is a success coach with LandOpt. Reach him at mark.borrasso@landopt.com.

COMPETE BY

KNOWING YOUR STRENGTHS

BY JEFFREY SCOTT



If you're trying to compete with the big boys in commercial or residential, the following guidelines will help you.

COMMERCIAL

For commercial work, you need to be sensitive to how the large commercial management firms operate. They have a sophisticated approach to decision making. It's different from an owner/operator of a strip mall. You need to find out:

- At what level the enhancement jobs go out to bid;
- At what level the property manager can make his own decision without it being kicked up the ladder;
- How capital expenditures are handled differently from other small projects; and
- Whether they have different man-

agement and restoration strategies for their different properties.

A small or midsize firm should be able to compete against the big boys with a high level of proactive communication with clients and by providing consistency across properties—same account manager oversight, same level of detail. Also in your favor is likely a consistent labor pool, hopefully with less turnover, bringing a consistent level of quality. Your company also may provide an ease of doing business that the big boys are not able to give. Finally, you should use speed of turning around requests—if you are smaller, you are also more nimble—to your advantage.

On the other hand, be proactive when you sense you will get behind schedule, which may happen due to your size. The big boys may be able to

YOUR COMPANY
MAY PROVIDE AN EASE
OF DOING BUSINESS
THAT THE BIG BOYS ARE
NOT ABLE TO GIVE.

gear up more quickly after a late winter, for example. You need to get in front of that problem by starting the communication earlier in the season.

Having said all that, don't be overly concerned about the risk of bringing on new account managers to take your place as the owner. Your large clients will understand and value that move when you have a backup plan with competent people on their account supporting you and them.

Realize that the reason (besides pricing pressure) large clients change

Continued on page 46

Continued from page 45

out contractors from time to time is due to complacency and their properties getting stale. So let me ask you two sets of questions.

Have you gotten stale on how you take care of your clients? Do you take them for granted? Do you take the same approach every year, just because “it’s working?” If you do, then you’re in trouble, though you may not even know it yet. You are about to lose work to someone else, not because they’re better, but because they might be better.

Do you have a systematic way of reinvigorating your perspective, your service and your clients’ perceptions of the value you bring? Do you wait for your clients to make requests or are you proactive on how you increase your value to your clients? If you do, then you are much more likely to retain your clients, earn new business and earn their referrals.

Lastly, let’s talk about niche. The best way for smaller firms to compete in the commercial market is to find their niche. In commercial, the most profitable client niche is owner/operator because they will care about more than just price. They will care about the quality of their properties.

RESIDENTIAL

Many of the tips above count for you, as well. But let’s take it further. In residential, you also have to find your niche: either a geographic area where you can create momentum, a type of work you do better than anyone else or a type of client you focus on. When your niche is clear, you can build your marketing and business development around those strengths.

Don’t try to copy the big boys in residential or compete head-on; rather, try to differentiate. Ask: Where and why are you better and different from them?

You should not need to compete on price if you are brutally honest with yourself about who your “green light” clients are. If you stay focused on them, you should be able to price your work and make a good profit doing so.

With the trouble of labor these days, you also may want to focus on work that brings a high throughput, which I define as gross profit per man-hour. My throughput metric will ensure you enjoy higher profits, fewer headaches and stronger cash reserves.

Whether you compete in residential or commercial, you need to know and own your strengths and compete from a position of strength. As Sun Tzu, the ancient Chinese general, said, “Know thy self, know thy enemy.” ☞

Scott is a consultant, peer group facilitator and author. Reach him at jeff@jeffreyscott.biz.

COMPETE BY

CONNECTING WITH CLIENTS

BY KEN THOMAS

When we talk about sales in the commercial landscape world we use the term business to business (B2B), which implies that we are businesses selling to businesses. B2B sales is a bit of a misnomer or sterile way to describe this category of sales. Over my years in the landscape industry, I have learned that businesses don’t make decisions. People do. The reality is that people do business with people. I call it P2P.

That’s right, while your business reputation or brand may help get you in the door, your greatest competitive advantage comes from the way you and your team interact with and form relationships with your prospects and customers.

In today’s competitive commercial landscape market, companies of all sizes are trying to leverage their resources to become more competitive. Questions



PHOTO: ISTOCK.COM/PEOPLEIMAGES



concerning pricing, value engineering, scope, deploying more efficient equipment and productivity training all come into play. These are all important aspects of competitive positioning.

So how do we compete against the big guys in winning and retaining the work?

The most important step in winning and retaining business is to understand your customers, including how and why they make decisions. Second, it's learning how to connect with them on a personal level. The roles of the commercial landscape buyer and property manager have changed dramatically since the Great Recession. Today's property managers are doing more with less and are focused on taking care of their tenants and reporting financial performance up the ladder. They don't have time to chase vendors around or follow up on work requests or issues. They are eager to connect with landscape partners they trust and who can help make their jobs easier.

Savvy business owners, sales leaders and account managers embrace this key concept and make it part of the way they sell and the way they do business.

Let me give you a couple of recent examples.

Ali is a 29-year-old senior property manager (yes, senior) in the Class A office market segment. She was recently in a position of putting her landscaping for a group of buildings out to bid and asked my thoughts on how to identify potential bidders. My suggestions were as follows:

- Ask your peers who they use and why.
- Use your connections in your trade organization to identify candidates.
- Identify landscape companies on other properties that compare to yours.

After doing her due diligence, she chose three companies she felt were credible.

- A regional player she had seen in the market but had not worked with.
- A regional player she had worked with and had a good experience with.
- A smaller local company she met through the Building Owners & Managers Association (BOMA).

She ultimately awarded the portfolio to No. 3, the smaller company she met at BOMA, for the following reasons.

- The owner took the time to meet with her on each site to understand her needs. In the process, he helped educate her about her properties and offered good suggestions about how to improve her asset value. The

BUSINESSES DON'T MAKE DECISIONS. PEOPLE DO. THE REALITY IS THAT PEOPLE DO BUSINESS WITH PEOPLE.

larger companies did not offer to meet with her to visit the properties.

- The small business owner made her feel respected, even as a young property manager.
- Due to the personal effort the smaller business owner exhibited through the sales process, she felt the smaller company would put more emphasis on serving her and her properties.

The smaller company was not the cheapest, but because of her desire to work with them, Ali coached them into an acceptable price range.

In her words, "They weren't the cheapest but I was willing to negotiate price because I felt comfortable with the owner." In this David and Goliath story, the small business owner trumped the larger regional players by demonstrating greater value through extra effort and in building a personal relationship.

While this example is a lesson on selling new work, the P2P concept is even more important in regard to our existing clients. In fact, in our industry, when we lose clients, it has less to do with landscaping and more to do with a personal relationship between an account manager and client. If businesses made decisions, this would not be an issue. People make decisions, and they do so on a personal level.

I recently helped a property manager in Atlanta who had become frustrated with her landscape service provider. She had two different account managers within the last year and had just found out that someone new had been assigned to her account. She was frustrated at having to "retrain" another account manager and had not heard from any company leader during any of the transitions. As we discussed options for prospective bidders, the conversation quickly turned from companies to people. The property manager recalled past relationships and people she trusted. Not surprisingly, the final bid list was centered around those relationships.

I don't want to minimize the value of a great organization. Landscaping is a team sport. It takes a team of professionals to pull off great service in a consistent manner, but great companies understand the value of people and relationships and build a culture that will attract and retain the best talent. It is through our people that our clients and prospective clients develop their perceptions about our company. Too many times we get caught up in "business speak," focusing on promoting our products and services rather than letting our prospects or customers know how we can really help them. 🙌

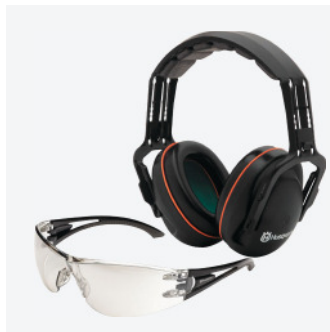
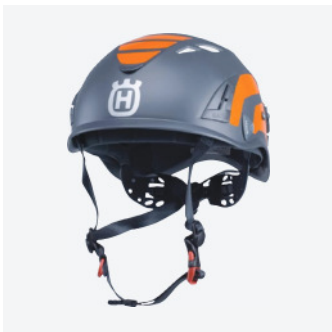
Thomas is founder of Envisor Consulting in Atlanta. Reach him at kentthomas@envisorco.com.



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solutions to save time
and make more money**

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Isuzu.....	68	Unilock.....	94
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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Arborgold Software

Q+A with Levi Garner
Head of Product Development
& Research

How do your products save time?

With Arborgold, jobs are quoted, scheduled, and billed at maximum efficiency:

- **Scheduling** Simply drag and drop single or multiple work orders to crew calendars in just a couple of clicks.
- **Estimating** Take the guesswork out of bidding jobs by auto-calculating price, cost, time and materials required to perform any preset service.
- **Mobile Apps** Allow sales teams to create, accept, and schedule bids from the field while production teams track time and materials on the job.
- **Reporting** Gain insight to the most important KPIs of your business in less time.

How do your products save labor?

Office and field teams are communicating real-time, with less mistakes and effort:

- **Project Management** Allow production managers to identify direct and indirect cost variances between budget and actual.
- **Chemical Reporting** Track chemical use on-site and generate state required chemical reports in just a couple of clicks.
- **Integrations** Virtually eliminate duplicate data entry between

your estimating, scheduling, and accounting software systems with seamless integrations.

- **Customer Portal** Minimize inbound calls with a 24/7 online customer portal.

How do your products save materials or fuel?

Arborgold is all about managing resources:

- **Advanced Scheduling** Arborgold's drag and drop scheduling assistant allows users to schedule work in the way they do business, while maximizing crews efficiently.
- **Crew Tracking** Use Arborgold's GPS tracking technology to clock in employees and keep eyes on crews and equipment.
- **Resource Management** Centralize labor and equipment resource information in a single system.
- **Supply Chain** Management Production managers can acquire exact material based on job needs, get insight to material availability, and stay ahead of future material needs.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

Arborgold gives teams the tools they need to close more sales:

- **Lead Capture** Capture and respond to new leads with web-to-lead forms for your website.
- **Messaging Center** Filter, forward, and manage inbound messages and appointments with our centralized message center.
- **Automated Follow-Up** Send follow-up email messages to during key lead and customer milestones.
- **Database Marketing** Filter and export your contact lists to use for advertising activities.
- **Job Costing** Improve profit margins and cash flow with job costing reports that identify both indirect and direct waste.

In what other ways do your products make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

With too many features to mention, Arborgold's all-in-one business management software can transform the productivity and profitability of your business. With plans that meet every company size, discover the features that fit by scheduling a walk-through here: arborgold.com/discovery.

Arborgold
BUILD A BETTER BUSINESS



all-in-one business management software by Arborgold

Find out why today's most successful lawn, tree, and landscape companies use Arborgold to manage leads, clients, estimates, scheduling, work orders, invoicing, and marketing.

software created for lawn, landscape and tree care companies

- ▼ Contact Management
- ▼ Appointments & Messaging
- ▼ Estimates & Bids
- ▼ Simple & Advanced Scheduling
- ▼ Job, Resource & Project Management
- ▼ Third-Party Integrations
- ▼ Accounting, Billing, Invoicing
- ▼ 24/7 Online Customer Portal



SALES TEAMS

Bid & Proposal Templates
Landscape Design Tool
Lawn Measurement Tool
Marketing & Sales Automation
Mobile Apps
Opportunity Management

PRODUCTION

Chemical Tracking & Reporting
Drag & Drop Scheduling
GPS Crew Tracking
Inventory Management
Project Management
Recurring Scheduling

ADMIN & FINANCE

Automated Renewals
Electronic Payment Solutions
Recurring Billing
Supply Chain Management
Job Costing & Reporting
Time & Material Billing

Arborgold gives us great insight on our crews ability to do the jobs in a timely fashion and allows our sales staff to spend less time in the office doing paperwork and more time doing things increase our profits and generate more income.

MATTHEW GRAGG | NUVIEW LAWN PROS

Take an Online Tour at arborgold.com/tour OR Speak With Us (800) 933-1955

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Cool Planet Q+A with Owen Towne Segment Lead Turf, Nursery, and Ornamental

What do landscape and lawn care pros need to know about biochar?

It seems like everyone is talking about biochar these days, and for good reason. Biochar has long been used as a carbon-rich soil enhancer and is acknowledged for its potential to support soil health. Biochar is created by pyrolyzing (heat in the absence of oxygen) biomass, and the result is a fixed carbon skeleton that sequesters carbon and locks it in place. Unlike compost, it resists chemical and microbial degradation. The material's porosity offers a habitat for microbes that are vital to support root zones. Professionals interested in optimizing their soil use biochar to enhance nutrient and fertilizer regimes. But, beware, raw biochar can perform unpredictably, and not all biochar is created equal!

How is Cool Terra different from raw biochar?

The source material and processing conditions can mean the difference between successful installations or need for re-work. Cool Terra® Organic is a biochar-based, consistent, and predictable soil enhancer that is produced to a strict specification. We use modern techniques to select the

proper biomass and then clean and treat the raw biochar. We then post-treat the raw biochar: adjusting the pH to neutral, flipping it to hydrophilic so that it attracts water and doesn't repel it, and removing detrimental residues. This means Cool Terra is ready to be used right out of the bag at lower application rates.

What can Cool Terra do for landscapers and lawn care professionals?

Cool Terra improves key soil performance characteristics for quality, resilient, and beautiful plantings and turf. It is highly porous which is beneficial for water holding. It has a high ion exchange capacity and can promote nutrient exchange and availability, holding nutrients in the root zone longer and making them easily accessible to roots. The porous structure made from neutral, strong and durable fixed carbon walls, acts like a coral-reef, to provide a habitat that can optimize microbial populations that can protect against stressors and diseases.

How does Cool Terra help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

Satisfy your customers for repeat visits and reduce warranty claims!

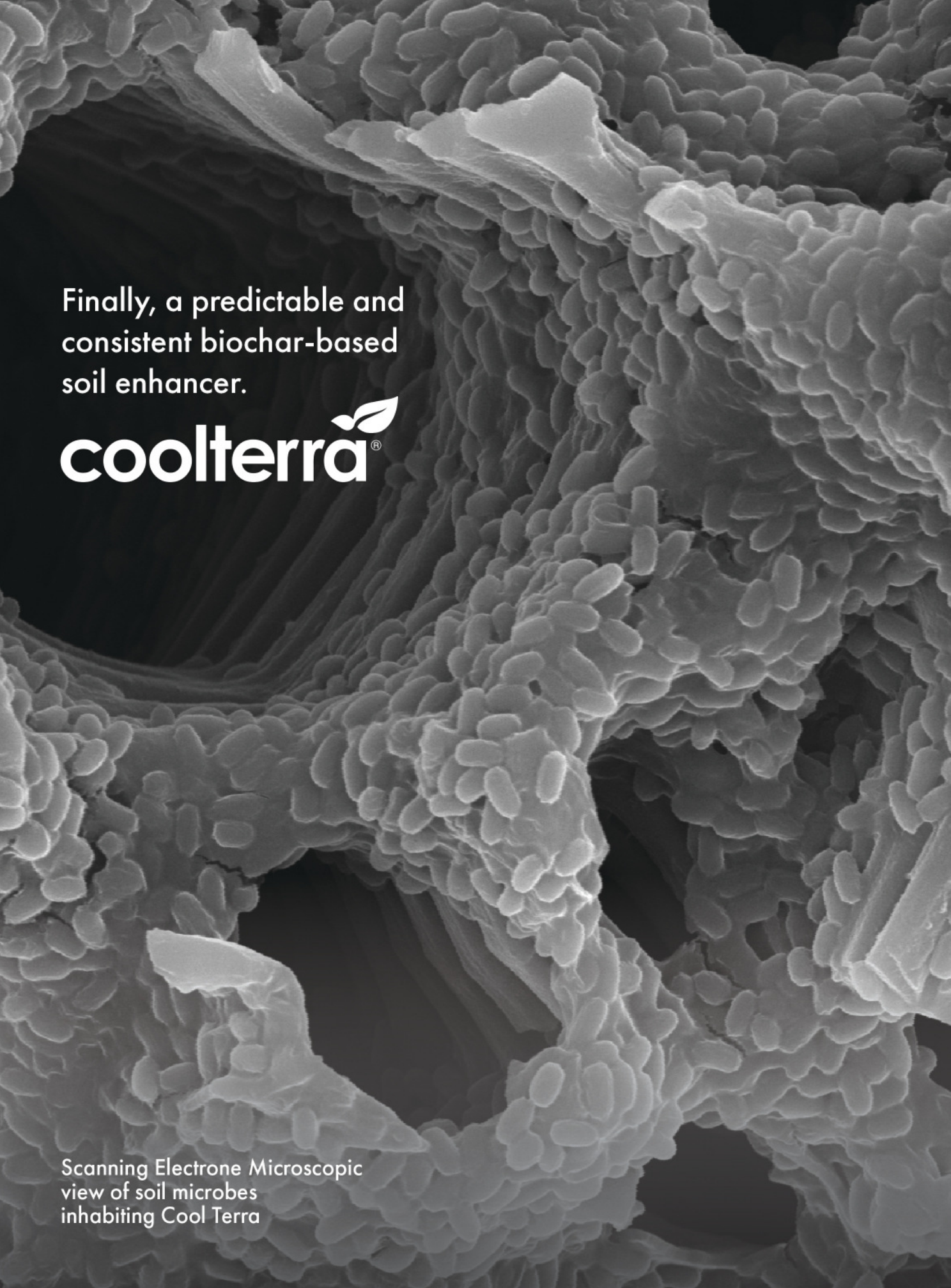


The bottom line is what matters at the end of the day. Cool Terra has been shown to improve plant establishment through quicker germination and increased root development which provides for successful, beautiful, and long-lasting projects and installations. On top of that, Cool Terra sequesters carbon, is OMRI certified, and US-DA-certified 100% biobased, allowing you to satisfy the interests of environmentally conscious customers.

How can professionals incorporate Cool Terra into their operations?

Simply add Cool Terra at 1-5% v/v into the soil or growth media. For those using perlite or vermiculite, try replacing them in part with Cool Terra as it provides key benefits of both!



A detailed scanning electron micrograph (SEM) showing a dense, textured surface of soil microbes. The microbes appear as numerous small, rounded, and elongated structures, some with distinct internal patterns. The overall texture is highly irregular and porous, with various crevices and protrusions. The lighting creates strong highlights and shadows, emphasizing the three-dimensional nature of the microbial community.

Finally, a predictable and
consistent biochar-based
soil enhancer.

coolterra[®] 

Scanning Electrone Microscopic
view of soil microbes
inhabiting Cool Terra

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Corteva Agriscience

Q+A with Karan Bansal
Product Manager Corteva
Agriscience™, Agriculture Division
of DowDuPont, Turf & Ornamental

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros time?

We strive to make a lawn care operator's job easier by providing effective weed control solutions, reducing callbacks and saving LCOs time and money.

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros labor?

Labor is big issue for lawn care professionals and we're always looking for ways to improve products to save labor. Hand-weeding can be labor-intensive and time consuming, a preemergence application of Snapshot® specialty herbicide in landscape beds can help reduce hand-weeding. Snapshot controls more than 125 broadleaf, grassy weeds and can be applied around hundreds of ornamentals without harming them.

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care materials or fuel?

Anytime you can reduce callbacks, you save on the added cost of materials and fuel. Dimension® 2EW specialty herbicide provides proven crabgrass and broadleaf weed control giving turf managers more time to complete the first applications of

the season. If you're using a ride-on sprayer spreader or traditional application equipment, Dimension can be tank-mixed with Defendor® specialty herbicide for added broadleaf weed control of dandelions, chickweed and clover. The ability to apply multiple products in one pass saves fuel and time for lawn care professionals.

How do your products or services help generate additional revenue for lawn care companies?

LCO's application programs are constantly changing based on a variety of factors, like weather, turf type, weed type and their customers' wants and needs. We have a full portfolio of products to help lawn care companies provide additional services, like weed control in landscape beds.

In what other ways do your products or services make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

Because Dimension provides both preemergence and early postemergence crabgrass control, it offers LCOs application flexibility and a wide application window, two to eight weeks longer than other preemergence herbicides in the



market. Applicators can confidently use Dimension early to mid-season without having to worry about switching products after crabgrass is germinated. Using Dimension, in combination with Defendor, allows LCOs to treat more acres without increasing their workforce, make applications earlier and extend the window of control for their customers.

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YOU COULD LOSE HALF YOUR CUSTOMERS TO DANDELIONS.

Up to 50 percent* of customers who call to complain about dandelions cancel their service. Protect their lawns, and your business, with Defendor® specialty herbicide. It works when nothing else does. Apply Defendor in early spring or late fall to stop dandelions, clover and other broadleaf weeds before they cost you a client. That way, the next time your phone rings, you'll be saying hello to more business. Learn more at www.FewerCallbacks.com.

Defendor®

SPECIALTY HERBICIDE

*Jefferson Davis, 2012

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Dow AgroSciences

Solutions for the Growing World

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Exmark Q+A with Daryn Walters Director of Marketing

How do your products save landscape or lawn care pros time?

The increased productivity of Exmark commercial mowers and lawn care equipment helps lawn care professionals finish jobs faster, with unmatched results. Exmark machines are also designed to reduce downtime and required in-season maintenance, so less time is spent maintaining equipment.

Exmark also saves customers time by including technology on many of its models, which tracks machine usage and sends maintenance alerts. This is a significant time saver that can also have a positive impact on mower durability and reliability in the field.

How do your products save landscape or lawn care pros labor?

Our new Staris stand-on riders are a great example of how Exmark is helping landscape professionals get more done with less labor. The compact design of the new models gives landscape professionals access to more yards, more quickly, without fatigue. For example, the 32-inch E-Series model enables operators to easily fit through gates as small as 36-inches.

The new 96-inch Lazer Z Diesel zero-turn mower is also a big labor saver for landscape professionals. Capable of mowing up to 10 acres each hour, we've heard from customers that the 96-inch Lazer Z Diesel has replaced 2-3 smaller mowers in their fleet.

How do your products save landscape or lawn care pros materials or fuel?

Exmark has been a pioneer in the adoption of fuel-saving technologies on its commercial mowers. From the early adoption of Electronic Fuel Injection, to our groundbreaking partnership with Kohler to develop the world's first EFI-propane engine for commercial mowers, we're working hard to increase fuel efficiency and reduce fuel costs for our customers.

Our patented RED Technology, now in its second generation, was developed to leverage the responsiveness of new electronic governors in EFI-equipped gasoline



and diesel engines to reduce fuel consumption. In standard mowing conditions, RED Technology slightly reduces engine RPM, which decreases fuel consumption, noise and wear—all while maintaining the power and productivity of the mower.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

The increased productivity of Exmark products helps lawn care professionals do more each day, with reduced labor and resource costs. Additionally, while Exmark may be best known for its industry-leading commercial mowers, we also offer a complete range of lawn care equipment. This empowers our customers who may have traditionally focused on mowing, for example, to add value-added services such as fertilization and weed control, aeration and seeding to their offering.

Staris models will be available spring 2019.



INTRODUCING **STARIS**

BY **eXmark**



THE REVOLUTIONARY STAND-ON MOWER FROM EXMARK.

Exmark engineers reinvented the stand-on zero-turn mower from the ground up. The all-new Staris delivers the **COMMERCIAL PERFORMANCE, DURABILITY, ERGONOMICS AND EASE OF SERVICE** that landscape professionals need to maximize productivity and profitability. An innovative, low center of gravity design optimizes weight distribution for increased stability, traction and maneuverability in a wide range of cutting conditions. The intuitive controls and large open platform design provide maximum comfort and make operating Staris easy. All Staris models feature both a flip-up front and rear cover, giving operators easy, tools-free access for routine maintenance and cleaning.

Available Spring 2019 • exmark.com

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Go iLawn Q+A with Mike Rorie CEO

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros time?

Go iLawn is a productivity tool. It's faster than going onsite to measure properties and saves you indirect time traveling from site to site. You can measure big sites in hours instead of days, and our numbers are always accurate.

How do your products or services help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

With Go iLawn, you can bid more jobs, faster, so we help you grow your reach. But the bigger advantage might be that you always arrive at your customer's site prepared. You already know all your numbers ahead of time when you meet them. So you can spend your time in front of the customer selling. You can focus on answering questions, understanding the customers' needs, and addressing their concerns instead of walking their site with a measuring wheel and a notebook.

In what other ways do your products or services make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

Go iLawn is great for selling and for productivity, but the biggest benefit for companies that really want to grow is that it helps them become numbers-driven. A numbers-driven company knows its capabilities and its costs for anything it does.

One side of this is knowing what you can do. We recommend a combination of benchmarking and recognizing overhead costs to get a "Real" number of what it costs to do X-amount of each type of work your company does.

From there, you just need to know how much of each type of



work your job requires. And for that, Go iLawn is the best tool I know. Go iLawn gives you "The Number" for everything on your jobsite. That means you get consistent numbers for the square footage of the lots, lawns and other surfaces you service. Go iLawn can also measure distances for jobs like edging, and volumes for materials like mulch or gravel. It will also count things like bushes to trim, trees to prune or obstacles to avoid.

If you know your numbers, you can take on work with confidence, knowing that you can get it done and that you'll always make a profit.



Discover
the **All New**



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Show the client.
Guide the crew.**

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Our new Go iLawn software has everything you love about Go iLawn, plus:

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- The best measuring tools in the business.



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Bid with facts, not guesses



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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Graham Spray Equipment

Q+A with Dave Arnett
Sales Manager

How do your products save time?

Efficiency is designed into our products in many ways. One of the biggest is configuring spray units and rigs to optimize route servicing. When a tech goes out into the field with all the chemicals and tools needed to service the various properties on a route, it eliminates the need to make multiple trips.

For lawn care operations (LCOs) that do both spraying and landscaping, the LawnScaper is a great example. **It carries landscaping and spray equipment, so you can provide all your services from a single rig and in less time.** And having a compartmented tank allows you to carry multiple applications like a weed control and a fungicide.

How do your products save labor?

When a rig is designed for efficiency, labor savings is built in. Before we give a price quote on a spray unit or rig, we learn how our customer's business works and what they need to accomplish. Then we offer options for compartmented tanks and drop tanks that enable the LCO to carry multiple products, such as fertilizers, herbicides and fungicides. Along with making routes more efficient, this

reduces the labor involved in switching out products for different applications. Furthermore, our LawnScaper, box truck and other rigs drastically reduce the need to load and offload equipment by accommodating large payloads.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

Residential and commercial customers increasingly want landscaping and lawn care from the same provider, but equipment logistics has been a big hurdle. The LawnScaper changes that. It provides landscapers the safety, efficiency, and flexibility they need to give their customers what they want.

The LawnScaper accommodates a ride-on mower or spreader-sprayer, a spray unit, and all the other tools of the trade. A Hannay reel and forkable steel frame provide flexibility in using the spray hose or spreader-sprayer, and the spray unit can be easily removed anytime the rig needs to be used just for landscaping.



Whether a business offers lawn care only or landscaping and lawn care, we always design to increase our customer's capacity to service more accounts.

In what other ways do your products make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

Keeping our customers out in the field working is our top priority. The LawnScaper and all our rigs are built to deliver reliable performance day after day, year after year. Spray units are a big investment. With the kind of dependability and longevity our units provide, LCOs will enjoy a return on that investment long before they have to think about replacing a unit that has reached the end of its serviceable life.

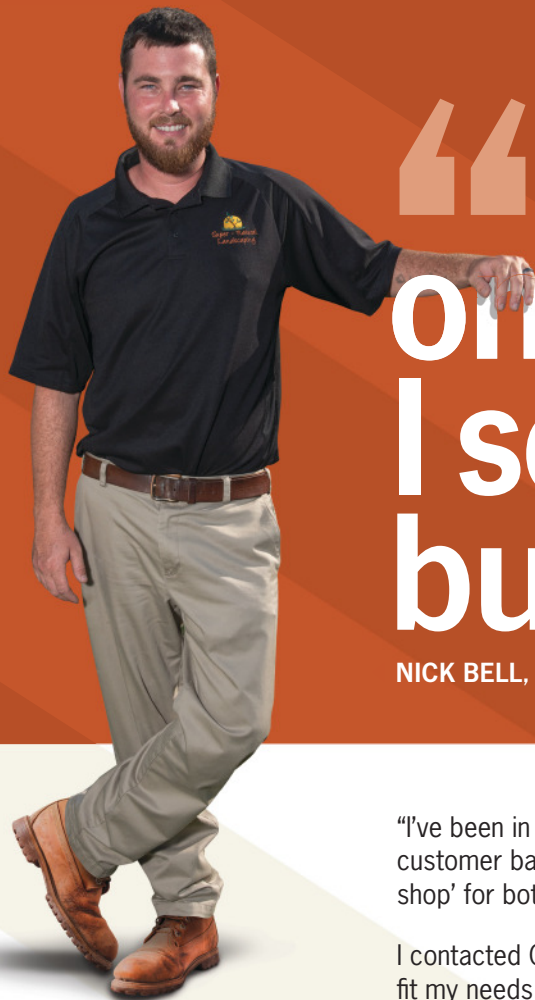


YOUR IDEAS ARE WHERE WE START

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📺 YouTube.com/GrahamSprayEquipment

GIE EXPO booth #594



“You see one truck. I see two businesses.”

NICK BELL, SUPER NATURAL LANDSCAPING, MYRTLE BEACH, SC

“I’ve been in the landscaping business for some 15 years. As my customer base grew, more and more folks were asking for a ‘one-stop shop’ for both their landscaping and lawn care needs.

I contacted Graham and they talked to me about the unit that would best fit my needs. The answer was the GSE LawnScaper.

Mine can accommodate a 400-gallon Graham spray unit, a ride-on mower or spreader sprayer and lots of other equipment – all on the bed of the truck. No more trailers or hassles – but lots more safety, maneuverability (49.5-degree wheel cut angle for tighter turning), versatility, and yes, profit.”

**“LAWNSCAPER IS THE ALL-IN-ONE SOLUTION THAT’S
REVOLUTIONIZED MY BUSINESS. BOTH OF THEM.”**

See the LawnScaper video at GrahamSE.com.



YOUR IDEAS ARE WHERE WE START

Visit our booth at GIE
10/17 – 10/19
Booth #594



Contact Steven Nace of Rush Truck Center for special Isuzu pricing for Graham customers, 404-557-3231.



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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Greene County Fertilizer Company

Q+A with John Perry
President/Founder and CEO

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros time?

The advantages of liquid fertility are well-known. The utilization of GCFC products into a lawn care program allows for a single mix of fertilizer, micronutrients and soil amendments, to be quickly dropped into a spray tank without having to add multiple components. We've taken the guess work out of complicated mixes and provide a simple to follow program that has proven effective across all turf types and soils.

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros time?

Having confident technicians is one of the most valuable pieces of a successful lawn care company and with that, minimizing call-backs is tantamount to confidence. With our products in a lawn care program, the results and customer satisfaction are at the forefront. Lawns with GCFC products respond quickly, generate a beautiful color, reduce the need for mechanical dethatching and aeration, and correct many of the

micronutrient deficiencies that are present in many lawn programs. Bottom line, consistent results equal fewer call backs and increase profitability.

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros materials or fuel?

The addition of the GCFC line into your program will have many compounding results over time. Less chemical controls will be needed as soils improve. Less time and money will be spent chasing problems that are caused by common fertility practices. Balance the soil, feed the plant what it needs and the use of costly controls will drop.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

If a fertilization program is not part of your lawn care model, it should be considered and we help companies enter this market every day. For those that are in the fertilization

game already, the options available for "Soil Building" are becoming an incredible revenue stream for those using GCFC products. This add on is one of the most profitable and simple upsells in the market place.

In what other ways do your products or services make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

Simply by providing superior results vs. the competition at a price point that is affordable. Lawns speak for themselves and the pride of your work will show. When you love the results and simplify the program, the desire to grow and expand your business becomes front and center. Neighbors will notice the changes on your lawns and your density will increase. Less travel, more profit.



MAXIMIZE YOUR FERTILIZER PROGRAM'S POTENTIAL

“REALLY GOOD
S*%@%!”

– MATT MARTIN,
The Grass Factor,
Knoxville, TN



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Soil & Plant Stimulant

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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Horizon Distributors

Q+A with Christina Burton
Product Manager, 24/7

How does Horizon 24/7 save landscape or lawn care pros time?

Horizon 24/7 is an online ordering tool that provides landscape professionals with the fastest answers to their most common questions for suppliers: **What's my price? Do you have it in stock? Can I place an order?** Viewing product availability and selecting product online means no needless stops and reduces the amount of time spent locating product in the store. There is also an app version, which can be used anywhere — including from the job site — to quickly determine which nearby branches have a needed product.

How does Horizon 24/7 save landscape or lawn care pros labor?

Especially in today's environment — where landscape professionals are facing a labor shortage and good help is hard to find — crew workers' hours on the actual job are increasingly valuable. Purchasing online via Horizon 24/7 and selecting delivery or pickup reduces the labor hours paid to employees or spent by owners for shopping tasks.

How does Horizon 24/7 help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

Less time shopping means more time working! Ordering product on Horizon 24/7 maximizes the hours crew workers can be on site earning revenue. Jobs can be completed faster, so landscape professionals can pick up more work or explore new business opportunities to expand their revenue streams.

How much time and labor can Horizon save landscape and lawn care companies?

Employee wages and time traveled to suppliers certainly vary across customers and markets. But even if 20% of the stops made by a crew of five could be cut by placing orders on Horizon 24/7, that would



be an annual savings of about \$2,000 in labor! Or another way to put it: That \$2,000 still paid to employees could be earning additional revenue because the employees are working on site instead of shopping. Check out our YouTube video to learn more!

How does a customer register for a Horizon 24/7 account?

Active Horizon customers can go to www.horizononline.com and select the 24/7 icon at the top right of the page. Register with your Customer Number and Web Registration Key, both of which can be located on your statement or by calling a sales center. Account holders will have access to product availability, ordering online, creating shopping lists for repeat purchases, past invoices and more!



Buy better, buy different, buy Horizon.

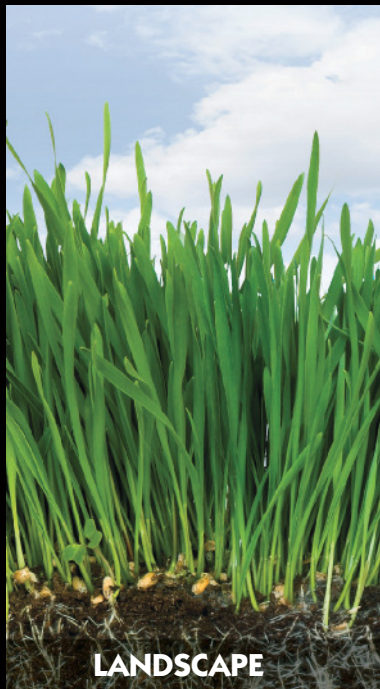
Horizon has the products you need, when you need them—all under one roof.



IRRIGATION



OUTDOOR LIVING



LANDSCAPE



EQUIPMENT

Horizon Distributors is one of the largest wholesalers of irrigation supplies in the U.S. With strategic partners like Hunter, Rain Bird, Toro, Lasco, NDS, ADS & more we have everything the irrigation contractor needs to get the job done. We have the products you need in stock and ready to fulfill your order today.

Step outside your normal scope of work to grow your business and keep up with the competition with Horizon's Outdoor Living products. Low voltage lighting, full outdoor kitchens, stand alone BBQs & hardscaping are all great opportunities for you to improve your profitability and expand your service offering.

Get the products and expertise to help you keep your client's properties healthy and beautiful. Whether it's turf management, pest management, or soil health we can help you find the right solution. Horizon has a complete selection of fertilizer, pesticides, soil amendments, seed, sod and more.

Horizon offers a complete selection of mowers, line trimmers, hedge trimmers, blowers, chain saws, & snow plows, plus everything you need to keep them running. Plus, we service what we sell! Horizon technicians are factory trained and certified, backed by a large parts inventory and fast turnaround times.



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Learn more when you visit us in booth 24016.


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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Hunter Industries

Q+A with Ben Sacks
Associate Product Manager -
Controllers

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros time?

The HCC provides a wide range of benefits for landscape professionals, site managers and homeowners alike. When coupled with a powerful high-capacity controller like the HCC, the remote landscape management capabilities of Hydrowise™ software are useful for larger sites. With highly accurate internet-sourced weather data, Hydrowise automatically adjusts irrigation based on local conditions. That means there is no need for contractors to conduct site visits to manually adjust controllers.

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros labor?

Engineered with contractors in mind, the Hydrowise platform helps maximize water, money, time and labor savings. With a built-in milliamp sensor, the HCC can detect a faulty solenoid or short in the field wiring and send instant alerts to the contractor. By adding an HC Flow Meter, users can be alerted of broken or leaky pipes. This means faulty zones can be shut down before costly landscape damage occurs.

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care materials or fuel?

One of the most beneficial aspects of Hydrowise is the fact that contractors can manage multiple sites from anywhere in the world. As long as there is an internet connection via smartphone, tablet or PC, users can monitor, adjust and program their controllers remotely. This saves significant amounts of time, money and fuel because they don't have to drive between sites to troubleshoot problems.

How do your products or services help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

There are many tools available within the Hydrowise software that help landscape professionals generate additional revenue. The Contractor Portal allows multi-site managers to manage customers from one convenient dashboard. The ability to generate job sheets from within the software helps streamline



maintenance, service and installation work orders. There are also a variety of upselling opportunities available. The ability to manage irrigation remotely helps save significant time and money, which positively impacts the landscape professional's bottom line.

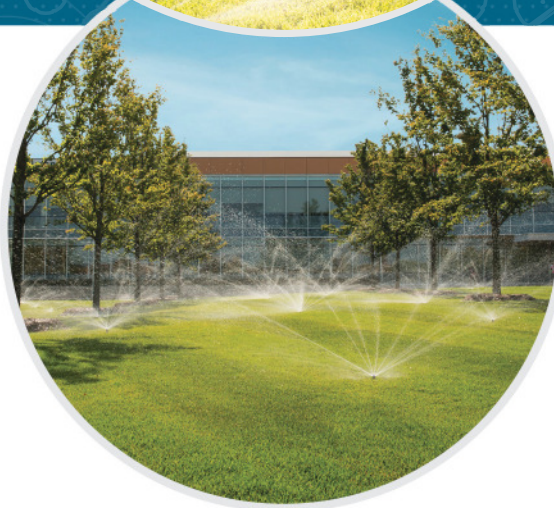
In what other ways do your products or services make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

The HCC controller is backward compatible with original ICC and newer ICC2 controllers. This means that professionals who have customers with traditional controllers that want to upgrade to Wi-Fi-enabled control can do so quickly, easily and affordably. This provides a huge opportunity to resell to existing customers and lengthen revenue streams for maintenance and service contracts.

Hunter®

Wi-Fi Is Now BIGGER BETTER & BOLDER

HCC: Hydrawise™ Control for Up to 54 Stations



THE NEW HCC OFFERS:

Two Simultaneous Stations + P/MV

Proven **Hydrawise** Internet Control Platform

Flow Reporting and Online Flow Alerts

Automatic **Weather-Based** Adjustments

Compatibility with **ROAM** and ROAM XL Remotes

From the office to the project site, HCC helps maximize time and labor savings with a suite of powerful tools. **Try it today!**

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$

Isuzu Commercial Truck of America

Q+A with Brian Tabel
Executive Director of Marketing

In what ways do your products or services make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

Lower Cost of Ownership! The Isuzu FTR, like every Isuzu diesel truck, is built with a keen focus on the ownership experience. We know that owners today are looking for value when it comes to operating expenses of their businesses and their trucks are a big part of that. With the FTR, it has a number of features and programs that dramatically reduce downtime, insure a low cost of ownership, and preserve the truck's value, here are just a few examples:

- B-10 rating of 375,000 miles! Quite simply, it means the FTR's efficient 4-cylinder engine is built to last. It means that 90% of Isuzu FTR engines are expected to last 375,000 miles before they require a major repair or rebuild. An engine with superb quality, reliability and operating efficiency keeps owners productive and doesn't hit them with extensive fuel and maintenance costs.
- Low Cab Forward design gives owners the option to put a larger body and carry more cargo on the same wheelbase as a conventional cab chassis. The FTR can accommodate body lengths from

14 to 30 feet. Carrying more cargo means less trips and if you need a smaller chassis, that means less weight and better fuel economy.

- A standard Multi-Information Display allows drivers to monitor the status and condition of over a dozen vehicle performance functions to help reduce maintenance costs and downtime.
- Vehicle Health Reports are available to provide a comprehensive analysis of the truck's powertrain and emissions systems, fuel economy, brake usage and driver operating habits. Owners can review how the truck operating and see where there may be problem areas.
- Every new FTR comes with Isuzu Oil Coverage, ensuring that the truck is maintained with FleetValue Parts and serviced by Isuzu technicians. Services are complimentary for two years or 60,000 miles (whichever comes first); just another maintenance cost that the owner avoids with an Isuzu.
- Priority Service Maintenance Program (PSMP) is a program we offer at purchase that allows the



owner to purchase scheduled service at a discount, with customizable terms to fit an owner's budget and how long they plan to own the truck. Not only does it save them from rising costs of labor and parts, but it also provides them with the convenience of getting their truck serviced at any Isuzu dealer.

- Three-year/unlimited mileage powertrain limited warranty* and a four-year/unlimited mileage perforation from corrosion limited warranty* are among the best warranty's in the industry and protects new owners from potential costly repairs.

At Isuzu, we know the importance of saving our owners' time and money. We know that our trucks are a big part of their productivity and we aim to deliver a reliable truck with a low cost of ownership that will be appreciated from the day they purchase it throughout the many years that follow.





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TRUCK



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#1 Selling
Low Cab
Forward Truck
Since 1986**

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Isuzu offers Classes 3-6 Low Cab Forward medium duty trucks, with class leading fuel economy and multiple wheelbases for bodies 10-30 feet long. Our lineup offers two different diesel engines as well as a gas engine that is CNG/LPG capable. Isuzu is the Class 3-6 solution for all your landscaping needs.

**For more information visit
WWW.ISUZUCV.COM**

Vehicle shown with optional equipment; some equipment is dealer installed. N and F-Series vehicles are assembled from component parts manufactured by Isuzu Motors Limited and by independent suppliers who manufacture such components to Isuzu's exacting standards for quality, performance and safety. Please see your authorized Isuzu dealer for additional details.

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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Koch Turf & Ornamental

Q+A with Ryan Bond
VP Strategic Marketing & Innovation

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros time?

Koch Turf & Ornamental (Koch) offers enhanced efficiency fertilizers (EEFs) that are specifically developed to efficiently deliver nutrition longer which means fewer fertilizer applications are needed to promote healthy turfgrass growth, saving landscape and lawn care professionals time and offering real advantages to their businesses.

Every season we are seeing more landscape and lawn care professionals putting EEFs to work for them. They are spending less time fertilizing, which allows them to visit more properties per day, perform other services on visits where they may have previously applied fertilizer, and add new customers to their routes.

How do your products or service save landscape or lawn care pros labor?

We continue to hear how challenging it can be to find, hire and retain productive employees. Koch EEFs can be part of the solution and help ease landscape and lawn care professionals' labor concerns.

By providing more efficient nutrient delivery and optimizing turfgrass uptake, EEFs help moderate growth flushes as well as unplanned mowing, clipping collection and hardscape cleanup, which are all labor-intensive. EEFs also minimize the feast/famine cycle that can cause stress; healthy turfgrass is more tolerant to weed, disease, insect, traffic and other stress factors, which can also save labor, because the need to apply control products is reduced.

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care materials or fuel?

There are several ways EEFs can help landscape and lawncare professional realizes savings in their materials and fuel. By providing gradual and efficient nutrient release, EEFs moderate growth flushes and unplanned mowing. This translates into true savings in materials and fuel with less wear and tear on equipment and fuel usage.



How do your products or services help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

An advantage of EEFs and their extended longevity is the opportunity to adjust your multi-step fertilizer application program to include a three-month fertilizer longevity, allowing you to cut down on the amount of fertilizer bags to buy, transport, handle and dispose of, which helps reduce the potential for injuries that can impede employee productivity. It can also free up crews to complete other tasks and visit more properties each day creating opportunities to offer new or enhanced services such as pest scouting or targeted weed control.

KOCH
TURF & ORNAMENTAL

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4111 E. 37th St. N., Wichita, KS 67220 www.KochTurf.com

GIE EXPO booth #20110



“Our customer retention rates have improved by 1.5 percent each year since we started using XCU.”

—
Corbin Schlatter, **Weed Man**

XCU® Slow-Release Fertilizer **Helps Corbin Schlatter Keep Customers Coming Back**

“Our customers really appreciate the benefits of XCU’s slow-release performance.”

“We’ve been purchasing and applying XCU for about three years now,” Schlatter says.

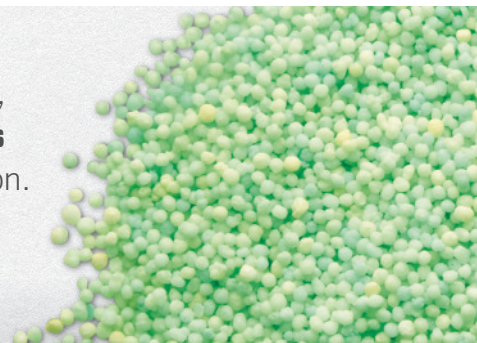
“I initially decided to give XCU a try because my distributor was offering competitive pricing. It seemed like a good time to try some new fertilizer technology and see how it worked.”

“It’s been an easy decision for our Weed Man USA franchise to continue using XCU fertilizer year after year.”

Lawn care professional Corbin Schlatter of Weed Man (Columbus, OH) uses XCU slow-release fertilizer, an enhanced efficiency technology, to gain competitive business advantages. With unique, dual-coated technology, XCU fertilizer provides gradual, steady nutritional uptake for up to 10 weeks of plant response. That means more time for weed control, and other lawn care services to help maintain healthy turfgrass growth.



Stop by **Booth 20110** at the **GIE+EXPO**,
and visit **KochTurf.com/Advantages**
to learn how XCU can help your operation.



PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Nearmap

Q+A

with Mike St. Louis
Director of Marketing

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros time?

Lawn care and landscaping professionals spend considerable amounts of time traveling to job sites. They do this at various stages of business — from prospecting and canvassing neighborhoods, to estimating and quoting, installation, service and ongoing maintenance. Nearmap's high-resolution aerial maps provide crystal-clear images of job sites from either top-down or oblique view angles, so landscapers can target new business, create estimates, and bid accurately and quickly all from the office. Less time on-site means more time finding new business.

How do your products or service save landscape or lawn care pros labor?

With Nearmap's MapBrowser, landscapers can search and view HD aerial maps for addresses or areas of interest on-demand from a standard web browser. However, in contrast to free satellite maps, Nearmap's imagery is updated often and several times sharper, allowing you to inspect details about the site without visiting it in person. More importantly, MapBrowser includes powerful tools that allow users to make precise measurements directly

on top of the imagery. By doing so, landscaping businesses save time and labor by keeping crews focused on critical work. Being able to see the complete property address from all four cardinal directions allows a landscaper to see all access points, hazards, etc., and measure for area, height and width, as well as annotate all on top of the property image.

How do your products or services save lawn care materials or fuel?

By using Nearmap's MapBrowser, landscape professionals can accurately quote, within inches, for the proper amount of materials, and be able to determine any objects that may add time or effort. This can all be done from the comfort of your office — saving on fuel and travel time to current and prospective jobsites. For example, if an average field worker earns \$14/hour and makes four site visits a day with vehicle running costs of \$0.56 per mile, in a year's time this would equal almost 1,000 site visits and close to \$15,000 in expenses. If you were to trim off a third of those in-person site visits and replace them with virtual site visits using Nearmap's high-res imagery

in MapBrowser, you will have saved around \$7,000. It adds up very quickly.

How do your products or services help generate additional revenue for landscape companies?

Using Nearmap, landscapers can scan entire neighborhoods to identify new business opportunities in minutes. All locations captured by Nearmap are geo-indexed, meaning users can drop a pin and quickly pull-up address details, coordinates, and even the time and date the image was captured. It's a much more efficient way to prospect than traditional canvassing. A landscaper can then target those addresses directly and provide up-to-date imagery of prospect properties for clear and concise quoting.

In what other ways do your products or services make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

When you need validation that your services have improved a landscape, or proof that a problem with the lawn existed prior. Nearmap historical imagery can be compared to current aerial maps to prove your point, retain customers or win new business.

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WITH CURRENT AERIAL MAPS



VERTICAL



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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



New Holland Construction

Q+A with Perry Girard
Product Manager

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros time?

The New Holland Sectional Snow Pusher allows snow contractors to plow an area cleanly on the first pass by tripping over obstacles that would otherwise leave sections of snow and ice that would require a second pass, or require additional salt and rework. It also allows operators to move on to other lots, or other sections of larger commercial lots, faster — ensuring more productive work is completed in a shorter period of time.

These units also save contractors considerable time and money in springtime repairs related to the properties they serve. The ability for the section to “trip” results in less curb and sewer damage during the plowing season, which the contractor is generally responsible for paying for in the spring. If a sewer plate gets damaged, that requires even more time and money, as those contractors are specialized and quite expensive.

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care materials or fuel?

The ability to reduce secondary passes while snowplowing achieves the truest definition of fuel efficiency,

which is generating greater productivity per gallon of fuel. The sectional snow pusher achieves that. Sectional snow push owners have also shown to significantly reduce salt use, which helps save on that material cost as well.

It also allows snow contractors to save on equipment and pusher costs in the long run. A snow contractor can now typically service a lot with fewer machines thanks to this technology. And, when damaged, each sectional moldboard can be swapped out and replaced, whereas other designs may require an entire snow pusher to be swapped out. This also helps minimize downtime related to damaged pushers.

The ability to finish the lot in a shorter period of time also reduces the amount of wear and tear on a machine over the course of completing the job.

How do your products or services help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?



Many landscape contractors who work in snow-belt states are already engaged in snow removal — but those who aren't already have one of the most powerful tools in their fleet that can be profitable in commercial snow removal: a skid steer, a CTL, a backhoe loader or a wheel loader. That machine(s) sits idle without generating any billable hours in the winter if not used for snow removal. The addition of a simple sectional snow pusher from New Holland immediately gives that contractor one of the most powerful and efficient combinations of machine/attachment for commercial snow removal — all while reducing the total cost of ownership of the machine by generating more billable work.

CLEANER, FASTER, SAFER SECTIONAL SNOW PUSHER

The snow removal industry is more competitive and challenging than ever. The New Holland Sectional Snow Pusher helps keep you at the top of your game—whether you're looking to add a new revenue stream or simply increase the productivity of your equipment to take on more jobs. Get the edge you need to work faster, cleaner and safer—all with lower operating costs.

\$750 Instant
Rebate*

OR

6 Months Special
Financing**



CHOOSE FROM TWO GREAT OFFERS!

Purchase a Sectional Snow Pusher by November 30, 2018 to take your pick of two great offers. You can take advantage of 6 months special financing—or enjoy instant savings with a \$750 instant rebate. Lower labor and fuel costs. Save time and money on repairs. And reduce your salt usage as much as 50%. Visit your New Holland dealer to learn more.



EQUIPPED FOR A NEW WORLD™



Hurry in—offers end Nov. 30, 2018!

*Offer valid on the purchase of a New Holland Sectional Snow Pusher from August 1, 2018 through November 30, 2018 at participating New Holland dealerships located in the 50 United States and Canada. Offer subject to change or cancellation without notice. Prior purchases are not eligible. \$750 discount is given as a line item discount from your dealer on your invoice at point of sale. Limit one redemption per household or business. Government bid and rental company purchases are not eligible. Dealers, please reference MB18-187.

**Subject to credit approval. Terms and conditions apply. Ask an associate for details.

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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Nufarm Q+A with Rick Fletcher Technical Service Manager, Turf & Ornamentals

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros time?

Sure Power™ Selective Herbicide is a new standard for the post emergence control of difficult weeds. From early- to late-season applications, Sure Power helps lawn and landscape professionals quickly “get clean” or “stay clean” for the season. It’s one solution that lessens the need to purchase, mix and apply multiple products. Also, applicators and their customers can expect visible results within 2-3 days.

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros labor?

Sure Power is labeled for more than 250 broadleaf weeds. It is proven to control tough challenges, including excellent control of ground ivy and wild violet. Sure Power’s four-way formulation also offers two different modes of action (group 4 and 14) to support a strong resistance management approach by targeting two different pathways in the selective control of weeds. This reduces callbacks due to weed persistence.

How does your product save materials or fuel?

One element that Sure Power adds is flexibility due to rapid penetration, leaf uptake and translocation in the plant. Not only is it designed for rapid entry into even the most waxy leaf surfaces, it is rainfast after one hour, and mowing can occur within a day of the application.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn companies?

We understand that a product that works is key to adding value to lawn and landscape operations. This means a product that is easy to use, highly efficacious and supports a strong weed resistance program with an improved solution for grass, broadleaf and sedge weed issues. Sure Power checks all the boxes to support your bottom line.



SAMPLE PRODUCT IMAGE
See label for specific product information

In what other ways does your product make landscape and lawn companies profitable?

Sure Power is showing its power in ongoing trials, rapidly controlling wild violet, ground ivy and other weeds better than the competition. Nufarm encourages lawn and landscape customers to learn more about Sure Power at NufarmInsider.com/SurePower, and to take advantage of significant early order savings on Sure Power and more than 40 additional proven Nufarm products at NufarmInsider.com/Rewards.

SEE US AT GIE+EXPO '18
NUFARM BOOTH 22110

CONTROL THE UNCONTROLLABLE



CONTROL WILD VIOLET



CONTROL GROUND IVY

NEW
SurePower™
SELECTIVE HERBICIDE

NEW SURE POWER™ SELECTIVE HERBICIDE

provides early- and late-season control to strike down more than 250 broadleaf weeds. In fact, broad-spectrum Sure Power delivers excellent control of ground ivy and wild violet.

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Nufarm **EDGE**
REWARDS PROGRAM

SAVE ON TOP SOLUTIONS INCLUDING
ARENA® 50 WDG, CELERO®, ESCALADE® 2,
SURE POWER™ AND SUREGUARD® SC.

Nufarm

Grow a better tomorrow

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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Oregon Professional Series

Q+A with Josh Huffman
Business Segment Director,
Outdoor Power Equipment

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros time?

Everything we did in developing the Oregon Professional Series was an attempt to finally deliver on the promise that battery powered tools CAN replace gas powered, professional equipment. Saving time, labor and money is part of that equation. With performance that exceeds gas by up to 15%, it means that the job gets done faster and more efficiently. Our large grab-and-go batteries with extended run times means no mixing fuel, no stopping to fuel up, and no coordination of smaller, brick-style packs. The tools have also been designed to simplify maintenance.

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros labor?

With improved productivity, you can do more with less. The Oregon Professional Series delivers on a promise of real power and performance, so that you get more

productivity. With the low noise of our tools, Pros have more flexibility in when they get their work done.

How do your products or services save lawn care pros materials or fuel?

High-quality, large-capacity, weather-resistant lithium-ion batteries are expensive, but we're trying to change the game when it comes to battery costs. At \$749 MSRP, for a 972Wh, fully UL-certified, IP56 professional quality battery — you won't find a better value. With all battery products, you need to purchase your "fuel" on the front end, but you never need to buy gasoline and two-cycle mix again. It depends on use patterns, but a professional can easily save \$10-\$20 per week in fuel cost, delivering shorter payback and higher ROI — in addition to all the advantages of battery.

How do your products or services help generate additional revenue for companies?

Behind the obvious labor issues going on in the industry, professionals say offering low noise solutions to their customer base is a top concern. With our tools, the professional can



confidently quote low noise via use of battery powered equipment when seeking new contracts and retaining existing contracts. Further, in certain pockets, reduced emissions are a major focal point. Battery powered equipment is an obvious winner in that area, but now, with the Oregon Professional Series equipment, you don't have to sacrifice performance and productivity.

In what other ways do your products or services make companies profitable?

When you step back and look at the whole picture, our products offer a lower total cost of ownership — reduced fuel and maintenance costs and expanded working hours. But there are also advantages around employee satisfaction. Our products eliminate some of the things employees don't want to deal with such as noise, fumes, pull cords, vibration — all unfortunate realities of gas equipment.





OREGON®

REAL POWER

Oregon® 120V Professional Series

Finally —
Battery Technology with Real Power

Our advanced battery technology offers no compromises when it comes to power, and it's free of the inconveniences of gas tools, including fuel mix, spills, emissions, gas maintenance and of course, noise.

Blower BL120VX
String Trimmer ST120VX
Hedge Trimmer EHT120VX
Edger EG120VX



Visit OregonProducts.com to request a demo

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



PermaGreen Q+A with Tom Jessen President

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros time?

Time is money. One person riding a PermaGreen, spreading and spraying at the same time, can cut production time in half. PermaGreens can carry enough product to treat an acre, and they can do it in as little as 15 minutes. Most importantly, that same person on that same machine can do all the trimming and work productively on up to 99% of all properties, from the smallest to the largest. Never having to drive past a jobsite saves a ton of time!

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros labor?

Our patented and patent-pending features can deliver superior accuracy and fewer labor-wasting service calls. Our spray system and super-effective deflector enable one person riding on one PermaGreen to easily and safely spread and spray simultaneously around sensitive ornamentals and edge sidewalks with little or no cleanup. With the ability to go through 36" backyard gates, no hoses to pull, no booms to mess with, no backpacks to lug, and very

little walking, PermaGreens are tremendous labor savers.

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care materials or fuel?

PermaGreen's patented and patent-pending features reduce human error and misapplication. By controlling product wasting variables, such as: calibration, ground speed, product distribution and output rates of both granular and liquid products, PermaGreens can apply the correct amount of product over the entire lawn. Product cost is controlled and, more importantly, the applications can deliver top quality results and happy customers. Also, liquid products can be applied only where needed rather than blanketed over the entire property. All this is accomplished using a fuel-efficient Honda 5.5 HP engine that can produce a huge day of production with less than 1 gallon of gas. There is simply nothing like a PermaGreen on the market today.



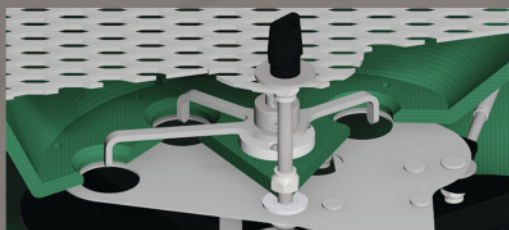
How do your products or services help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

The PermaGreen was designed with maximum efficiency in mind. An efficient operator has more time available to increase revenue by increasing production, customer relations and sales work. PermaGreen invented the stand-on riding spreader/sprayer in 1997, and our in-house technical support and lawn care experts are available to answer questions or just chat about building your turf care business. No other brand has the features, track record, and support to match those of PermaGreen. It's no wonder why PermaGreen has been and remains the green industry's most trusted spreader/sprayer.

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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Quali-Pro Q+A with Nick Strain Business Director

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros labor?

Quali-Pro offers a variety of Combination Chemistry™ products, such as Negate, Fahrenheit and 2DQ, which contain multiple modes of action intentionally formulated into one superior product. This reduces time spent loading and mixing sprayers, saving your workforce time and money.

In what ways do your products or services make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

Quali-Pro offers effective and economical solutions to control pests of all kinds, including unwanted insects, weeds, and fungi. Along with offering your basic chemical needs, Quali-Pro is developing innovative value-added solutions that will improve the bottom line for landscape and lawn care operations. **Plan ahead and save with Quali-Pro.** Promotion period for the Simply Grow Together Early Order Program is from Sept. 1 to Dec. 8, 2018. Order now while supplies last.

Simply Grow Together Promotion

NEW FOR 2018: You can now submit your rebate online at simplygrowtogether.com by using the online form and calculator.



Who Qualifies? End users in all U.S. Turf, Nursery & Ornamental markets who purchase

Quali-Pro products through authorized Quali-Pro Distributors.



Terms. 20% of rebate must consist of Platinum products to qualify. Minimum rebate is \$100.

Maximum rebate per account is \$5,000.

The Simply Grow Together Early Order Program has 3 easy steps:



Step 1 - Redemption

Complete the redemption form on the website.



Step 2 - Calculate

Use the EOP calculator with product selections and unit quantity.



Step 3 - Send materials

Upload all receipts and submit! Your rebate is on the way!

Visit simplygrowtogether.com to get started or call 281-892-2500 to locate a rep!



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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



SingleOps Q+A with Sean McCormick CEO

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros time?

SingleOps saves our users time by removing duplicate data entry as well as providing intelligent automations for your business processes. Our product has fully integrated CRM, estimating, scheduling & routing, invoicing & payments, time tracking, reporting & QuickBooks syncing, all of which is available in the office and on any mobile device in the field. A fully integrated system like SingleOps saves our users hours every week from having to re-enter data. We also provide intelligent automations like emails and texts that save users hours every week with customer and internal communication.

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros labor?

SingleOps enables your labor to be much more productive in the office and in the field. Here are just two examples of many: 1) Our route optimization features allow

you to build perfectly optimized routes with the click of a button — your crews and field techs will reduce drive time and can get more work done every day. 2) Our estimating platform connects with timesheets and job costing, so you can understand which jobs and crews are most productive. This information is vital in making business decisions that improve labor productivity.

How do your products save materials or fuel?

Building more efficient routes with our scheduling & routing system can significantly reduce your fuel expense. In addition, accurate material estimates can allow for

better planning and purchasing decisions, reducing material expense as well.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

Building estimates faster using more accurate data and producing more professional documents for the customer helps our clients increase their revenue. Automated estimate follow-ups, up-sell features, and sales reporting also help our clients grow their business.

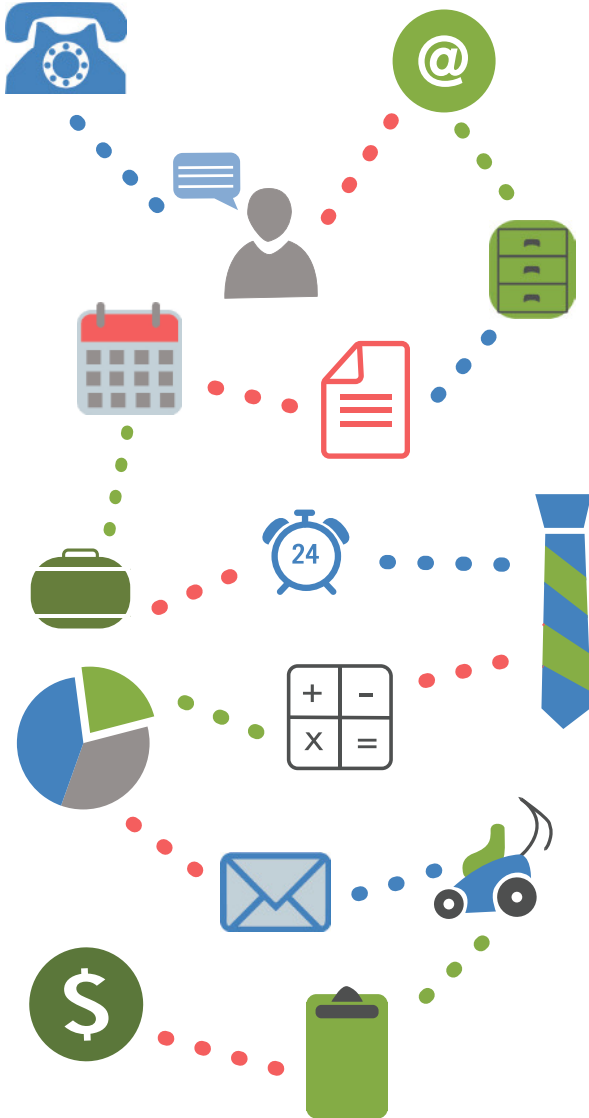
In what other ways do your products make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

Our in-depth reporting lets you know who and what is driving profitability for your business. This information will equip you to make profitable decisions with customers and with your staff.



Streamline your business.

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SingleOps is an end-to-end cloud-based business management software designed specifically for the lawn care industry. It is the premier solution to streamline your business and save time and money. With CRM, estimates, scheduling, routing, labor & chemical tracking, invoicing, and more, you can run your entire business with SingleOps.

The modern lawn care business needs a reliable software solution that will grow with it. SingleOps employs the most advanced mobile technologies that deliver real impact on growth. Our software can be accessed on any device, any where, any time. Join the thousands of lawn care professionals that trust SingleOps to streamline their business.



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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



SiteOne Landscape Supply

Q+A with John Gertz
VP Category Management for the Agronomics Category

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros time?

LESCO® products are carefully formulated and rigorously tested to perform. Our control products are engineered to work the first time, every time, and are designed for easy application so turf care professionals can quickly and efficiently complete their treatment and move on to the next job. Professionals look to LESCO for the industry's most comprehensive portfolio of labor saving, proven and dependable specialty products, fertility innovations, the highest tag quality seed in the industry and legendary equipment products.

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros labor?

LESCO fertilizers designed with PolyPlus® technology are developed to release nutrients evenly and slowly, requiring fewer seasonal applications and job site visits to maintain healthy, attractive turf. And with innovations like LESCO Moisture Manager™ and CarbonPRO™, professionals can now consistently deliver the added service, business and green solution advantage of water consumption reduction programs.

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros materials or fuel?

Our exclusive LESCO Smart Guided system is an easy-to-install GPS system that maximizes labor efficiencies, minimizes application error and optimizes chemical budgets. It virtually eliminates over-spray for turf care professionals by using powered application equipment that saves them materials and time.

How do your products or services help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

Specialty products like LESCO Moisture Manager provide lawn care professionals solutions for saving their customers' water costs while providing additional revenue streams for their business. And product portfolio innovations like LESCO CarbonPRO provide new carbon-based solutions to improve turf health by optimizing nutrient and



water utilization efficiency through supplemental treatments.

In what other ways do your products or services make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

LESCO advanced agronomic products, combined with the technical expertise and solutions from SiteOne Landscape Supply, provide our customers an unrivaled level of partnership that no one else in the green industry can offer. We help our customers not only grow healthy landscapes but also profitable businesses through educational opportunities, customer reward programs and business efficiency tools.



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Healthier landscapes are only half the battle. To win in this industry, you need solutions that can help your turf survive in harsh conditions, and help your company thrive in an even tougher business climate. LESCO® has it all: the leading science to grow resilient landscapes, backed with the green industry expertise of SiteOne® Landscape Supply.

Visit LESCO.com for new ways to triumph from the ground up.

The LESCO logo is printed on a white, textured surface that resembles a bag of fertilizer or soil. The logo consists of the word "LESCO" in a bold, serif font, with a registered trademark symbol (®) to the upper right. A green swoosh underline is positioned beneath the letters "SCO".

LESCO®

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Target Specialty Products

Q+A with David Helt
President

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros time?

Target Specialty Products has over 40 service centers across the U.S. and Canada servicing the professional turf and ornamental and pest control industries. We have multiple fulfillment options from delivery to pick-up and are typically able to deliver in-stock product to the customer the following day.

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros labor?

Target Specialty Products offers a full range of product solutions with improved efficacy to lessen the time between applications and limit call-backs. This will reduce the amount of time spent on a job, lower the visit frequency with better results, and/or afford more time to perform add-on services during each visit. All of these will reduce the amount of labor spend per revenue dollar.

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care materials or fuel?

Target Specialty Products has a broad offering through relationships with many of the key manufacturers in the industry. This allows us to develop the best solutions for the customer relative to the need including solutions that include products with lower usage rates and longer durations of effectiveness. Our network of locations and expert sales professionals will also help limit unnecessary trips to find the right materials or help.

How do your products and services help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

Our sales people have broad knowledge and resources beyond turf management. They can help a customer expand into arbor care, ornamental care, mosquito abatement or pest control. This allows our customers to provide more services during each visit,

thus reducing labor cost per revenue dollar. In addition, we invest heavily in developing products that range from cutting-edge tech for the most demanding needs to the highest-quality products to meet everyday needs. This includes the recent launch of an exclusive line of granular fertilizers, Turf Fuel G and TS Pro, that are Powered by Scotts PRO Technology and designed to provide the best performance and help our customers' services stand out amongst their competition.

In what other ways do your products or services make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

Target Specialty Products has been in the industry for more than 80 years; our sales team has extensive experience, many with over 10 years in the industry. This experience goes far beyond developing product and service solutions. Our sales team can also help our customers improve their bottom line through revenue generating and expense saving ideas.



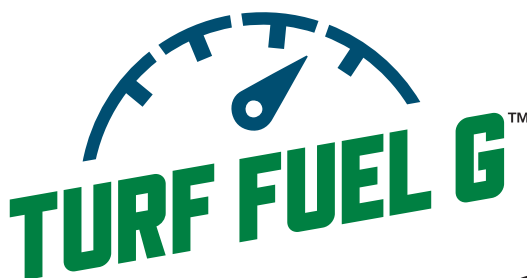


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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Tenna Q+A with Austin Conti CEO and Founder

How does Tenna save landscape or lawncare pros time?

When businesses are planning project schedules and resource capacity, it is imperative to know where assets are located and that everything is in good working condition.

Tenna's asset management tools integrate all assets onto one platform, enabling businesses to manage inventory in one place. This provides complete visibility across locations and which assets are in-use versus available if a breakdown or misplacement occurs. Employees can spend less time looking for lost assets or waiting for replacements and more time following project schedules. By overseeing asset usage and managing maintenance needs, businesses reduce waste that impacts productivity.

How does Tenna save landscape or lawncare resources such as materials or fuel?

Analytics provide valuable insights into asset usage and data for maintenance needs, which help businesses become proactive rather than reactive when equipment requires service. Understanding

usage for each project improves the ability to allocate project crews, resources and costs.

When assets are properly maintained, you increase their service life and eliminate the need to acquire replacements when something is broken or missing. This is costly and often results in companies owning unnecessary duplicates of the same resources.

For fuel monitoring, Tenna reveals vehicle locations to audit time spent on jobsites versus elsewhere. Route optimization is an easy way to plan direct routes for fuel management. Idling reports reveal when vehicles are unnecessarily burning fuel. Fuel usage reporting shows insights into which vehicles are burning the most fuel, which can impact decisions to replace an older vehicle with a newer, more fuel-efficient model.

Many companies report asset losses of 5%-10% each year. When using one system to track all your assets, you lose fewer resources



through misplacement or theft by monitoring each item (who used it, where, when, for how long). This solution keeps people honest and improves accountability among your staff.

How does Tenna help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawncare companies?

By properly managing assets at the job-level and creating realistic budgets for internal costs, Tenna enables businesses to more accurately forecast these costs on future projects. With more accurate costs, businesses become more competitive and win more work, increasing their revenue. When internal costs are lower and operations follow an optimal asset management strategy, profit margins increase.



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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Turfco Q+A with George Kinkead President

How does Turfco help LCOs become more profitable and grow their businesses?

One of the most pressing problems for LCOs is training new staff, whether it's because of turnover or additional routes. Turfco has solutions such as the T3100 applicator with its patented technology that allows it to be a highly productive applicator, yet you can still train your new staff in a day and a half.

How does Turfco help with employee retention?

Turfco focuses on intuitive designs that make the employee more productive, which in turn helps retention. An example: On our patent-pending depth control on our XT8 ride-on aerator, this design makes it easier for the operator to run the machine without extensive training.

Why does Turfco sell direct?

Turfco decided in 1998 the best way to support LCOs was to sell directly to them. We believe the challenges and needs of today's LCO can be best met by dealing directly with them. For example,



the same day shipment of parts. If an LCO calls in by 2 p.m. we can ship out parts the same day. Turfco has structured its business to support keeping your machines operational every day.

How does Turfco service its products?

Turfco, because of its direct model, talks directly with LCOs every day and has extensive experience solving their problems. We have numerous servicing dealers

throughout the country for more complex problems. Our less than 1% warranty rate also helps by putting quality in in the first place.

Why should an LCO partner with Turfco?

Turfco is uniquely positioned to help solve the production problems many LCOs face. It's not just that an LCO needs to buy equipment to automate his business—it needs to be the right equipment that's easy to use, easy to train on and not break down in the middle of a job. I hope you will give us a call so we can show you how we can help grow your business.



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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Unilock Q+A with Ray Rodenburgh Director of Trade Strategy - Unilock Group of Companies

How do your products save time?

U-Cara™ is comprised of two easy-to-handle components: U-Cara Fascia Panels and Sure Track Backer Blocks. Both sides of the Sure Track backer blocks feature precision molded Sure Track rails. The panels hang on these rails. Simply clad one or both sides of the backer block to create almost any landscape feature. U-Cara™ will save you many man-hours. U-Cara's Universal Base Unit can save up to 30% of your time when it comes to block leveling and alignment. Also, you can almost eliminate the need for cutting any backer blocks by strategically gapping the backer blocks, which eventually get covered by the fascia panels anyways. You can easily save up to 50% (or more) of actual cutting time on a project.

How do your products save labor?

When you save that much time on base leveling and that much time on cutting, you will automatically save on labor. This labor can now be diverted into other aspects of the project.

Because U-Cara is a two-component system, the components are easier to handle resulting in

reduced installer fatigue. This is important when it comes to employee safety as well as long-term employee retention.

How do your products save materials or fuel?

With a backer-block/fascia panel system you do not have to bury any of the decorative fascia panels below grade. Similarly, when constructing a single-sided retaining wall or planter, you do not have to bury any of the fascia panels, which are the more expensive part of the wall.

There are two sizes of backer blocks: standard and large. Only the standard backer is required for walls under 18" high or for constructing hollow landscape features. This saves you from having to buy heavy units for light-duty applications.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

The U-Cara System is very easy to learn simply watching the installation tutorials online. This



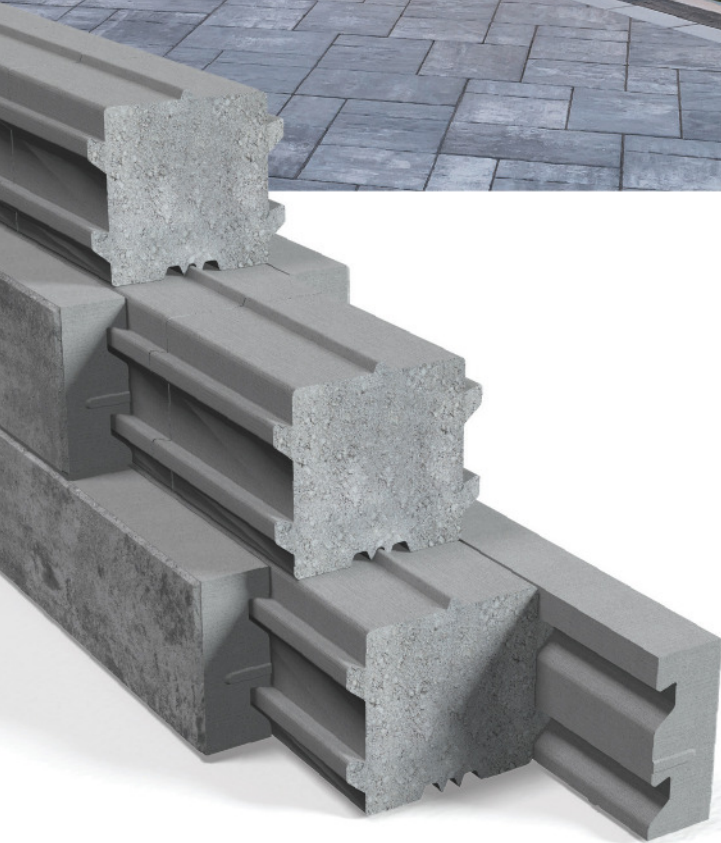
means that your new hardscape employees or the staff on your maintenance crew will get up to speed quickly, allowing you to take on more projects and get them done faster.

In what other ways do your products make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

There are incredible design opportunities available with U-Cara when it comes to panel colors, textures and placement. With this unleashed creativity, you can design and sell more easily and execute more profitable projects.

U-Cara is an engineered wall system, meaning that you can build walls up to 12 feet high and beyond. Because Unilock offers full design support for U-Cara, you can confidently take on larger and more profitable projects.

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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$

Vermeer Corp.

Q+A with Brett Newendorp Landscape Market Manager

How do your products or services save time?

Equipment from Vermeer, like the CTX100 mini skid steer, can help a landscape pro save time by offering a more efficient method to install landscape features like hardscaping or to prep a landscape bed for seeding or future planting. When combining a Vermeer mini skid steer with one of over 40 attachment offerings, contractors gain time because the machine can work more quickly than work done by hand. Transporting loads of rock, mulch, compost or other materials throughout a jobsite are also aided by the 4.4 mph top transport speed of the CTX100. Compared to equipment where the operator would need to climb in or out of a cab, the stand-on platform of Vermeer mini skid steers offers the ability for an operator to go from helping the crew to back operating the machine faster.

How do your products or service save landscape or lawn care pros labor?

Vermeer mini skid steers, like the S925TX, are built for tasks that used to be hard on laborers and required more people to get the job done. A Vermeer mini skid steer is capable of

lifting up to 1035 lbs in the ISO-rated operating capacity and transporting that load throughout a jobsite. In addition, trenches for irrigation or augured holes for tree and shrub planting are accomplished in far less time compared to hand-digging. Vermeer equipment helps landscape pros work more efficiently and effectively on jobsites.

How do your products or services save materials or fuel?

Using a Vermeer mini skid steer can save landscape professionals on fuel costs. First, Vermeer models are either gas- or diesel-powered, with the S925TX offering an engine option in each fuel type. In addition, the CTX100 or S925TX and various attachments weigh less than most larger-sized loaders that contractors are more accustomed to running. With a reduced load on the trailer or truck, crews can expect to use less fuel in the towing vehicle as well.



How do your products or services generate additional revenue for companies?

Vermeer equipment aids contractors with productive solutions that generate increased profit. A Vermeer mini skid steer can more efficiently plant and move trees into a new landscape install or carry pavers into a tighter area than a larger loader could for a hardscape project. These could be new revenue streams for a maintenance business looking to expand an offering to clients through landscape enhancements or even new design/build projects.

In what other ways do your products or services make companies profitable?

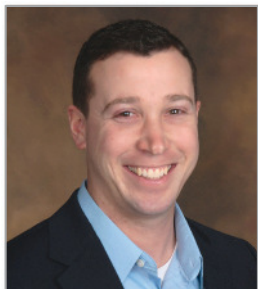
The Vermeer dealer network is focused on being a partner to our customers. We provide reliable parts and service after the equipment purchase and want to help our clients' businesses grow. Vermeer often provides seminars and workshops on jobsite safety and continuing education credit training for arborists at nearly every dealer location in the U.S.

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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Kawasaki Q+A with Troy Smith Manager, R&D testing and EFI

Why does Kawasaki opt for open-loop control rather than closed-loop control?

Kawasaki looked at all the variables to determine which technology would deliver the desired results. We always start by looking at the needs of lawn care professionals. In their demanding world, they need plenty of power and unfaltering dependability. Our open-loop system, paired with our electronic governor (eGov) and ECU, achieves the results lawn care professionals want: power and reliability.

What is the difference between open-loop versus closed-loop?

A Kawasaki open-loop system uses a defined map to manage the air/fuel ratio on the front end of the fueling process. With an open-loop system, there is no O2 sensor. Kawasaki uses advanced engine control algorithms to maximize accuracy of fuel control. A closed-loop system is more complicated in

that it needs to add an O2 sensor to measure exhaust. It then uses that reading to constantly adjust the air/fuel mixture to correct for any error in fuel control.

What about fuel efficiency?

Fuel efficiency is important to lawn care professionals. So, which system is more fuel efficient? This is a loaded question — literally. One source of efficiency loss is the need for rich air/fuel ratios. Tested under identical conditions, the open-loop system exhibits air/fuel ratios similar to a closed-loop system. In fact, when compared at 50% load, air/fuel ratios between open and closed systems are almost identical in the engines tested. Therefore, closed loop or open loop alone does not equate to engine fuel



efficiency. It's only one of the many contributing factors.

What is the maintenance advantage for open-loop?

Our goal is to deliver optimal results under the most demanding conditions. The design of the open-loop system requires fewer parts so there's less to go wrong. A closed-loop system requires more parts and thus more maintenance.

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17. **Publication of Statement of Ownership for a Requester Publication is required and will be printed in the October 2018 issue of this publication.**

18. **Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner**
Antoinette Sanchez-Perkins, Senior Audience Development Manager
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 **PAGE 100**



How to hire winning hourly employees



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.

Few people understand the daily pressures faced by landscape management business owners and managers. And fewer still realize that it's people—both clients and employees—who are usually the source of these stresses. A mower may malfunction, but you can fix it and count on it to be there every day and on time, too. The handheld trimmer or brushcutter may be kaput, but they won't ever be rude to a customer.

On the other hand, your employees are more often the source of your pressure and stress—but, as you well know, they also are the key to your success. In fact, your success is directly proportionate to your ability to hire quality employees. Why? Because bad hiring decisions are expensive!

It costs an employer 300-700 times an employee's hourly wage to replace that person when they quit, are fired or just stop showing up. Then, you're desperate to fill that position so you decide to hire the first applicant who shows up. But chances are, you'll come to regret it later because that new hire is likely to be mediocre at

best and whatever he or she does or doesn't do can result in lost profits, missed opportunities, decreased productivity and disgruntled coworkers and customers.

A bad hiring decision also can jeopardize your company's assets, reputation and security. A negligent hiring lawsuit is not something you want to learn about the hard way when a client sues you over an employee's mistake or misconduct.

Remember the good old days when there were lots applicants for every job? A simple "Help Wanted" sign on your trucks did the trick. Given today's low unemployment rate, it's more difficult to find any employees at all, much less above average, reliable ones.

In such a competitive labor market, those who get creative to attract and retain the type of applicants they need will come out on top. Creative thinking includes strategies such as finding out where the types of people you'd like to hire tend to congregate, socialize, worship, entertain, work, play, belong, shop and live. Once you have this information, you can tailor

your recruiting cards and calling former good employees to see if they'd like to come back. (Maybe it turned out that the grass wasn't greener at that new job after all.)

One recruiting mistake that's made in almost every industry is to require previous experience to minimize training time. On the other hand, Herb Kelleher, the founder of Southwest Airlines says, "If you don't have a good attitude, we don't want you, no matter how skilled you are. We can change skill levels through training. We can't change attitude." And research proves that a good attitude is one of the most important qualities an employee can have. Studies show 87 percent of the employees who fail at or leave a job fail or leave because they won't do it, not because they can't do it. That's an attitude problem.

The best way to get rid of a bad attitude is to not hire it in the first place. It's far easier and less expensive in the long run to hire an employee with a winning attitude and train him or her in the skills you need.

Remember, your employees can be a source of stress or the key to your success. A simple, efficient, effective hiring system includes: 1). recruiting, 2). screening, 3). attitude testing, 4). interviewing and 5). reference checks. A systemized hiring process will give you a real competitive advantage because a well-designed system eases the stress associated with the hiring/firing syndrome, minimizes costly employee turnover, reduces legal exposure and saves you time, money and the headaches that come with hiring mistakes. 

your recruiting message to appeal to this group and put your message where it's most likely to be seen. ("Come Grow with Us!" is one such example.) Other useful strategies include starting an employee referral reward program,



LET'S GROW

5 marketing tricks, treats



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.

I'm often tasked with putting together integrated marketing communication plans that encompass several platforms across a variety of media. Growing up in the green industry has given me a lot of experience with different platforms. I've learned some marketing and advertising endeavors are "tricks" and several platforms can be "treats."

TRICKS

1 Home service websites. The good thing about these sites—including HomeAdvisor and Angie's List—is they're populated with "customer reviews," but aggressive pushes for advertising lead to multiple contractors competing for the same estimate requests. Sometimes up to four companies could be competing for the same project, resulting in price shopping by the consumer.

2 Facebook Marketplace & Craigslist. Free advertising on these platforms typically revolves around consumer-to-consumer sales of used goods. However, contractors in the green industry also use these platforms to advertise their services. These listing platforms are based on chronological listing and require a user to repeatedly post to remain near the top. Inquiries from these platforms rarely create solid leads, and often, those you do receive are from people looking to barter.

3 Yellow Pages (online). While the print Yellow Pages is dead, the online version is alive and kicking. Yellow Pages representatives sell both print and online ads, offering to run your online ads for your company across the Google networks. The problem is they're running ads using their own account, extremely marking up the actual costs of the ads.

4 Home service listing mailers. Neighborhood mailings, like Valpak, are viewed by many as a quick, cheap alternative to direct mailers. They often promise the reach of a direct mail campaign; however, you're sharing the envelope with 20 to 30 other advertisers to divide that cost. It's hard enough to stand out in a mailbox with your own direct mail piece, let alone one you share with so many other advertisers.

5 Coupon websites. Groupon and other coupon websites hit their peak of popularity early this decade but are still relevant today. Unfortunately, for many companies that invest in these programs, there are many sales but for very little margin. Why? These coupon websites require companies to offer discounts at 50 percent or more off of normal prices.

TREATS

1 Google Ads. Online advertising doesn't need to be difficult. Google offers a multiplatform solution that integrates several advertising options, including:

- Search Ads that appear on Google's Search results page;
- Display Ads, which are image and video ads appearing on popular websites across the internet;
- YouTube Ads that play before YouTube videos;
- Shopping Ads, which are image ads that link to product sales pages; and
- Gmail Ads, which are text-based ads that appear in Gmail inboxes.

These ad platforms allow for multiple ways of targeting, allowing you to pinpoint consumers by geography, as well as by search behaviors. The best part about these platforms is the fact that you don't pay until someone clicks on your ad.

2 Facebook Ads. The largest social media site, Facebook, has a powerful ad platform enabling you to place image and video ads in users' timelines. These ads can be targeted by consumer geography, online behaviors and interests, as well as by third-party data from Facebook partners.

3 Search engine optimization. A well-optimized website allows you to show up in multiple searches on Google. The more Google searches your website appears in, the more traffic and leads that come to your website. A well-trained professional can help you design a plan to incorporate the most used terms into your website to achieve this traffic.

4 Online reviews. Word-of-mouth marketing still exists today, but it's mostly in the form of reviews on Google, Yelp and Facebook. Promoting online reviews will help you build consumer confidence and appear in more recommended searches on these platforms.

5 Direct mail. When controlled with specific targeting options, direct mail pieces can help bring more consumers to your business. List companies can help build lists of consumers based on geographic location and demographic data, such as income level, home value and more. 

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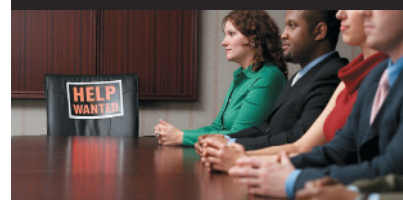
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We'll dig into the landscape industry's current market conditions in our annual **LM Industry Pulse** report, based on our research and extensive interviews with landscape professionals. To provide your input on the state of the market, keep an eye on your inbox for a link to our survey and/or email **LM Editor Marisa Palmieri** at mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net to schedule an interview.



GROW WITH GRUNDER

BY MARTY GRUNDER

The author is president and CEO of Grunder Landscaping Co. and The Grow Group, based in Dayton, Ohio. Reach him at marty@growgroupinc.com.



Fall is crucial if you want to get ahead

Welcome to fall and to my first column in *Landscape Management*. I will be here each month, sharing with you my insights as CEO of Grunder Landscaping Co. (GLC) and as a coach and consultant to ambitious landscape pros all over the country. I am always looking for ways to get better and grow as a leader and business person, and it's my goal to help you do the same.

So let's get down to business. Whether you're an owner or a team member, October is a pivotal month. With the hectic demands of summer starting to wind down, it's the perfect time to look back at what you've accomplished so far this year and where you hope to finish, what you did well and where you came up short. We take the time to do this at GLC because it's our last big chance to fix what we can for the season and to set ourselves up for success in the new year.

We reassess every area of our business—from finance and operations to sales and marketing—but none is more important than the way we're treating our clients and our people.

SHOW YOUR CLIENTS YOU CARE

Every successful landscaping company I know is working hard all year long to deliver great service to their clients, but fall is the time to wrap it all up with a bow.

At GLC, we are taking extra care to ensure all our clients' properties look exceptionally good and to get an extra touch point in with them

“Whether you're an owner or a team member, October is a pivotal month. With the hectic demands of summer starting to wind down, it's the perfect time to look back at what you've accomplished so far this year and where you hope to finish.”

before the year ends. This helps set the stage for us to convert design/build customers to ongoing maintenance clients, to lock in renewals and to sell new work for next year. Our team leads are knocking on doors to check in with our clients, our group leads are following up to make certain we haven't missed anything and I am sending handwritten thank-you notes to all our clients and offering to personally walk their property with them. Any issues we uncover, we will investigate thoroughly and agree on a plan for correcting for the future.

Is this time-intensive? Absolutely. But it's worth it. We understand the lifetime value of our best clients and are striving to build lasting relationships with them. We also know happy clients are our best marketing tool, helping us to discover new prospects through their word-of-mouth recommendations to their friends and neighbors.

YOUR PEOPLE ARE KEY

Finding and keeping good team members is just as important to the success of your business as finding and keeping good clients. It's also an ongoing challenge for nearly everyone in our industry.

In my experience, the single most important approach you can take is to proactively build the kind of company and culture that people want to be a part of. And to do that, you have to actually listen to your people and their concerns.

At GLC, we are holding “stay interviews” with our team members to find out what they like and don't like about our company and what would cause them to stay or to leave. These can be scary conversations to have, but they can provide invaluable insight into how to improve your workplace and retain your best people. We are also sending our director of human resources, Amber, out to job sites to talk with our teams in the field and to gain a better understanding of the specific challenges they face.

What do *your* clients and team members have to say about you? Now is a great time to ask.

See you next month! 

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