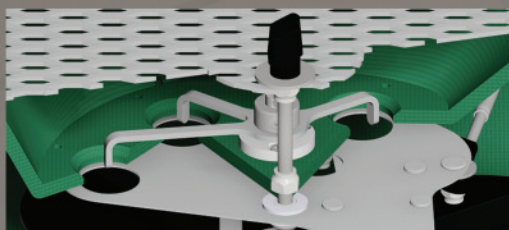


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(left) talks to the
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LM CONTENTS

JANUARY 2019 • VOL 58, ISSUE 1

TURF + ORNAMENTAL

26 Weed Avengers

Tips for controlling crabgrass and goosegrass.

28 Turf Insect ID + Control

How to identify chinch bugs.

30 Maintenance Shop

Best practices for the upkeep of spreader-sprayers.

31 Did you Know?

The scoop on selling aerations.

32 Products that Work

New turf products and technologies.

34 Business Boosters

The upsides of GPS tracking.

MOWING + MAINTENANCE

38 The Big One

LandCare, Culver City, Calif.

40 Iron Workhorses

New mowing products and technologies.

42 Maintain your Edge

What to think about before purchasing a new vehicle.

43 Business Boosters

Five things to consider before joining a franchise.

DESIGN BUILD + INSTALLATION

44 Hardscape Solutions

Custom Greenscaping, Irving, Texas.

46 Installation Iron

Design trends and suppliers' tips for compact excavators.

48 Design

How to choose the right design software for your business.

50 Business Boosters

The lowdown on lighting features.

Find out how to identify chinch bugs, even in their earliest stages of life (page 28).



ON THE COVER

The industry's best kept secret is a secret no more — welcome to the LM Growth Summit.

12

IRRIGATION + WATER MANAGEMENT

51 Water World

John Mini Distinctive Landscapes, Congers, N.Y.

52 Irrigation Tech

Design trends and suppliers' tips for heads, nozzles and rotors.

54 Business Boosters

The benefits of having strong contracts.

COLUMNS

58 Kehoe's Playbook

How to incorporate "the method" into your sales techniques.

BY KEVIN KEHOE

60 Business Insider

Why hope shouldn't be a profit growth strategy.

BY JEFFREY SCOTT

IN EVERY ISSUE

4 Seth's Cut

BY SETH JONES

6 LM Gallery

Photos from industry events

8 Need to Know

News and issues from around the landscaping industry.

56 Five Questions With

Meet Casey Hurd, managing member, Greenscapes Land Care.

59 A Look Back

A *Landscape Management* blast from the past.

61 SafetyWatch

Blower safety.

63 Classifieds/Ad Index

64 Grow with Grunder

Marty Grunder's insights from the past 12 months.

BY MARTY GRUNDER

ON THE COVER: PHOTO BY SETH JONES

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What can landscape pros do to follow through on their 2019 growth plan?



Landscape Professionals

Richard Bare
Arbor-Nomics Turf
Norcross, Ga.

"I would read and apply everything in the book 'Traction' by Gino Wickman. It will get you to all your goals, I guarantee."

Troy Clogg
Troy Clogg Landscape Associates
Wixom, Mich.

Paul Fraynd
Sun Valley Landscaping
Omaha, Neb.

Luke Henry
ProScape Lawn & Landscaping Services
Marion, Ohio



Chris Joyce
Joyce Landscaping
Cape Cod, Mass.

"We have to intentionally train and develop our people. Our ability to grow our business is directly proportional to the investment we make in the people in our business. The team with the best players on the field will win."

Aaron Katerberg
Grapids Irrigation
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Jerry McKay
McKay Landscape Lighting
Omaha, Neb.

Bryan Stolz
Winterberry Landscape & Garden Center
Southington, Conn.

Greg Winchel
Winchel Irrigation
Grandville, Mich.

Industry Consultants

Dan Gordon
TurfBooks
Newton, N.J.

Marty Grunder
The Grow Group
Dayton, Ohio

Phil Harwood
Grow the Bench
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Kevin Kehoe
3PG Consulting
Laguna, Calif.

Jeffrey Scott
Jeffrey Scott Consulting
Trumbull, Conn.



"Put the plan in writing with clear goals and share it with your team. Get your leaders involved in the planning process and give them each metrics they are accountable for to reach the team's goals. Be open and transparent with your team on what you want to accomplish ... they will help you get there!"



"Have a person on your admin staff schedule a monthly meeting with your key personnel and track your goals."



"Review documented growth plans with your leadership team on a weekly basis."

MORE ONLINE

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



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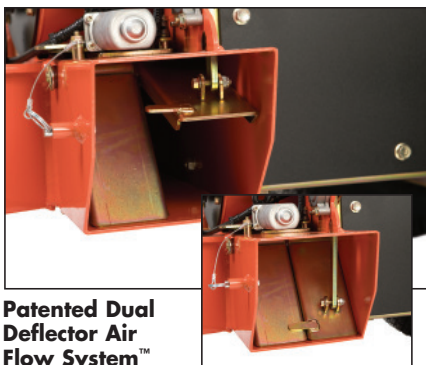
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via Twitter @sethajones.



Another small step

I've been fortunate in my career that I never had to make a giant leap ... I'm more like a Moon-walking Neil Armstrong, taking one small step at a time.

For example, my transition from college to the professional world was easier than almost anyone I know. While many of my classmates from Kansas University moved away from Lawrence to bigger cities, hopeful to find jobs in their chosen fields, I stayed in Lawrence and went from working 20 hours a week as a part-time intern to 40 hours a week as a full-time editor.

Looking back now, it may have been a case of arrested development — I was supposed to be a “professional” yet I was still living with my college roommates, still going to the same college bars. My first adult purchase was a coin-operated arcade game for our apartment. At work, I didn't even change cubicles, but now I was getting paid for my lunch hour.

That internship-turned-job was as an editor with *Golf Course Management* magazine, the official publication of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. I worked for that magazine for 12 years until the fine folks at North Coast Media (NCM) called. In yet another smooth transition, I kept working in the same industry — the green industry — but now as the editor-in-chief of *Golfdom*, sister publication of *Landscape Management* (LM). I've been EIC of *Golfdom* for eight years now (and happily still counting.)

NCM did not ask me to relocate my family to Cleveland. Today, instead of

driving to work, I make a short walk to my downstairs home office. The steps can get even smaller, apparently.

Over these years with NCM, I've been admiring LM — and not from afar. I was thrilled when a photo I took of the team at Ryan Lawn & Tree in Overland Park, Kan., was the cover of the April 2014 issue. I've always been quick to travel for the company, happy to represent for LM at GIE+EXPO or at meetings around the country with the many advertisers we see in both LM and *Golfdom*.

“Over these years with NCM, I've been admiring LM — and not from afar.”

A few months ago, Marisa Palmieri, who did an outstanding job guiding LM for the past several years, told us she was ready to leave behind the rigmarole of full-time work in favor of spending more time with her family (thankfully she remains with the magazine in a part-time role, as special projects editor.) After a few anxious weeks, NCM announced it would entrust me with this respected magazine as its new editor-in-chief. (And yes, I did take a few more steps back to that same college bar to celebrate a new milestone in my career.)

I hope my transition into EIC of LM goes as smoothly as my previous job changes. I'm thankful to have the support of my family and of NCM.

Now I just need *your* support.

Throughout my career, I've always understood that I'm the one playing in your sandbox. I'm the guy who carries pen and paper, trying to learn how the boots-on-the-ground reader is doing his or her job and how I can go about helping that reader. After all, this is not my magazine, it's your magazine.

With any change in leadership there is an opportunity to take a look at what works and what could be improved. So I ask you now: What do you want to see more of? Less of? How can we best help you and your company?

We're going to endeavor to do our best to keep what readers love about LM while adding even more solutions to their many challenges in LM's print and digital media. I love seeing the newest equipment available to the industry, and I pride myself in getting that information out as quickly as possible. You'll see that reflected in this month's cover story I wrote on the LM Growth Summit, detailing the many products and solutions on display at the event. You can count on LM continuing to be your top source for real-world solutions.

I'm excited for this new journey and to see where it takes me. As I take these next steps in my career, I hope you will walk with me and help me and my team keep LM as the premier magazine for green industry professionals. 🍷

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LM GALLERY

Check out a few of the places where the **LM** team made its rounds recently.

1 Somewhere over the rainbows This beautiful double rainbow showed itself over Reunion Resort while the group photo was being taken at the 2018 *Landscape Management Growth Summit (LMGS)*.

2 Is everyone accounted for? For a fun break in the *LMGS*, these brave souls took a kayak tour, knowing there are gators in Florida ...

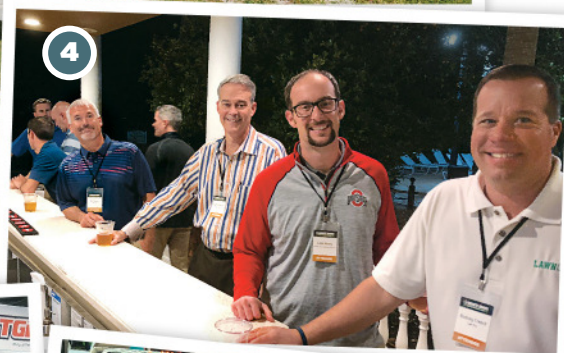
3 For the win! Benjamin Lewis, president of Browder-Hite, Exmore, Va., looks to get his scramble foursome a birdie while *LM* Associate Publisher Craig MacGregor watches.

4 Holding down the bar (Left to right) Bob Brower, general manager, Lawn Plus, West Alexandria, Ohio; Mark Utendorf, president, Emerald Lawn Care, Rolling Meadows, Ill.; Luke Henry, president, ProScape Lawn & Landscape Services, Marion, Ohio; Rodney Creech, owner, Lawn Plus, take in a beautiful Orlando evening at the Seven Eagles Pool Pavilion outdoor bar.

5 Gotta meet the new guy At GIE+EXPO in Louisville, Ky., *LM* columnist Jeffrey Scott (left) stopped by the *LM* booth to say hi to the new guy — *LM* EIC Seth Jones.

6 Philadelphia flyers This new spin on air hockey was a fun way for WORX to show off the blowing force of the 20-volt turbine blowers at GIE+EXPO.

7 Familiar face *LM* Publisher Bill Roddy (left) and MacGregor (right) show off their name badges, featuring the October 2018 cover of the magazine. And who was on that cover? None other than Marty Grunder, (center) president and CEO of Grunder Landscaping Co. and the Grow Group, Dayton, Ohio.



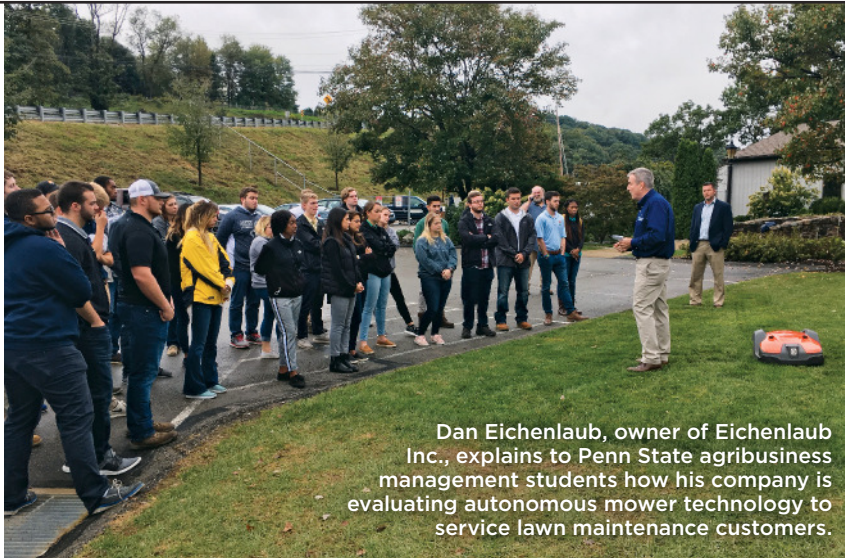


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Dan Eichenlaub, owner of Eichenlaub Inc., explains to Penn State agribusiness management students how his company is evaluating autonomous mower technology to service lawn maintenance customers.

NALP NAMES NEWEST CLASS OF TRAILBLAZERS

The National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) named six industry professionals as its newest Trailblazers. These individuals were nominated by their peers for making significant and long-term contributions to the landscape industry and are committed to giving back to the industry through mentoring other industry professionals. The following are the new Trailblazers:

- **Barry Schneider**, president, Surrounds, Sterling, Va.;
- **John Puryear**, president, Puryear Farms, Gallatin, Tenn.;
- **Michael Prokopchak**, president, Walnut Hill Landscape Co., Annapolis, Md.;
- **Alan Richmond**, vice president, Southern Botanical, Dallas;
- **Brian Edwards**, manager, Color Burst Landscapes, Brentwood, Tenn.; and
- **Marc Funderburk**, president, LandPatterns, Dallas.

EMBRACING ROBOTS WITH OPEN ARMS

How do you feel about robotic mowers? This is the question Penn State University students recently asked customers of Eichenlaub Inc., a full-service landscape firm based in Pittsburgh.

Nearly 100 students took part in the field day hosted at Eichenlaub Inc.'s headquarters. The event included a live case study where students called and spoke directly with Eichenlaub Inc.'s customers to get feedback on having their property serviced with a robotic mower.

Dan Eichenlaub, owner of Eichenlaub Inc., which is a LandOpt contractor, hosted the event alongside Husqvarna's Brian Luzier and Penn State's Dean Richard Roush.

During the field day, students learned, discussed and brainstormed how to bring innovation to existing businesses and to an industry.

"Existing companies must innovate or they die," Eichenlaub says.

Husqvarna's Automower was

demonstrated to the students, who are minoring in entrepreneurship and innovation as part of their degree from Penn State.

"The students that are taking this minor aren't necessarily in agriculture. This is an opportunity to expose them to the landscaping industry," says Eichenlaub, a Penn State alumnus. "If we want to be able to recruit in this industry, people need to know about it from the current perspective."

Luzier, commercial sales manager at Husqvarna, says that out of all of the customers the students interviewed, more than 80 percent are willing to let a professional landscaping company maintain their lawn autonomously.

"Most (property owners) have said that they trust the professional landscaper's judgement when it comes to what is best for their property," he says. "The Automower is the future, and by future, I don't mean three years from now, I mean the 2019 cutting season."

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PBI-Gordon Corp. President and CEO Don Chew (left) and CFO Andrew Peck (right) stand in front of PBI-Gordon's new corporate headquarters in Shawnee, Kan.

PBI'S NEW DIGS

PBI-Gordon Corp. officially moved into its new corporate headquarters, located in Shawnee, Kan. PBI-Gordon announced its purchase of the building in March 2018. Since then, the building has undergone renovations to accommodate approximately 100 of the company's employee-owners. PBI-Gordon currently employs more than 400 nationally in facilities in Kansas, Missouri, Illinois and Florida, and has been headquartered in the Kansas City metro area since its founding in 1947. The company moved from its former headquarters at 1217 W. 12th Street in Kansas City, Mo.'s West Bottoms, where it had been since 1981.

BrightView: A company with a plan

Following its move to go public in June 2018, BrightView's revenue has continued to grow at a modest pace. Revenue for the year ended Sept. 30, 2018 was 5.7 percent higher than the previous year's revenue. According to financial expert Greg Herring, these stats signify that the company has a strategic plan and is executing it.

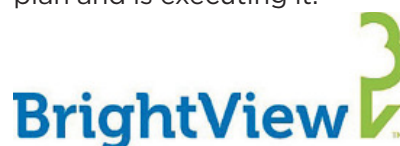


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LDI makes moves

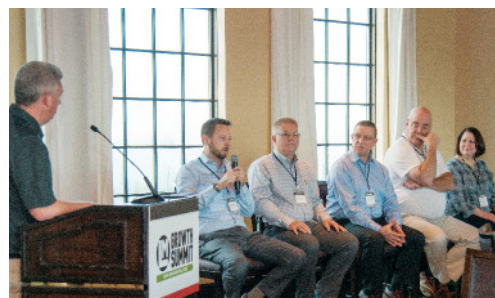
Landscape Development Inc. (LDI) opened a new Sacramento, Calif., division, expanding the company's service territory into northern California. Dudley Mallinson has been appointed as division president, tasked with broadening LDI's service territory and client base, according to the company. The division will offer the same core services as provided throughout the California and Nevada company network, including construction, maintenance, landscape architecture, earth services, preconstruction and design/build services.



Horizon Distributors acquires Turf & Garden

Louisiana-based Horizon Distributors, a full-service distributor of irrigation and landscape products, acquired Turf & Garden, a wholesale supplier of landscape products, irrigation, lighting and power equipment with four stores in southeastern Virginia and the Outer Banks, N.C. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

198 sessions had with partners during the 2018 LM Growth Summit.



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WHEELS UP

Turfco President George Kinkead (left) talks to the Spring Touch Lawn & Pest Control team about the finer details of the T3100 spreader-sprayer.

SERIOUS BUSINESS

The industry's best kept secret is a secret no more — welcome to the *LM* Growth Summit. **BY SETH JONES | *LM* EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

Now in its eighth year, the *LM* Growth Summit is unique in the industry in that it brings lawn care professionals face-to-face with some of the industry's leading innovators.

Sure, the opportunity exists to schedule these meetings at national or regional trade shows. But good luck successfully making 10 meetings with top level executives — let alone the owners of the companies or the actual inventors of the equipment — at any trade show.

The *LM* Growth Summit is designed so that every attendee meets with every partner, period.

"To be honest with you, I was kind of apprehensive before I came in because I was thinking I would be a captive

audience," says first-time attendee Mark Utendorf, president of Emerald Lawn Care in Rolling Meadows, Ill. "I didn't feel like any of the vendors were really trying to push their product. It was very educational; the vendors were very well informed and that was the focus of the conversation — finding out what we're doing and where their products may or may not help us."

Attendees also liked the event's organization.

"We are all kept to task to make our different meetings with the different vendors and suppliers," says 2018 *LM* Growth Summit attendee Mike Caprio, regional business consultant for Lawn Doctor. "Too often you go to different events and you see people wandering in the halls or they're on their phones."

Continued on page 14

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Continued from page 12

No wandering allowed at the *LM Growth Summit* — there are too many meetings to be made. Attendees are each given their own specific schedule of one-on-one meetings with the 10 different partners, ensuring every lawn care professional learns about how each partner can help his or her business.

This year 20 different companies accepted invitations to attend the *LM Growth Summit*. While it's not as good as attending in person (lawn care professionals interested in attending can apply at LMGrowthSummit.com), we present our own one-on-one meeting with each partner in this feature story.

➔ PermaGreen

Only one company has been to every *LM Growth Summit*, and that company is PermaGreen. Dan Shiplov, new product sales consultant for PermaGreen, says the one-on-one meetings are what bring the company back every year.

"You get undivided attention as opposed to a trade show, where people are more nonchalant," Shiplov says. "You're able to get to know people on a personal level and get a better idea of their needs."

Shiplov was outdoors allowing attendees to take PermaGreen's spreader-sprayer for a test drive. His focus was to point out the different ways the machine can maximize an operator's efficiency.

"With attendees at this event, they are looking at efficiency and asking themselves what is going to save them money and what is going to make them money," Shiplov says. "At PermaGreen, we've all been in the business, we've done the turf applications, we've experienced the labor costs, the fuel costs, the windshield time. We incorporate all that (knowledge) into our machines."

One of the newer features to increase efficiency on the Triumph spreader-sprayer is a break-through applicator, which combats clumping in the hopper. Another feature is the machine's mechanically regulated spreader-sprayer system.

"If you are doing even passes, the machine takes care of the rest," Shiplov says. "The operator doesn't need to mess with any gauges. If you give an operator something to mess with, they will mess with it. This is a big feature for us because it makes the machine foolproof."

➔ Ewing Irrigation & Landscape Supply

A funny thing happened before the *LM Growth Summit* began when one of the attendees emailed Brian Walker, area sales manager for Ewing Irrigation & Landscape Supply. The attendee politely declined the meeting with Ewing, Walker recalls, because the attendee didn't do any irrigation installation.

"I emailed him back and said, 'If you think all we do is irrigation, then that is exactly why we need to meet,'" Walker says, laughing.



SPREADING THE MESSAGE (Top) Shiplov gives a demo of PermaGreen's spreader-sprayer. (Bottom) The team from Ewing Irrigation & Landscape Supply talk to Dean Bryant of Massey Services.

Walker took the time to tell all the attendees about Ewing Irrigation & Landscape Supply's culture and how the company goes about business.

"We're a 96-year-old company, third-generation, family-owned. We have 240-plus locations in the U.S.," Walker says. "We partner with our customers. We have classrooms in all our facilities because their education makes them a better customer for us."

And for the attendee who wanted to skip his meeting with Ewing? Thankfully he took the meeting, because Walker had an important message for him.

"I told him we carry a full line of turf products but also outdoor living products — landscape lighting, hardscape and grills. In fact, we have just under 30,000 SKUs. It's amazing the amount of stuff we carry."

Continued on page 16

[illegible]

PRO Landscape

Continued from page 14

➤Turfco

George Kinkead, president of Turfco, says he enjoys visiting the *LM* Growth Summit because of the attendees. They're people he enjoys talking to, he says, because they are all hungry to grow their businesses.

"They took the time out of their week to come down here and talk to other professionals," Kinkead says. "It helps separate the people who are too busy to think about how to grow their business from those who are growing their business."

Turfco was giving demos of its T3100 spreader-sprayer to attendees, and while Kinkead was presenting the machine's various features, his main talking point was that his company wants to help them grow their companies.

"One of the biggest issues everybody's running into is they have the ability to outsell what they can produce," Kinkead says. "If you go 15-20 years ago, the primary problem was 'How can I sell more?' The people at this conference, they've already reached that point through sophisticated software or systems that answer the sales questions. So now what they're struggling with is 'How can I produce that efficiently?'"

One of Kinkead's solutions to increase efficiency is the ease of operation of the T3100.

"There's an incredible, unfortunate amount of turnover in our business," Kinkead says. "If guys are running 10 trucks, it isn't surprising to see two or three people turn over (regularly). So how fast can I get my new guys up and running, and how fast can I be making money? Even if a guy quits, the lawn care professional needs this machine out there running the very next day."

➤Prime Source

North Carolina-based Prime Source is an entrepreneurial marketing company with a focus on developing,

manufacturing and marketing select post-patent products, unique technologies and specialty products. Its goal for attending the *LM* Growth Summit was simple: The team wanted to educate people about who they are and what products they have available.

"There's been a lot of guys here that didn't know that several products are off patent because their sales guys aren't telling them because they can't tell them because that's corporate direction," says Keith Montgomery, chief business development officer for Prime Source. "It's been good for us to be able to educate and then come up with a plan afterward working through one of our distributors."

Prime Source has a broad portfolio of adjuvants, seed treatments, fungicides, herbicides and insecticides, and obviously the company doesn't want any of those products being kept secret from customers.

"Some of the (national distributors) have contracts in place that are really loyalty driven and that are trying to block post-patents," Montgomery says. "So we want to make sure LCOs know there is a value-added option out there."

➤LebanonTurf

LebanonTurf produces fertilizers, grass seed and biological products to help lawn care operators create and maintain healthy turf conditions. Mike Bandy, product manager, and Jeremy Bigler, landscape channel manager, were discussing how the company's ProScope products can help LCOs overcome labor challenges by combining or even eliminating applications.

"(ProScope) offers either fertilizer with pre- and postemergent herbicides or fertilizer with preemergent and insecticides, so those two groups are really focused on the value add, what can you do with less time," Bigler says. "We're focused on the labor issue — there's just not as much time in the workday to get the work done."

Bigler says the event kept him on his toes as the attendees wanted to pursue different topics based on geography and the scope of their business.

"Frankly, I learned from everyone — there were a lot of different viewpoints," he says. "There were some products we were really focused on promoting, but then the conversation would go a different direction, based on the cues we were given."

Continued on page 21



PRIME TIME Jud Hudnut of Prime Source meets with Jason Kregel, member-owner of My Turf, Byron Center, Mich.

PHOTO: SETH JONES

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Continued from page 16

➔ Quali-Pro

The men from Quali-Pro — Nick Strain, business manager, Jeremy Moore, national accounts manager, and Paul Fox, Florida area manager — were constantly on the move at the LM Growth Summit, not wanting to waste a single minute of the event. The attendees were all familiar with Quali-Pro, Strain says, but they were somewhat surprised to learn how big the company is.

"I would say 80-90 percent of them know who we are, but I don't know if they realize the breadth of products we have," Strain says. "We have over 100 active ingredients (AIs) that we work with, we have specific proprietary combinations that we have in market, such as Negate. And we also have some 'me-too' products like Strobe Pro G."

Some of the excitement from the group came from the new residential label on Negate, a sulfonylurea herbicide for broadleaf weed control in warm season grasses. Strobe Pro G was also a "big one" for the trio to talk about, Strain says.

"(Strobe Pro G) controls a broad spectrum of weeds, it covers and adds another bullet to the arsenal of products we have that we can bring to support our customers," Strain says. "Strobe Pro G is unique in a fungal application. It's on a granular so the ease of application and the amount of diseases that it covers is unique."

➔ Anuvia Plant Nutrients

It's said that one man's trash is another man's treasure. For the employees of Anuvia Plant Nutrients, that trash isn't just a treasure, it's also an environmentally friendly plant nutrient.

Chuck Barber, vice president of customer accounts, specialty, explained to LM Growth Summit attendees how Anuvia takes organic waste and changes it into something useful that lawn care companies can be proud to use.

Continued on page 22



TALKING TURF
(Top) The team from Quali-Pro stressed to LMGS attendees the breadth of their company — they have access to more than 100 AIs. (Left) At the LebanonTurf table, the discussion focused on labor-saving products like the company's ProScape line of fertilizers.



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2018 LMGS GROUP PHOTO The 2018 LM Growth Summit included 20 attendees, 10 partners, six experts and one double rainbow (see page 6.)

BUILDING TRACTION

At the very start of this year's LM Growth Summit, consultant Ken Bogard kicked off the workshop session with a request:

"Everyone stand up, look at the person on either side of you ... and say goodbye."

The person next to you is not going to be the same person in three hours once we go through this process, Bogard said. He then led the lawn care attendees through the six components of the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) — vision, people, data, issues, process and traction — outlined in the book "Traction: Get a Grip on Your Business" by Gino Wickman.

Bogard, a professional EOS implementer with Nexus Business Solutions in Grand Rapids, Mich., works with companies to integrate the EOS into their operations. At the Growth Summit, he challenged attendees to identify their one-year, three-year and 10-year goals, evaluate their employees and build a strong leadership team. All attendees walked away having started their one-page plans — their roadmaps to creating "traction" and changing their companies for the better.

Mark Utendorf, president of Emerald Lawn Care in Rolling Meadows, Ill., appreciated Bogard's approach to introducing and breaking down the EOS. "It's all about execution, so figure out what your priorities are and figure out what you can do to address those individual priorities," he said. "If you break it into those pieces, it's much more manageable and less intimidating." — Abby Hart

For LM readers who didn't join us at this year's Growth Summit, we're giving away copies of "Traction: Get a Grip on Your Business." To learn how you can get your copy, visit LandscapeManagement.net/WebExtras.



Continued from page 21

"Anuvia Plant Nutrients really represents a new category, a new technology," Barber says. "We reclaim organic inputs that would otherwise be discarded, and we reprocess it into a homogenized renewable granule that performs as both an immediate and a slow-release fertilizer."

Barber says that while he was there to educate the attendees, he also spent an equal amount of time learning from the attendees.

"We want to learn more about their businesses," Barber says. "That was a key point to us attending that meeting. We want to connect with that segment of the marketplace, and we want to pass along our message of sustainability."

The one thing that stood out to Barber was the willingness of the attendees to learn about a new technology.

"I think that's a key reason people attend (the LM Growth Summit), is to learn," Barber says. "The people that are there want to see the newest cutting-edge technology in the marketplace."

PBI-Gordon Corp.

Shawnee, Kan.-based PBI-Gordon Corp. came to the LM Growth Summit with a common question for attendees: If they could have an ideal product, what would that product look like?

'THE NEWEST CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY'

Discussions at both Anuvia Plant Nutrients (top) and PBI-Gordon (bottom) focused on the latest and greatest products to help LCOs overcome their many challenges.



PHOTOS: LOU FERRARO, PARK SOUTH PHOTOGRAPHY (TOP); SETH JONES



“We were really trying to get a feel for their business, their agromomic schedule and what their biggest challenges are,” says Jay Young, herbicide product manager for PBI-Gordon. “Labor is always a problem for everyone, but from a weed standpoint, we want to know what people are looking for and how PBI-Gordon might help.”

A product that came up frequently was the company’s Avenue South, a broadleaf herbicide that is safe to apply in St. Augustinegrass and other sensitive warm-season grasses. Avenue South controls clover, dollarweed, spurge, dandelion and Virginia buttonweed, among many others.

“For the most part, attendees were familiar with us. Maybe not the company by name, but definitely our products,” Young says. “To have that many LCOs all in one location for two days was very valuable to us.”

Continued on page 24



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Continued from page 23

Turfware

Rob Edwards is the vice president of operations for Turfware, but he is quick to point out that he is not your typical salesperson. That's because Edwards is not only a former lawn care operator, but he's also the co-inventor of TR360 ride-on spreader-sprayer.

"We built this machine over a 10-year period while we had, at our peak, 40 trucks out on the road," Edwards says. "I can relate to the headaches of running an LCO, and that led to a lot of laughs."

Edwards says the first thing he always points out about the TR360 is how it is "simply built," making repairs easy. "I'm genuinely proud of that," he says. The next thing that most attendees wanted to learn more about was the machine's dual hopper, which allows operators to carry two different materials to job sites at the same time.

"The ability to regulate expensive products and not to have to apply it on lawns where people aren't paying for it is an exciting part of this machine," Edwards says. "That's hundreds, if not thousands, in material and labor that we can save people." 📱

MADE IN THE SHADE Rob Edwards, VP of operations for Turfware, discusses the TR360 ride-on spreader-sprayer.



PHOTO: SETH JONES



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WEED AVENGERS

Take back your turf

Crabgrass and goosegrass are two of the most prevalent turf nuisances in the country. Here are a few tips LCOs can use to identify and control these troublesome grassy weeds. **BY ABBY HART | LM SENIOR EDITOR**



CRABGRASS

KNOW YOUR ENEMY:

- Upright-growing, summer annual grassy weed that grows in patches;
- Yellowish-green in color;
- As it germinates, the wide leaf blade is generally wider than turfgrasses;
- Large crabgrass features hairs on the leaves;
- Smooth crabgrass has a smooth leaf blade;
- Begins to germinate when soil temps warm up to 55 degrees;
- Look for crabgrass first in south-facing slopes, south sides of buildings and turfgrass around and near concrete where soils are likely warmer;
- Thrives in compacted soils; and
- Competes with turf during the summer season. As crabgrass dies in the early fall, it leaves voids in the turf.

COMBAT STRATEGY:

- Cultivate healthy, dense turf through a solid aeration and fertilization program and by addressing insect or disease issues promptly;
- Apply preemergent herbicides before germination (mid-February to mid- to late-March);
- Look for preemergent herbicides with active ingredients dithiopyr, indaziflam, oxadiazon, prodiamine and pendimethalin;


- Postemergent herbicide active ingredients include fenoxaprop, fluazifop, mesotrione, quinclorac, sethoxydim, topramezone and more recently, pinoxaden; and
- Single or split applications can be effective, depending on the severity of the growth.

GOOSEGRASS

KNOW YOUR ENEMY:

- Low-growing summer annual grassy weed;
- Lighter green in color than healthy turf;
- Broader leaf blades;
- Grows out from a whitish, folded stem from a single center point, emanating out into a “wagon-wheel” pattern;
- Found in thinner turf areas and compacted soils;
- Has a fibrous taproot; and
- Germinates 4-6 weeks after crabgrass.

COMBAT STRATEGY:

- Cultivate healthy, dense turf through a solid aeration and fertilization program and by addressing insect or disease issues;
- Irrigate turfgrass deeply and infrequently — frequent, light watering encourages goosegrass growth;
- Apply preemergent products with active ingredients dithiopyr, indaziflam, oxadiazon, prodiamine and pendimethalin; and
- Postemergent products with the active ingredients fenoxaprop, foramsulfuron, mesotrione, sulfentrazone, topramezone and products that combine several herbicides are also effective. 



SOURCES: Gil del Rosario, market development specialist at Corteva Agriscience, Agriculture Division of DowDuPont, and Jay McCurdy, Ph.D., assistant professor and turfgrass extension specialist, Department of Plant & Soil Sciences, Mississippi State University.

PHOTOS: GIL DEL ROSARIO, CORTEVA AGRISCIENCE, AGRICULTURE DIVISION OF DOW/DUPONT



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TURF INSECT ID + CONTROL

Chinch bug mug

An in-depth look at chinch bugs and how to combat them.

BY ABBY HART | LM SENIOR EDITOR

Chinch bug damage to lawns can range from subtle to dramatic, resulting in brown turf that can be confused with drought stress or leaf spot disease. Here, David J. Shetlar, Ph.D., professor emeritus of urban landscape entomology at The Ohio State University, offers some recommendations for how you can ID and control a chinch bug infestation.

Identify the culprit. Chinch bugs are generally small black and white insects. Early instar nymphs are a bright orange color with a white band across the abdomen, and later instar nymphs turn a dark purple-black color. Southern chinch bugs look like hairy chinch bugs; a specialist is needed to separate the two species.

Hairy chinch bugs are most common and damaging in cool-season grasses in the Northeast. The western chinch bug seems to attack lawns in the prairie states. The southern chinch bug is most common in all of the Gulf states, espe-

cially where St. Augustinegrass grows.

Hairy chinch bug damage in cool-season grasses looks like melting out from leaf spot disease or summer drought stress. Shetlar says that lawn care operators (LCOs) often mistakenly believe the turf damage is caused by an irrigation head that isn't working properly.


Diagnosing the problem. Shetlar recommends that LCOs get down on their hands and knees where the turf looks droughted and brown. In the areas where brown turf meets green turf, separate the canopy, and if there are chinch bugs, they will be running around in the thatch zone.

Damage control. "Hairy chinch bugs respond well to a single application of a pyrethroid insecticide," Shetlar says. The southern chinch bug has up to six

generations per year, so repeated applications in a single season of several insecticide categories can lead to resistance development, especially with pyrethroid and neonicotinoid insecticides. However, combination products containing a pyrethroid plus a neonicotinoid perform well against resistant southern chinch bugs. LCOs can limit their applications to once a year for an insecticide category to avoid resistance.

Long-term strategy. Chinch bugs are often found in neighborhood developments, Shetlar explains. He says this is most likely because the developer used the same turf supplier or seed source to establish lawns. Kentucky bluegrass is extremely susceptible. Perennial ryegrass and fine fescue lacking endophytes are also highly susceptible.

In turfgrasses, endophytes are fungi that take in nutrients and water from the grass plant. In return, endophytes produce toxins that protect the plant from various insects, especially caterpillars, chinch bugs and billbugs.

Fescues and ryegrasses with endophytes are resistant to chinch bug attack. When reseeding lawns with chinch bug damage, Shetlar recommends consulting with seed suppliers to establish endophytic grasses into lawns. Another option is to check with local turf suppliers and obtain new cultivars that have shown resistance to southern chinch bugs. 

GROWING PROBLEM
The chinch bug at various stages in its life cycle.



Chinch bug infestations can cause brown patches of turf that are often mistaken for drought symptoms.



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MAINTENANCE SHOP

Spreader-sprayer smarts

How LCOs can keep their spreader-sprayers in good shape.

BY ABBY HART | LM SENIOR EDITOR



Lawn care operators (LCOs) invest a large part of their budgets into equipment like aerators, spray rigs and spreader-sprayers. According to some experts, they often miss a key component — preventive maintenance — especially over the winter months in colder areas of the country.

“Many LCOs aren’t doing enough preventive maintenance on their equipment,” says George Kinkead, president of turf equipment manufacturer, Turfco. “But they’re starting to catch on that their labor issues are connected to their product issues — they’re starting to say,

‘If I maintain my equipment, I can keep (employees).’”

Kinkead says it’s important for owners and managers to lead by example when training employees

on equipment maintenance. The result is employees who take ownership and pride in that equipment.

“It’s kind of like a virtuous cycle,” he says. “We’re trying to push the issue right now in winter when things are down; that’s when to take care of equipment.”

Dan Shiplov, new product sales consultant for PermaGreen, says his No. 1 maintenance tip is to blow off machines rather than spray them down with water.

“When you start getting into the equipment with water, especially from a pressure washer, it starts to activate that fertilizer and starts eating away around

the engine and the transmission,” Shiplov says. He also recommends not leaving fertilizer in the hopper overnight.

Though LCOs should refer to equipment operation manuals for product-specific maintenance tasks, Kinkead and Shiplov offer a few tips to keep spreader-sprayers in tiptop condition.

DAILY

- Check engine and transmission oil levels;
- Clear remaining fertilizer and debris off of the unit with a blower or pressurized air hose, paying close attention to these key areas:
 1. around the axle;
 2. around and under the engine;
 3. inside and under the hopper (be sure to move hopper gate open and closed); and
 4. around the transmission;
- Clean equipment with water as necessary, particularly during high-humidity days. Ensure all fertilizer is removed from the unit; water mixed with fertilizer sitting on the unit for extended periods of time can erode the equipment. Blow off the unit with air after cleaning with water;
- Clean spray system with water — be sure to wear proper personal protective equipment. Shiplov recommends a couple gallons of warm soapy water to clean the spray system, ensuring it goes through the lines, including the nozzles. He also notes that some LCOs have reported success with products such as OxiClean, diluting it according to the product directions; and

- Check springs on the engine — make sure they have good tension and aren’t becoming corroded.




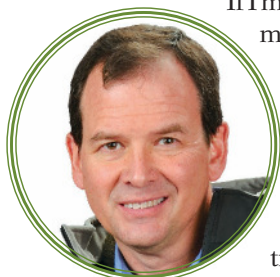
Dan Shiplov

WEEKLY

- Grease all grease fittings on the machine;
- Check and clean engine air filter — if excessively dirty, replace the filter;
- Clean carb linkage, choke control and governor spring. Blow off the area with air (brake cleaner also works);
- Check air pressure in tires and inflate to the marked PSI on tire;
- Check engine and transmission oil levels;
- Check steering cable tension;
- Inspect belts for wear;
- Check all cables for smooth function — use WD-40 in the sleeves of the cables to ensure they’re lubricated;
- Inspect and clean front wheel bearings;
- Check filters and strainers to ensure they are clear; and
- Check that belts aren’t worn.

OFF-SEASON WINTER MAINTENANCE

- Perform all daily and winter maintenance activities;
- Run RV antifreeze through the spray system. Shiplov recommends 1 to 2 gallons of a half-water, half-RV antifreeze solution; and
- Check tires’ air pressure and inflate above PSI on tires before storing. 



George Kinkead

EDUCATE ➔

It's important that contractors let customers know what to expect following aeration services.

DID YOU KNOW

Top tips for selling aeration

BY ABBY HART | LM SENIOR EDITOR

Offering turf aeration services can be daunting for a lawn care operator (LCO) because customers often don't understand how aerating can benefit their lawns.

LCOs may opt out of offering aeration because they have limited manpower or a competing lawn care company offers cheaper services, says Rich Clark, account manager for Billy Goat Industries. Aeration can be a lucrative add-on, as the going rate for the service is \$10-\$20 per 1,000 square feet, with a minimum charge of \$100 per aeration, not including seed costs, according to Clark. These tips can help increase aeration sales.

● **Educate customers about aerating.** Provide healthy lawncare tips on your statement of service, website and social media platforms. Explain that aeration reduces compaction, increases air circulation, allows more water and



nutrients to get to the roots, helps thicken and deepen roots, and reduces thatch. When aerating warm-season grasses, explain that more aeration holes are better, and the more rhizomes and stolons are cut, the more shoots will grow.

● **Set reasonable expectations.** Clark recommends helping the customer understand what they should see in their lawns and offering information such as seed germination time (generally 7 to 14 days).

● **Ensure customers understand how to take care of their lawns once service is completed.** Let customers know how much and when to water. Explain that there will be plugs on the lawn for a short period — which will break down when watered as directed — and how the plugs can help the seed germination process before they break down.

For additional tips, visit LandscapeManagement.net.

PHOTO: BILLY GOAT INDUSTRIES



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The LawnScaper is an Isuzu NPR-HD truck that accommodates a 300-gal. or 400-gal. Graham spray unit, a ride-on mower or spreader-sprayer and a variety of other landscaping equipment. The truck's heavy-duty bed measures 14 ft. with an additional 4-ft. dovetail. A forkable heavy-duty steel frame gives technicians total flexibility when applying liquid products, according to the company. The fiberglass tank can be compartmented, and fold-down bed rails and a split gate with gate assist make it easy to load and offload equipment.



TURNAER XT8 AND DROP SEEDER ATTACHMENT

COMPANY: Turfco

URL: Turfco.com

Turfco's drop seeder attachment for the TurnAer XT8 stand-on aerator has a 30-in. seeding width that matches the XT8's aerating width. The machine holds up to 65 lbs. of seed and mounts directly to the front of the XT8, so crews spend less time per yard by needing only a single pass to aerate and seed, according to Turfco. Additionally, the XT8 offers zero-turn agility, auto-depth control, protected drive chains and zero-grease fittings.



NEXT GEN 25-IN. AERATOR



COMPANY: Billy Goat Industries

URL: BillyGoat.com

The Next Gen 25-in. width PLUGR reciprocating aerator offers up to 42,550 sq. ft. of aeration per hour in a single pass. Variable aeration density allows operators to vary hole spacing from eight to 45 holes per sq. ft. The unit features self-propelled rear-wheel hydro-drive and front casters for in-ground turning and drive controls that feature feathering speed with fingertip control. The aerator also offers EZ Lift-n-Drop tine engagement/disengagement for uninterrupted aeration.



TRIUMPH SPREADER-SPRAYER



COMPANY: PermaGreen

URL: PermaGreen.com

The Triumph spreader-sprayer features a Honda GX200 engine, can cover an acre in 15 min. and can also fit through a 36-in. gate, which allows operators to perform applications on both large and small properties, according to the company. The machine sprays at a rate of 32 oz. per 1,000 sq. ft., covering 48,000 sq. ft. per fill or 12 gal. The PermaGreen agitator helps prevent clogging and provides a fuller spread pattern, according to the company, and it includes a 15-month bumper-to-bumper warranty and a 60-day buyback guarantee.





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have ever worked with."**

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BUSINESS BOOSTERS

Tracking your trucks

GPS tracking systems help shed light on how lawn and landscape crews are using resources and help companies work efficiently while promoting safety and accountability. **BY ABBY HART | LM SENIOR EDITOR**



**SMOOTH
ROADS AHEAD**
Implementing a GPS
system aids with
safety, accountability
and efficiency.

In the hustle and bustle of serving lawn care customers and managing employees, it can be daunting to streamline operations and track where crews and equipment are at any given moment. Integrating GPS tracking into your operation can help — and will pay off in the long run.

“Lawn and landscaping companies have a lot of challenges to solve,” says Kevin Aries, senior manager, products, for Verizon Connect. “GPS tracking benefits them by giving them the real-time (vehicle) locations and information they need in order to eliminate wasteful activities, and it allows them to be more productive in their business operations.”

Ryan Driscoll, vice president of marketing at GPS Insight, says the positives are obvious for companies with expensive equipment and a workforce that’s always on the move.

“Think about it this way: If you have trucks, trailers or mowers that are of value, and if location information, driver accountability, safety, efficiency and maintenance are important to you, then you should consider using GPS tracking,” he says.

THE CHALLENGES

Aries says prior to researching GPS fleet tracking systems, lawn and landscape companies should first consider the specific challenges they’re looking to solve. Typically, these challenges include accountability, safety, efficiency and vehicle maintenance.

Accountability relates to how a company holds its drivers responsible for their time and use of company property and how it holds itself responsible to its customers.

A GPS fleet tracking system displays where drivers are, their current status and where they have been. The system can track the number of customer visits and length of time spent with each customer, which also can offer proof of service to customers in the event they claim a crew didn’t provide a service or stay the expected length of time.

GPS tracking allows companies to verify payroll using location information, which, according to Driscoll, can help save companies thousands of dollars a year due to intentional or unintentional rounding errors. He notes that contractors have found blatant and subtle cases of inaccurate time reporting — a discrepancy of just 10 to 15 minutes of billable time reported can add up over a long period.

An additional concern may be that crews are doing unscheduled side

jobs off of the books.

These would also appear on GPS tracking reports.

Safety issues include unsafe driver behavior, vehicle accidents and liability for accidents. It also involves ensuring the safety of employees and the public.

“When your drivers are reckless in company vehicles, the consequences go far beyond just monetary; they can be fatal,” Driscoll says, adding that among businesses with vehicle fleets, trailers and other equipment, safety is the No. 1 challenge those companies look to solve with GPS.

Tracking systems can help improve driver behavior and reduce tickets and accidents — which can ultimately lower insurance and liability costs and improve a company’s brand image in the community.

For a fleet, efficiency and vehicle maintenance relate to ensuring vehicles and equipment receive preventive maintenance on schedule, working as efficiently as possible to deliver the best customer experience, ensuring fuel efficiency and examining the use of vehicles and equipment, Driscoll says.

GPS tracking systems can help lawn and landscape companies track, schedule and receive reminders for all preventive maintenance due on a vehicle.

Continued on page 36



Kevin Aries



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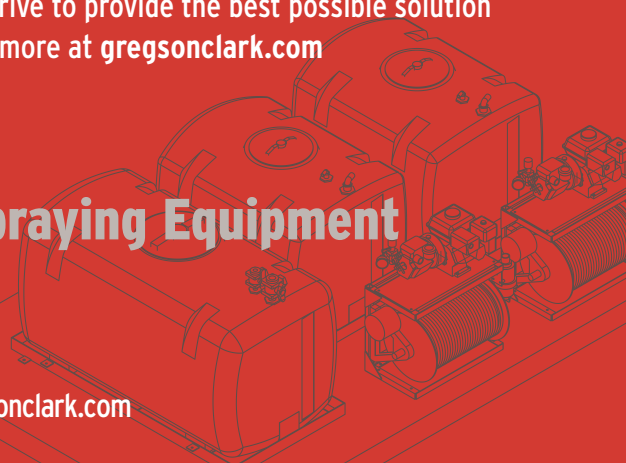


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BUSINESS BOOSTERS

Continued from page 34

It also can notify the shop to bring vehicles in when the check engine light comes on.

The systems can also help create more efficient service routes, which may cut fuel costs by reducing engine idling, speeding and unauthorized use, according to Driscoll. Reducing fuel costs and increasing efficiency mean crews can focus on the customer experience by providing fast response times to service requests, accurate ETAs and time windows for service. Monitoring time spent on service calls helps ensure that employees are completing jobs as efficiently as possible.

Tracking these metrics with GPS may have an additional upside, Driscoll says. By examining use, companies can optimize fleets and ensure they are getting the most out of every vehicle and asset during its time in service. It can

also identify if contractors have the appropriate number of vehicles and may reveal additional cost savings if a company has a surplus of trucks on the road.



Ryan Driscoll

THE PROCESS

Once a contractor decides on the top challenge he or she would like to solve, they should reach out to GPS companies and receive product demonstrations.

After deciding on a GPS tracking system, a lawn or landscape company should provide the GPS provider with a vehicle list, which will help determine the correct GPS devices and installation equipment suited for the year, make and models of those vehicles.

Depending on the GPS system, the contractor may install the GPS devices

on the vehicles him or herself following a step-by-step guide, or the supplier may install them. Once the devices are installed and registered, an account manager will train users on the system and how it can help solve their business challenges.

Ensuring that the GPS system is helping solve the problem contractors set out to fix is important, Aries says. He encourages landscape pros to ask the question, "Do you have a provider that offers the right support to ensure that the value is being reached not just in the first month or two, but who cares about how you're doing long term as a company?"

THE COST

Driscoll says the cost for GPS Insight's system ranges from \$20-30 per month per vehicle and approximately \$15 per month per trailer or asset. There are no upfront costs and the system includes the GPS device and the monthly software and app service.

As far as the return on investment (ROI), Driscoll estimates that companies usually see savings up to five to 10 times the cost of the software within the first few months. He says that companies start seeing ROI as quickly

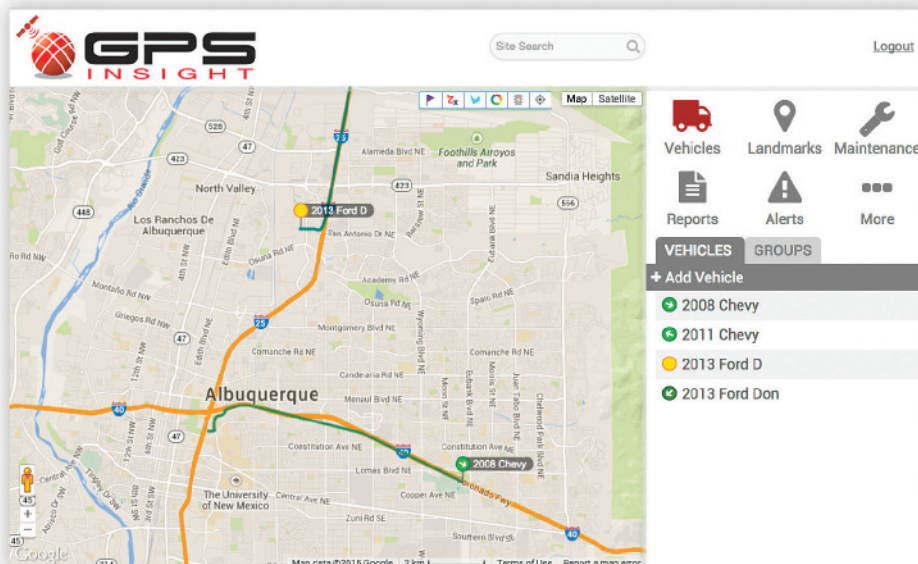
as the first month of GPS tracking, as employees are aware they are being tracked and begin to change their behavior accordingly.

He says companies are typically fully operational with the system in 30 days, depending on how quickly the team implements the system and starts using the product.

Verizon Connect does not disclose pricing publicly, however, it also aims to get companies up and running with their new software in 30 days.

Aries acknowledges that change is scary, and whenever a company needs to adapt a new system or solution into its business, it can be difficult and time-consuming. There's sometimes a "big brother" concern about being tracked that may turn off some field employees.

"When you find a provider that provides a simple and easy-to-use solution, and also has a good reputation for onboarding and customer support, that pain of adopting the new system or solution tends to diminish," Aries says. "We see our customers get up and running relatively quickly, despite the fears they may have coming into the process."

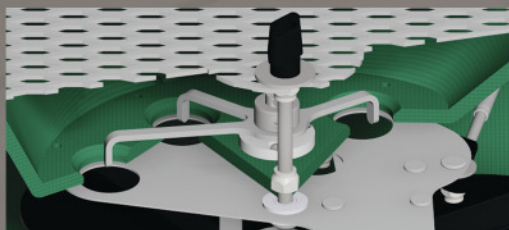


↑ TIME SAVER
GPS tracking can help crews save time by creating more efficient routes.

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THE BIG ONE

Class A act

LOCATION El Segundo, Calif.

COMPANY LandCare, Culver City

DETAILS Originally a strawberry patch, Pacific Corporate Towers (PCT) is a Class A commercial office space, located between the Los Angeles International Airport and the Pacific Ocean. The LEED Gold property is home to more than 90 tenants.

LandCare has maintained the site since November 2009. It secured the deal after PCT's chief engineer spotted the work LandCare had accomplished on a neighboring property.

PCT wished to uphold its LEED Gold Certification, while still providing an urban oasis for its tenants to relax and engage in recreational activities — no easy task with the drought that's plagued California since 2012.

The LandCare team also had to find organic methods for pest and fungus control and learn how to maintain different types of landscapes all in one location.

LandCare achieved the upkeep of the property's planters, lawns, no-mow areas, gardens, walkways and bridges using Exmark mowers and smaller equipment from Echo. To contend with the dry conditions, LandCare incorporated Weather-matic's smart irrigation controllers, installed drought-tolerant plant materials and performed regular assessments of the property's water needs.

Thanks to LandCare's team, PCT tenants continue to enjoy the benefits of a sustainable outdoor living space.

The project earned LandCare a Gold Award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program.

See more photos from this project at LandscapeManagement.net.



LEED THE WAY

Pacific Corporate Towers is a cluster of Class A commercial office buildings in El Segundo, Calif. It has been LEED Gold certified since 2015, adding another level of complexity to the maintenance of the grounds. The property prides itself in having created an urban oasis that emphasizes healthy and vibrant living. From its curbside to the inner sections of the complex, PCT fosters a love for the outdoors with its environment.

WATER WISE

Along the stone walkway, a well-manicured lawn sits on one side while various drought-resistant plants align the other. Furcraea plants pop out of westringia shrubs with blue festuca borders for an aesthetically satisfying design.

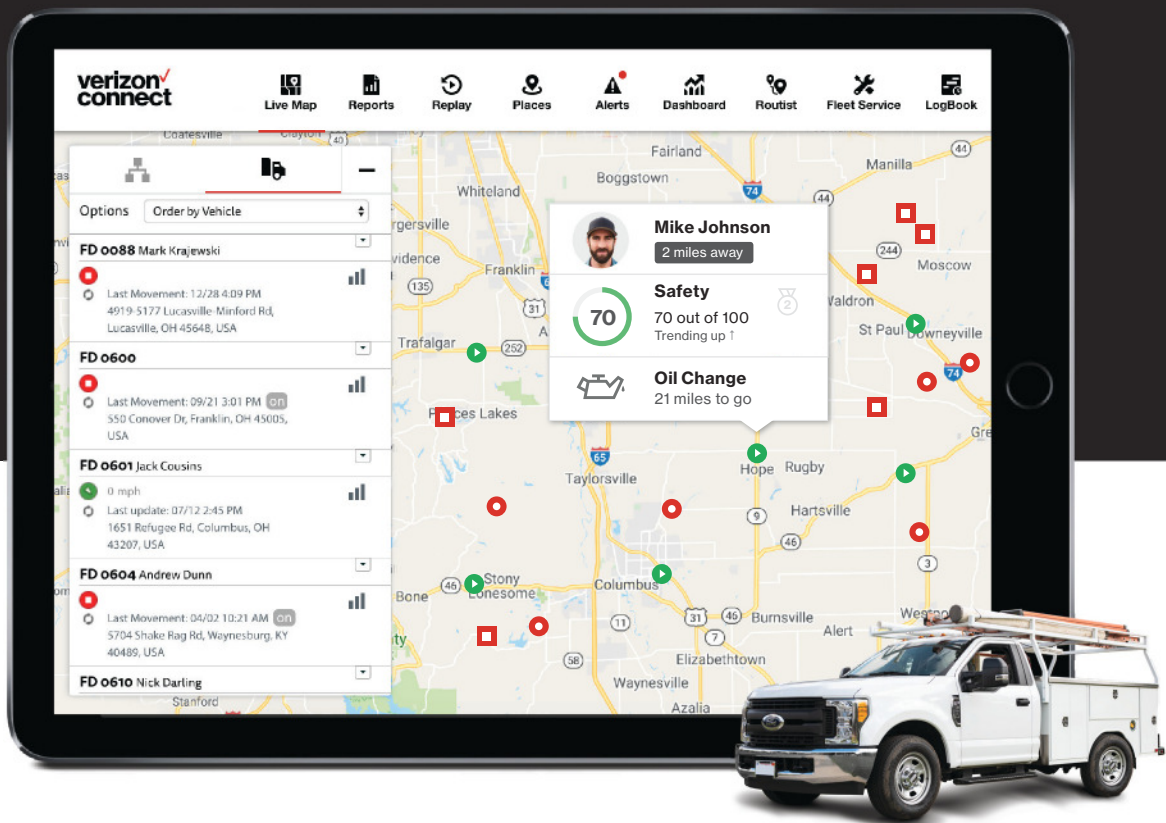


CURB APPEAL

Maintaining a healthy curbside lawn in hot Southern California during a drought is challenging. The team works tirelessly to address heat spots, pests and damage resulting from foot and pet traffic.

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IRON WORKHORSES

Mower Design Trends + Suppliers' Tips



Husqvarna Z500 Zero-Turn Series

NAME: George Reister

TITLE: Product manager North America — wheeled

COMPANY: Husqvarna

URL: Husqvarna.com

Husqvarna's Z500 zero-turn series provides durability, cut quality, comfort, high ground speeds and excellent traction.

Consisting of 11 products, three Z500 models and seven Z500X models, this series stands out with its weld-reinforced 2- by 3-in. tubular steel frame, 7- or 10-gauge cutting decks and 10-in. diameter spindles, all protected by Husqvarna's five-year limited commercial warranty. Operator improvements include an automatic parking brake, an easy-to-fold rollover protection system and deck height adjustment. Smart design features include toolless fasteners, sealed and labeled fuse boxes and easy access to all major components. New for 2019, the mowers now come with purpose-built Yamaha engines. The models include EFI engines and are among the most fuel efficient in their class. Ranging from 26 to 33 hp, Yamaha engine versions will be available for all models in Husqvarna's new commercial Z500 zero-turn series.



John Deere Z994R Commercial ZTrak

NAME: Natalie Haller

TITLE: Product manager

COMPANY: John Deere

URL: Deere.com

The new Z994R Commercial ZTrak mower offers enhanced comfort, increased productivity, lower operating costs and longer engine life. The Z994R is powered by a three-cylinder, liquid-cooled Final Tier 4 diesel engine. The high-torque, low-emission engine provides power for tough conditions with low vibration and noise levels. To increase productivity, the Z994R is equipped with a single 11.5-gal. diesel fuel tank with an easy-to-read fuel gauge. The Z994R is available with three seat options, each with adjustable armrests. All seat options feature the ComfortGlide fore/aft suspension that provides up to 2 in. of fore and aft travel to absorb bumps. The mower is available with three deck options: the 54-in. and 60-in. 7-Iron PRO side-discharge mower deck and the 60-in. 7-Iron PRO Mulch On-Demand mower deck. The Z994R is also available with the Michelin Tweel X Turf airless radial tires to virtually eliminate flats and increase productivity.





Kubota Z700 EFI

NAME: Tom Vachal
TITLE: Kubota senior turf product manager
COMPANY: Kubota
URL: KubotaUSA.com



The new Kubota Z700 EFI mowers deliver many new performance features. Kawasaki FX EFI engines combine all the advantages of a fully integrated electronic governor and open-loop technology. All of these features contribute to outstanding performance without experiencing power loss. The dial throttle control provides accurate and dependable engine control. The large 3.5-in. LCD engine monitor displays hours on the unit, fuel level, engine oil temperature and pressure, battery voltage, service indicators and safety switch status. Water- and dust-proof switches eliminate failures due to water and dust intrusion. Low-profile 24-in. tires deliver greater traction on slopes while reducing ground pressure. A standard 12-v outlet is convenient for powering phones or other devices. All models now have 6.5-in. wide caster tires.

Cub Cadet PRO Z 972 SD

NAME: Josh Sooy
TITLE: Director, professional business segment
COMPANY: Cub Cadet
URL: CubCadet.com

The Cub Cadet PRO Z 972 SD is built for maximum performance and minimal downtime. It delivers hillside confidence so landscape professionals can comfortably mow a straight line, execute zero-degree turns and operate on hillsides with slopes of up to 25 degrees. Oversized dual rear wheels provide a higher level of stability and precision for the perfect stripe. The drive system with four-wheel steering provides ultimate control.



» MAINTAIN YOUR EDGE

A truckload of tips and trends

What landscape pros should consider before purchasing a new vehicle. BY SARAH WEBB | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR



CHOOSE WISELY
Contractors should consider a truck's application to determine what to purchase.

Purchasing a new landscape vehicle can be a weighty decision. That's why we spoke with experts Chad Femler, director of product marketing for medium duty at Navistar, and Brian Tabel, executive director of marketing at Isuzu, to get the lowdown on purchasing new vehicles.

The first factor for contractors to consider is the truck's application, which will help determine the payload — and most likely the truck model.

"What are they going to do with the truck?" Femler asks. "If they're just going to haul around mowers and mulch, they may not need a high gross vehicle rating on the truck, where as if they're going to be hauling around gravel and large rocks, they'd want to make sure they don't overload the truck."

Tabel adds that the intended mileage for the vehicle also should be factored in, as this may determine whether a contractor chooses a diesel or gas truck.

"Generally, the rule is that if someone drives 25,000 or fewer miles a year, Isuzu's gas truck is the better option for them, as there's a higher acquisition cost with diesel, and there are additional

maintenance items as well," Tabel says. "Most landscapers drive between 10,000 and 20,000 miles a year."

Other options to consider include the cab's size and seating capacity, depending on a company's crew size; an open or closed body, determined by the weather and security level of an area; fuel tank size; and the size of the truck itself.

Femler and Tabel say that landscapers tend to prefer smaller-sized trucks, typically in the Class 4/5 range, although Femler says some of the truck options creep into the Class 6/7 range.

"Landscapers are mostly driving in neighborhoods and business parks, so maneuverability is key," Tabel says, adding that visibility is also an important consideration.

As far as other trends go, Femler mentions four-by-four drive configuration, which allows trucks to travel off-pavement, and Navistar's forward-tilt hood that enables easy access to maintenance points.

Both Femler and Tabel agree contractors should defer to their local dealers for the specifics surrounding their truck purchases.

"The dealer is really the expert to help guide landscapers to the proper trucks," Tabel says. He adds that some dealers may offer incentives if a customer is a member of certain associations. Customers who purchase multiple vehicles at one time — 10 in Isuzu's case — may also qualify for special fleet incentives.

Regarding the ideal time to purchase, Femler and Tabel say there is no best time, but many landscapers tend to buy during the winter so new vehicles are ready to go come spring.

DOWN THE PIKE

In the future, Femler says telematics will gain more traction.

"Landscapers can not only track the truck's location, but they also can get an early warning if there's anything wrong with the truck," he says.

Tabel says he thinks electrification for trucks will begin to catch on within the next 10 years.

"As electrification dabbles in the car market and becomes more and more popular, I think it will move into the truck market as well," he says.

BUSINESS BOOSTERS

A road map for franchising

Five things to consider before joining a franchise.

BY SARAH WEBB | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

For contractors who want to scale their business but feel stuck in a rut, franchising may be a viable route to consider. Franchising is also an option for startup landscapers, who may need help learning how to run an effective business and understanding the ins and outs of the green industry.

“The franchise system is like having a guardrail on each side of the road,” says Ryan Deatherage, owner of Grounds Guys in Edmond, Okla. “There are systems and procedures in place, and as long as you follow the road map, you’re usually successful.”

Deatherage became a startup Grounds Guys franchisee in 2012, after years of working in the corporate world.

To gain more insight into the maintenance franchising world, we spoke to a few experts from Grounds Guys and U.S. Lawns: Brandon Moxam, vice president of U.S. Lawns; Michael Green, president of Grounds Guys; David Wells, senior director of franchise recruiting for U.S. Lawns; and Deatherage.

1 BRAND

Those thinking about joining a franchise should consider the potential franchisor’s brand, as well as the direction of their own brand.



Franchisees can rest easy knowing they don't have to go it alone.

“It’s a deep self-reflection on your goals,” Moxam says. “We look for people who are looking to pull away from the day-to-day activity within the business and start focusing on running the business.”

It’s also important to note that once a company becomes part of a franchise, it typically gives up its original name and runs under the franchisor’s name.

However, with that brand name also comes the buying power of a national company, according to Wells.

2 SYSTEMS

A franchise organization’s set of systems can help contractors market their business, recruit new employees and hurdle any obstacles they may face.

Experts warn, however, that it’s crucial that contractors follow all the systems completely.

“I call it the buffet syndrome,” Green says. “It’s not really to your advantage to pick and choose aspects of systems that’ve already been proven. Comprehensive utilization of those resources leads to success.”

3 TIMING

Grounds Guys and U.S. Lawns both

implement 10-year franchise agreements, with the option to re-up at the end of 10 years.

The onboarding process for a franchisee may take about 90 days, depending on the franchisor and the size of the franchisee.

4 COST

Many franchisors request a one-time franchise fee — as well as a monthly royalty fee. Some franchisors are willing to work with a contractor to partially finance the initial fee.

“I would say franchisees could break even at about 12 months, depending on an individual’s skill set and onboarding process,” Green says.

5 NETWORK

By design, franchise organizations foster a large support network, consisting of up to hundreds of other franchisees, who can call one another with questions and advice.

“It’s a lonely world out there being a small business owner,” Moxam says. “Wouldn’t it be nice to have a team you can rely upon to provide coaching and guidance?”



Contractors who join a franchise benefit by gaining the buying power of a major brand.

HARDSCAPE SOLUTIONS

Revealing a view

LOCATION Irving, Texas

COMPANY Custom Greenscaping

THE DETAILS What started as a desire to have an outside tenant area for gatherings and events evolved into an overhaul of 70 percent of a corporate campus' landscape.

To reveal a beautiful view of the river and a country club at the back of the property, a large berm of soil was removed and used along the hillside to plant wildflowers.

Custom Greenscaping used John Deere's 310SL backhoe and 333G compact track loader to grade the displaced soil and install two new retaining walls.

It was a must that the stone used for the two new 90-inch walls — Austin cream limestone — was an exact match to the building.

Two hundred feet of drainage was installed behind the walls for irrigation and rainfall.

The back of the property and the main entrance were renewed with planting beds that incorporate Texas mountain laurel, Mexican feather grass and cotoneaster, along with other native and drought-tolerant plants.

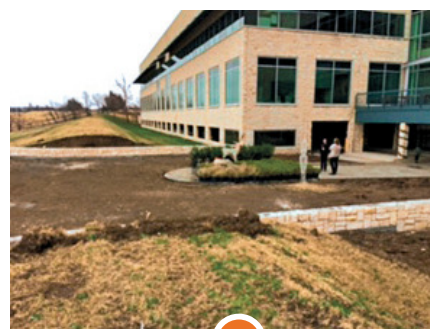
Since the renovation, the area, which includes outdoor seating areas, grills and a putting green, sees daily use.

The project earned Custom Greenscaping a 2018 Silver Award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program.

See more photos from this project at LandscapeManagement.net.



PHOTOS: CUSTOM GREENSCAPING



Captions | **1.** An employee balcony overlooks the new tenant recreation area. **2.** While construction was happening at the back of the property, the client realized the front needed a makeover as well. Old planting beds were updated with ornamental trees, shrubs and flowers. **3.** In this photo of the original landscaping, the berm came across the back of the property. More than 200 cubic yards of soil were relocated down the hill and planted with wildflowers. **4.** Two 90-inch retaining walls were built to hold back the berm. Austin cream limestone was used to match the building's original stone. **5.** Two additional views of the site during the renovation.

INSTALLATION IRON

Compact Excavators



Bobcat E35 R-Series

NAME: Jason Boerger
TITLE: Marketing manager
COMPANY: Bobcat Co.
URL: Bobcat.com



At Bobcat Co., we have developed the E35 R-Series compact excavator, which features a bold, distinct design geared toward increasing operator productivity and comfort, as well as machine uptime protection. Operators benefit from a 15 percent increase in over-the-side stability with the new dual-flange track roller system. Also, an optimized integrated rear counterweight design further enhances the machine's stability. Knowing operators can spend long days in the cab, we focused on improving the operator experience within the cab. We have strengthened hinges and latches, and developed more ridged panels to reduce vibration in the cab. Along with having large cab openings, we redesigned the E35 R-Series excavator cab with increased floor space and additional glass surface area, which includes an improved top window and narrower side pillars for visibility that's never been better.

John Deere 30G

NAME: Jonny Spendlove
TITLE: Product marketing manager, excavators
COMPANY: John Deere Construction & Forestry
URL: Deere.com



The John Deere 30G compact excavator is ideal for contractors looking for a solution in the three-to four-metric-ton class. It offers numerous performance features, such as increased lift capacity and improved breakout forces. The 30G incorporates all current G-Series features — including the standard pattern changer and standard hand-controlled proportional auxiliary hydraulics. A redesigned cab with heat and air conditioning and a seat with adjustable wrist rests provides ultimate operator comfort in any climate. For increased uptime and easier maintenance, a third service door provides improved access to the cooling core and other daily checkpoints. The cores are positioned side by side rather than being stacked inline to permit easier access. Extended fluid and lubrication intervals and sight gauges help keep maintenance and expenses at a minimum, and the absence of aftertreatment to meet emissions regulations provides continued operation without interruption.





Kubota excavators

NAME: Jeff Jacobsmeyer
TITLE: Product manager, excavators, wheel loaders and TLBs

COMPANY: Kubota Tractor Corp.
URL: KubotaUSA.com

Designed for efficiency on the job site and to use a variety of attachments, most Kubota compact excavators can digitally program up to five different hydraulic flow rates for different attachments. No tools are required, and adjustments can be done from the comfort of the operator's seat. An operator can simply set the required flow amounts for up to five different attachments, and with a push of a button, the hydraulic control of the attachment is set just where you need it for that specific attachment. There's no need to continually adjust the hydraulic flow every time you change the attachment, because now the five programmable settings are stored in the dash memory. Plus, Kubota's auxiliary hydraulics provide versatility to maximize the machine's potential with impressive flow amounts.



Case C-Series

NAME: Ed Brenton
TITLE: Product marketing manager
COMPANY: Case Construction Equipment
URL: CaseCE.com



When we introduced the Case C-Series mini excavators to market, the goal was to make as many features standard as possible to build as much functionality into the base unit as we could. Standard proportional controls provide precision control of all attachments with the ease-of-thumb control, while a standard auxiliary flow diverter valve allows the operator to easily switch between single and bidirectional flow for use with a variety of attachments. An easy-to-use pattern selector also comes standard, allowing operators to choose their control pattern preference for optimum productivity. A standard autoshift travel system provides operator comfort and convenience by securing travel speed and torque as ground conditions change. All C-Series mini excavators also feature standard auxiliary hydraulics for easy thumb and attachment setup, as well as standard boom and blade guarding. The CX57C and CX60C come standard with an LCD touchscreen with up-to-the-minute machine performance data and intuitive access to machine settings.



DESIGN: SOFTWARE

Software savvy

Three things to keep in mind when choosing software. BY DANIELLE PESTA | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

WORKING TOGETHER
Contractors should choose software that integrates into their current systems.



In the tight labor market, creating efficiencies and saving time is key. What better way than to use technology to do so?

Landscape software has come a long way, and it's improving all the time. There are numerous options to help improve your designs and better plan your projects.

We spoke with a few experts — David Sloan, sales and marketing manager for Drafix/PRO Landscape; Mike St. Louis, director of marketing for Nearmap; Cameron Ashby, systems manager for Elite Grounds; and Jim and Billie Helms, owners of Helms Lawn Specialist — to learn what landscape pros should consider when choosing design software.

USER-FRIENDLY

A functionality that's easy to use and intuitive is crucial, especially for training crew members of all ages and at different points in their careers.

It's important to identify team members who are eager and willing to learn how to use and implement new software properly. "Before choosing

(software), make sure to consider the skill level of those using the software and how they might approach technology," Sloan says.

"If a landscaping company has to hire a specialist just to use software, it adds to the bottom line," St. Louis adds.

ACCURACY

St. Louis also says having an accurate base map is a good start to any design project.

Getting accurate measurements makes it easier to prepare quotes and bids for projects. For example, the location data on Nearmap's aerial imagery has helped Ashby capture accurate measurements for Elite Grounds, which is based in Salt Lake City. "We can easily measure a property and calculate material costs to avoid extra inventory," he says. "Using the oblique view, we can measure details such as fence and wall height, the linear feet of rooflines and even the degree at which the property slopes."

Jim and Billie Helms use PRO Landscape at their Delphi, Ind.-based com-

pany to show customers what a design might look like five years into the future.


"Homeowners really find out what they want at the beginning of the process. The design sells itself," Jim Helms says. "We can even add snow and lighting to show what the landscape could look like."


INTEGRATION

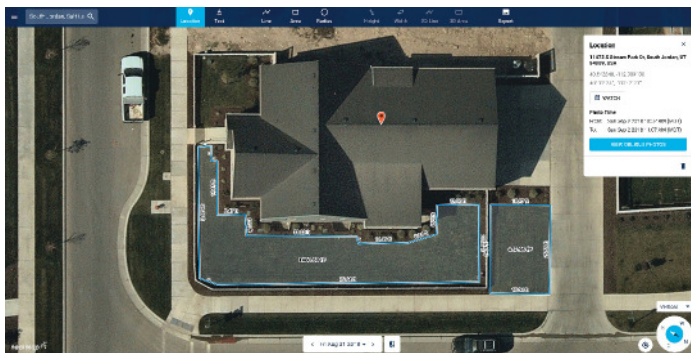
Keeping in mind the type of projects being designed will make it easier to determine how a software might integrate into current company processes. "Different pieces of software have different capabilities, so it's important to choose the software that is right for a company's exact situation," Sloan says.

Customization can make integrating new software at a company easier and more effective long term. With PRO Landscape, the Helmses can set up the software with the specific location to ensure the correct plant is used the first time around. "We can choose plants from all zones of the U.S.," Billie Helms says. "Or we can narrow it down to all of the plants that grow best in zone 5 — our region."

Ashby says Elite Grounds' local service area is growing with new homes and businesses, so designing installation projects has become easier with historical images and seeing the property as a blank slate before structures are built.


At the end of the day, Ashby says having integrated software will make his company more efficient. "It's a software that I really enjoy," he says. "And soon, it will go out to the full team making their jobs better." 

BIRD'S EYE 
Capturing aerial imagery can help contractors accurately measure different properties.



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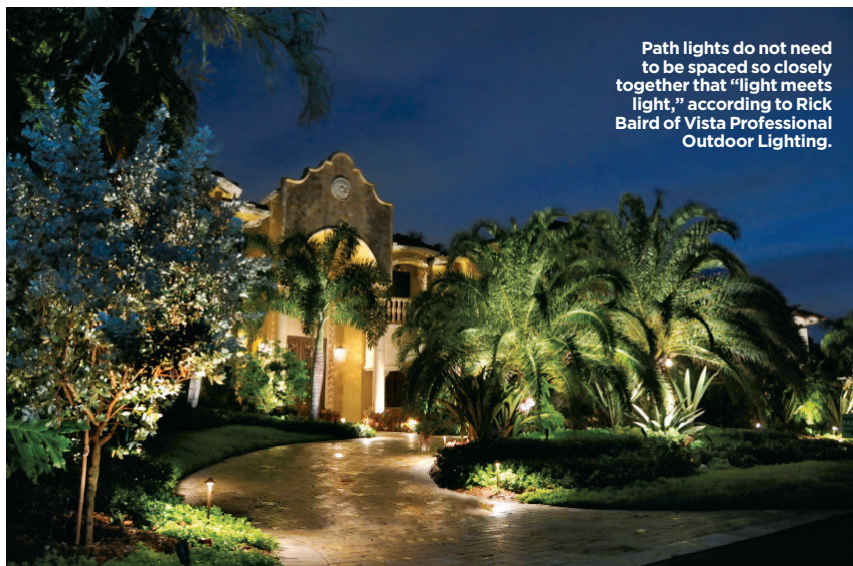
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BUSINESS BOOSTERS



Path lights do not need to be spaced so closely together that “light meets light,” according to Rick Baird of Vista Professional Outdoor Lighting.

Light the way

Installation and maintenance tips for path and step lighting. BY DANIELLE PESTA | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Landscape lighting can extend the length of time spent outdoors once the sun goes down. This is, perhaps, one of its main selling points. It can also bring safety benefits to a property.

“When strategically placed, path lights not only illuminate paths and walkways, but also light planting bed

borders,” says Rick Baird, national sales manager, landscape division, Vista Professional Outdoor Lighting, a manufacturer headquartered in Simi Valley, Calif.

There are several types of landscape lighting, but illuminating walkways is one of the most popular applications. Ryan Williams, senior marketing manager for FX Luminaire, a San Marcos, Calif.-based manufacturer, says path lights are the company’s second-most popular style category after up lights.

DON'T JUST FOLLOW THE PATH

Despite their popularity and safety benefits, Williams recommends installers avoid overusing path lights.

“Optimal pathway lighting can be achieved by installing up lights and down lights in close proximity to pathways,” he says.

← LIGHT IT UP
Path lights can be used to brighten up plant bed borders, in addition to walkways.

Down lights can be installed in trees and on nearby

FIXTURE FACTS

As with anything in the landscape industry, maintenance is key. Follow this checklist, provided by Rick Baird, national sales manager, landscape division, Vista Professional Outdoor Lighting, to keep a property’s lighting fixture setup in peak condition.


- **FINISH** – The fixture may need to be wiped clean periodically to remove water spots or chemical stains.
- **LENS** – The lens of each fixture will need to be polished with a water-repellent applied.
- **ANGLE/AIMING** – Determine each fixture’s original purpose and make sure it’s aimed and standing correctly to illuminate its intended space.
- **LIGHT SOURCE** – Periodically check to make sure the fixture is still operating with the same light output as originally intended. (Note: LED has eliminated the need to replace light sources on a frequent basis.)
- **SPACE MAINTENANCE** – Check the surrounding landscape for plant material, ground cover, shrubs and trees that may need to be trimmed for optimum light output and performance.

structures to contribute to effective path lighting, according to Baird.

In commercial spaces, it’s important to get lights off the ground to eliminate damage from increased foot traffic and potential vandalism.

“Step lighting can be considered very detailed path lighting,” Baird says. “It’s imperative to keep shadows and dark spots to a minimum.”

He recommends lighting designers take a walk along a path, including any steps, to identify obstacles, such as intersecting paths or elevation changes.

When installing wall and step fixtures, Williams recommends that contractors pay close attention to the wiring and keep in mind safety, aesthetics and future servicing. 



WATER WORLD

Water in the walls

LOCATION New York

COMPANY John Mini Distinctive Landscapes

DETAILS This quiet courtyard is a relaxing green space nestled in the heart of midtown Manhattan.

The streetside sanctuary has unique maintenance needs, which are provided by John Mini Distinctive Landscapes. The company inherited the project in 2013 when the firm was tapped to take over maintaining the space.

"There's nothing too fancy with the irrigation system," says Andrew Sliwa, director of outdoor. "It's simply four zones of drip tubing that lie horizontally on top of each panel."

The biggest challenge is the hydrophobic soil. To combat this problem and ensure water is evenly distributed, the company injects surfactants into the system with a Dosatron. Despite cold winter temperatures and a chilling wind-tunnel effect, the system is not winterized. The wall dries out quickly in the winter months, so the system must be kept active to keep the plants healthy.

The system's copper and PVC piping components are located in a heated room. Only flexible pipe is exposed to the elements. If temperatures stay above 50 degrees F for several days in the winter, the company will soak the plant material.

The project earned John Mini Distinctive Landscapes a 2018 Gold Award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program.

See more photos from this project at LandscapeManagement.net.



GROWING PAINS

The site's pervasive shade conditions provide a maintenance challenge from one end of the green wall to the other, where fluctuations of reflective light can alter growing conditions.



IRRIGATION INSIGHT

The skeleton of the wall during installation. The system's irrigation is provided by four zones of drip tubing that lie horizontally on top of each panel.



PLANT PANELS

Once the system's skeleton was complete, the team installed plant material into each panel, using alternating colors and textures.

WATER WORKS

Water adds motion, sound and integration to the design, as well as added maintenance challenges for accessing the fountain planters.



IRRIGATION TECH

Design Trends + Suppliers' Tips

Rain Bird R-VAN

NAME: Patrick Hibbs

TITLE: Marketing group manager

COMPANY: Rain Bird Corp.

URL: RainBird.com

Rain Bird R-VAN Adjustable Rotary Nozzles are engineered to deliver efficient coverage with faster, easier installation and maintenance. The nozzles maintain optimum performance at high operating pressures without misting and fogging, while their low precipitation rate reduces runoff and erosion. Thick streams and large water droplets cut

through the wind to deliver water with precision. Compatible with all Rain Bird spray bodies, risers and adapters, R-VANs feature matched precipitation rates across radius, arc and pattern types. Combine R-VANs with Rain Bird's 5000 Series rotors and MPR nozzles to get matched precipitation rates from 8 to 35 ft. A hand-adjustable arc and radius component makes R-VANs easy to install and maintain, while a pull-up-to-flush feature quickly clears the nozzle of dirt and debris. Contractors can stock half as many R-VAN SKUs to achieve 45- to 360-degree coverage, with each nozzle color-coded and laser-marked for easy identification.



Toro T5 RapidSet

COMPANY: Toro

URL: Toro.com

The Toro T5 Series rotor has a 5-in. pop-up height to help ensure that its high-efficiency Airfoil Technology nozzles aren't impeded by taller grasses. The T5 Series is a rotor that can be installed without worrying if it is going to pop up and retract, thanks to a pressure-activated wiper seal. In addition, the a-slip clutch and gear drive combination is designed for everyday environments and consistent performance, providing reliable operation year after year. All lawn models are available with the optional RapidSet feature, a quick and easy way to make arc adjustments — without tools.



K-Rain RPS 75i

NAME: Frank Salamone
TITLE: Marketing manager
COMPANY: K-Rain
URL: KRain.com



The patented, intelligent flow technology of the K-Rain RPS 75i rotor allows you to easily adjust distance while simultaneously adjusting flow up to 50 percent. The result is uniformity because a screw does not disrupt nozzle discharge. The RPS 75i also helps maintain matched precipitation because you adjust both flow and area of coverage. With a simple turn of the flow control, the RPS 75i delivers even water distribution, eliminates dry spots and provides better zone performance. Experience excellent uniformity and water savings up to 30 percent.



Hunter I-80

NAME: Rich Dunn
TITLE: Product manager, golf and large turf rotors
COMPANY: Hunter Industries
URL: HunterIndustries.com

Engineered for sports turf and large park applications, the I-80 is built with a robust, dirt-tolerant gear drive that provides high torque while offering power, performance, versatility and safety. The I-80 features a wide range of highly efficient, dual trajectory, wind-fighting nozzles. Exclusive to the commercial rotor market, the I-80 provides total top serviceability via its integrated, surface-mounted snap ring. This no-dig solution makes maintenance quick and easy. In addition, the I-80 offers an advanced ProTech Turf Cup System. With ProTech TC, living or synthetic turf is retained in a cup mounted to the top of the rotor and installed flush to the surrounding turf. The no-dig ProTech TC is top serviceable and features a no-tool quick-change turf cup, arc adjustments without riser removal and a fully contained riser assembly that stays together when removed from the sprinkler's body.



BUSINESS BOOSTERS

More than a handshake deal

Securing commercial irrigation installation projects is great for your business, just make sure the contracts protect you and your employees.

BY CLARA RICHTER | LM MANAGING EDITOR

Making sure your irrigation contracts protect your business and ensure you won't be left in the lurch should something go awry is almost as important as landing a big irrigation installation.

Greg Winchel, owner of Winchel Irrigation in Grandville, Mich., knows a thing or two about securing irrigation contracts and making sure they protect his employees and his company. Winchel Irrigation has been in the business for 46 years and serves custom home builders, condominium developers and commercial customers throughout western Michigan.

Landscape Management interviewed Winchel to learn his best practices for landing contracts, and creating irrigation installation contracts.

Q: HOW HAVE YOU APPROACHED SECURING BIG COMMERCIAL IRRIGATION CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS?

A: The strategy is to create relationships with general contractors or architectural firms so they learn about your company, know about your projects and quality of work and recommend you.



Greg Winchel

You can develop relationships in a variety of ways. Perhaps you know someone personally and they make an introduction. It could be a business meeting or a trade show. Could be you've done a small project for them and it starts from there and you develop that over years. As you develop and improve your craft, they give you more and larger projects as you prove your abilities to them.

Q: WHAT ARE SOME IMPORTANT THINGS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR IRRIGATION CONTRACTS?

A: The biggest thing is that when you work for general contractors or large companies, they usually provide the contract,


and it isn't in your best benefit. The contract is usually to protect *them*.

You want to put things in there that can protect you and your employees. On new construction projects, I always ask for a production schedule. Our start date is this, our end date is this and the excavator is going to work from this day to this day, so you know how to plan where the project is going to fall. Rarely is that schedule followed because every trade gets behind, but you want the same completion date, so you have coverage for yourself. If it takes more work or more labor, you're able to bill for that.

I make sure I have a provision in there for two things. No. 1, if my work isn't able to start on schedule, however many days late we start, that same number of days get added to the expected completion date. No. 2 is you want to give yourself some room for weather conditions. If you are hit with two weeks of rain where you can't work on the site, you want the Mother Nature clause in there.

Q: WHAT ARE SOME BEST PRACTICES FOR SECURING THESE BIG-TICKET CONTRACTS?

A: Have a safety plan and safety policies that tell a general contractor or construction manager that you're an organized company and that you're following (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) regulations. Those are big-ticket things right now. That is a big factor when businesses select contractors. Otherwise, it goes back to relationships. You can't beat the fact that you've done work for an architectural firm or a general contractor for 20 years and performed and met their standards.

Understand what your scope is. Reach outside of your comfort zone, in small steps. We get dollar signs in our eyes and see a (big project), but if you don't have the right people and equipment to do it, you could cost yourself more money than you gain. 

BE PREPARED
Contractors hoping to secure commercial irrigation projects should first ensure they have the equipment and manpower to complete them.





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FIVE QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW BY SETH JONES

Casey Hurd

MANAGING MEMBER

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1 How big is your family?

I have a wife, two daughters and a big 100-pound yellow lab. My family keeps me organized and on my toes. With two young kids, you have to stick to routines to make things less hectic. Quinn is 4, Tessa is 1 ... Gomer, the lab, is 8. He's my hunting buddy and male companion.

2 What's the best thing about living on a farm?

The ability to get away and the peacefulness. We live on a 330-acre farm with lots of ponds and wildlife. I do a fair amount of hunting out there. My business used to be on the farm right next to me, but I moved it to give me room to just be myself.

3 How do you see this industry changing, and what have you done to try to adapt?

I don't know if it's smaller companies, but definitely less employees ... but the good news is you can do more with less employees now. The mini skid-steer alone has proven that the technology in our industry is improving to help us get the job done faster and with less labor. We've even got better hand tools now to make us perform more like a construction company at times.

4 If I asked your crew, what is the one thing that they would tell me you say to them all the time?

I thought the answer to this was "be careful." But then I asked them, and they said the thing I say to them every day is "good morning" and "thank you." I kind of knew it might be good morning, we do 15 minutes of training each morning, and I always say good morning then because I might not see them again that day. I feel like I'm always saying, "be careful and do your best." We have 19 people working here when things slow down, and we staff up to 28 to 30 at our busiest. I rely on these people. I do try to tell everyone "thank you" when they leave for the day.

5 Fill in the blank: I love my job because _____.

Because of the different things I get to do each day. I love the challenges and all the different people I get to meet. 🍷

BEST ADVICE

"The harder you work, the luckier you get. I find that to be true. There will always be struggles in business, you just have to work through them."



PHOTO SETH JONES

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BY KEVIN KEHOE

The author is managing partner of The Aspire Software Co. Reach him at kevin.kehoe@youraspire.com.

Sell more ... technology should be part of the plan

Make no mistake, sales is hard work. The thrill of victory is tempered by long stretches of disappointment. It's the nature of the game. Yet, the best salespeople succeed because they marry technology to "the method." A few years ago, I wrote a column about the method. In brief, here it is: Work from a list, grind out a daily action plan, go direct and get answers, and prep for every call. The reason? The big wins result from the accumulation of small actions. And when the method is married to technology, technology becomes a force multiplier that produces big results.

THREE TECHNOLOGIES

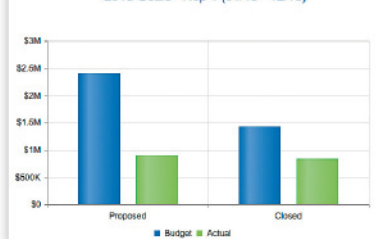
1. Pipeline management

You must prioritize your list and goals. The list is made up of prospective properties and jobs. The goals are monthly proposal dollars and monthly closed dollars. This list is the scorecard and your pipeline. The method calls for working on high-probability properties and jobs where proposal dollars are driven by prospecting activities, and closing dollars are driven by negotiating activities. You must divide your limited time between these two. Wasting your time on low-probability properties and jobs is one way to fall behind on your scorecard, but forgetting to follow up (because you have a poor list) is the surest way to underachieve. You must work from the list every day and schedule your time.

Here's what the pipeline report looks like:

| Active Starts | Starting Month | Proposed Budget | Proposed Actual | Closed Budget | Closed Actual |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| January | January | \$122,248.00 | \$122,248.00 | \$122,248.00 | \$122,248.00 |
| February | January | \$100,000.00 | \$91,420.00 | \$100,000.00 | \$100,000.00 |
| March | January | \$100,000.00 | \$41,248.00 | \$100,000.00 | \$100,000.00 |
| April | January | \$100,000.00 | \$1,548.00 | \$100,000.00 | \$1,548.00 |
| May | January | \$100,000.00 | \$1,548.00 | \$100,000.00 | \$1,548.00 |
| June | January | \$100,000.00 | \$1,548.00 | \$100,000.00 | \$1,548.00 |
| July | January | \$100,000.00 | \$1,548.00 | \$100,000.00 | \$1,548.00 |
| August | January | \$100,000.00 | \$1,548.00 | \$100,000.00 | \$1,548.00 |
| September | January | \$100,000.00 | \$1,548.00 | \$100,000.00 | \$1,548.00 |
| October | January | \$100,000.00 | \$1,548.00 | \$100,000.00 | \$1,548.00 |
| November | January | \$100,000.00 | \$1,548.00 | \$100,000.00 | \$1,548.00 |
| December | January | \$100,000.00 | \$1,548.00 | \$100,000.00 | \$1,548.00 |

2018 Goals - Rep 1 (01/18 - 12/18)

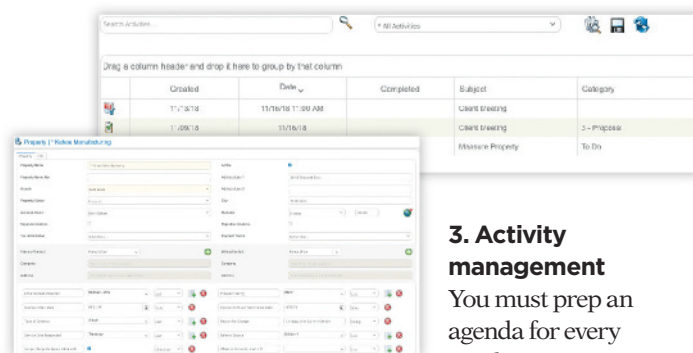


2. Property/job information:

You must document essential information for prospecting and negotiating each property and job. This includes information about the scope of work, the primary needs and concerns and the people who make decisions. This information is then employed in your daily planning to prioritize your activities and craft your

progressively more direct sales messages (why prospects should choose you and your solution). Yes, better messages and better proposals beat low prices almost every time. In addition, in a long selling cycle, without this history of messaging you will likely forget important details essential to the negotiation, and your closing rate will decline.

Here's what property/job information looks like:

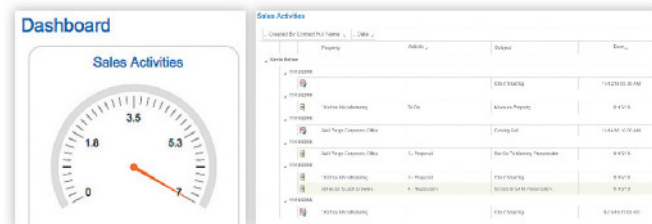


3. Activity management

You must prep an agenda for every touch so you control the call. There are only two possible objectives for every call. The first is an agreed-upon action with the prospect to advance the sales process. The second is a decision (yes or no) by the prospect. Every activity must be on your calendar.

These activities include to-do's, emails, face-to-face appointments and virtual appointments (GoToMeetings). This is the grind of the sales process. Manage your daily, weekly and monthly calendar so it reflects the necessary follow-up for every opportunity. Only by doing this will you spend time wisely and drive the pipeline to a decision.

Here's what activity management looks like:

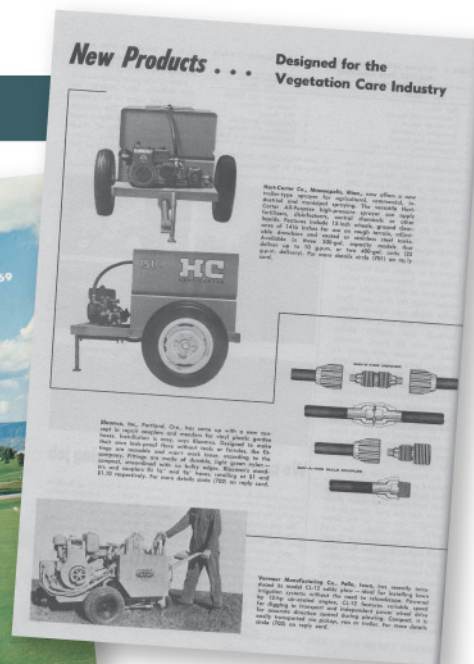
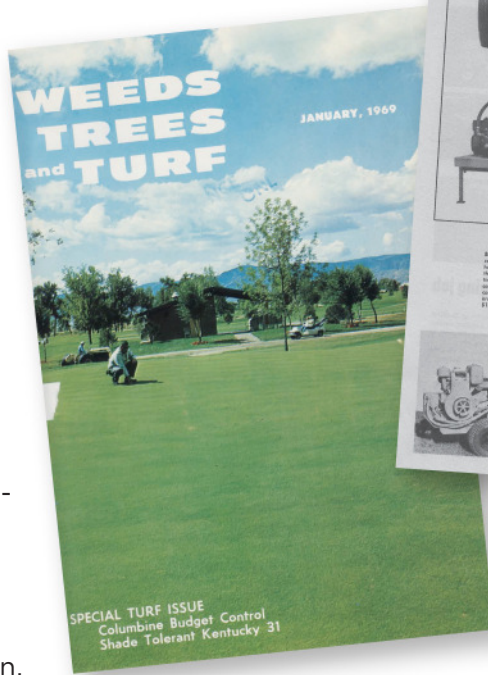


In summary, successful salespeople are not necessarily the most well-spoken or charismatic. More often than not, the best salespeople are the most disciplined and detail oriented. When you marry the method to technology, you will look and sound like a pro and in doing so, build that essential condition for a sale: trust.

A LOOK BACK

My, how times have changed.

The January 1969 issue of *Weeds, Trees and Turf* (Landscape Management's name from 1964-1987) featured new products "designed for the vegetation care industry." This section included nine products, such as a trailer-type sprayer, a trencher for installing irrigation systems, a dry fertilizer spreader, a mower and a soil shredder. Whereas now we simply visit a company website to learn more about featured products, in 1969 readers interested in a specific product circled a number on the reply card and were sent additional information.



PHOTOS: WEEDS, TREES AND TURF



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You can't grow yourself to profitability



BY JEFFREY SCOTT

The author is owner of Jeffrey Scott Consulting, which helps landscape companies grow and maximize profits. Reach him at jeff@jeffreyscott.biz.

Growth is a natural success metric. You see it in how countries measure their GDP, in how companies show their investors they are a worthwhile investment and in how upwardly mobile employees show their ability to handle more responsibility.

Growth creates opportunities for everyone ... unless you fall prey to the misconception that growth will solve your profit problems.

The unspoken hope is that top line sales growth will trickle down to bottom line profit growth. It ain't necessarily so. If you want to grow profits, you should focus on that goal directly, instead of hoping that sales growth will translate into profit growth.

Sales may cover up a multitude of sins, but only a focused profit improvement plan will fix them. In fact, a strategy of sales growth may actually amplify your problems and make them worse:

- If you have cash flow challenges, your growth will suck up even more cash.
- If you are challenged by employee recruiting, accelerated growth will mean you have more open positions, and your quality will likely decrease.
- If you lack company discipline, the chaos will get worse as you juggle more clients, more middle management and more equipment.
- If you lack effective systems, they will easily get outstripped as you grow and ultimately break down.

PROFIT DRIVES GROWTH




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Are there exceptions? Yes, sometimes an under-utilized asset or overhead position will benefit from increased sales to optimize overhead. Don't let this exception sway you from tackling profit challenges head-on.

When you focus on creating and implementing a profit improvement plan, you will enjoy many benefits:

- Employees will better understand what it means to think and act like an owner.
- Your balance sheet will improve.
- Employees will be able to improve and grow in their positions.
- Overall business risk will be reduced (depending on your sales mix).
- Systems will be improved, and critical systems will be added.
- Employees' creativity and problem-solving skills will be engaged, and morale will increase.
- Customer satisfaction will usually increase due to fixing inefficiencies in your systems.
- Sales growth will ultimately add more profit and value back to the organization.

To stay competitive, you must keep growing in all senses of the word. However, a focus on sales growth is never a guarantee that your profit will grow, whereas a focus on profit growth will almost always create revenue growth and strengthen your client and employee base. 



BLOWER SAFETY

Blowers are useful for cleaning debris off of sidewalks and driveways after finishing landscape work. It's important to know how to properly operate a blower before using it.

Before starting the blower, do the following:

- Check the blower's condition: Is there any damage that may affect its performance or safe operation?
- Test the throttle trigger to make sure it's in good working order.
- Inspect for missing or worn guards.
- Check fuel; make sure there's enough for the job. It's safer to refuel a cool engine, compared with a hot one.
- Ensure that your fuel type is correct, whether it's a gas/oil combination or straight gas. As you pour the fuel, make sure it's the correct color.
- After fueling, make sure the fuel cap is secured but not too tight.
- If you have spilled fuel, clean it up and be sure to start the blower at least 6 feet away from the spill area.
- When refueling, be sure to loosen the fuel cap slowly to relieve pressure in the fuel tank.



Before using the blower, follow these guidelines:

- Always be considerate of bystanders and adjoining property owners. Never blow in the direction of people, pets, roads, vehicles or buildings.
- When people approach, stop working until they pass.
- Always be aware of who and what is around you. It's easy to trip, bump or walk into something, including traffic.
- Know and observe your local laws and regulations regarding power equipment. Your supervisor will explain the guidelines you have to follow.

WATCH AND LEARN

Visit [LandscapeManagement.net/SafetyWatch](https://www.LandscapeManagement.net/SafetyWatch) to view a video about blower safety.

SOURCE: GREENIUS

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AD INDEX

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| AMP Lighting..... | CV4 |
| Andersons, The..... | 29 |
| Billy Goat..... | 3 |
| Bobcat Co..... | 7 |
| Case Construction..... | 25 |
| Exmark..... | 9 |
| GEICO Commercial..... | 27 |
| Go iLawn..... | 24 |
| GPS Insight..... | 33 |
| Grasshopper Co., The..... | 59 |
| Gregson-Clark Spraying Equipment..... | 35 |
| Horizon Distributors..... | 10 |
| John Deere..... | 13 |
| Kubota Tractor Corp..... | CV3 |
| NaturaLawn..... | 62 |
| Navistar Inc..... | 17-19 |
| Neely Coble Co..... | 61 |
| Pennington Seed..... | 23 |
| PermaGreen Supreme..... | 37 |
| PRO Landscape by Drafix Software..... | 15 |
| Progressive Insurance..... | 11 |
| Project EverGreen..... | 62 |
| Quali-Pro..... | CV2 |
| Takeuchi Manufacturing..... | 49 |
| The Grow Group..... | 57 |
| Turfco..... | 5 |
| U.S. Lawns..... | 31 |
| Verizon Networkfleet..... | 39 |

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GROW WITH GRUNDER

BY MARTY GRUNDER

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Attack 2019 head-on

At the start of every new year, I like to take some time to reflect on the best insights I gleaned from industry colleagues over the past 12 months. Here's the hard-won wisdom I'll be focusing on most intently in 2019:

"I have never seen young people so interested in company culture." This intel came from Phil Allen, Ph.D., a professor of landscape management at Brigham Young University. I asked him what it takes to recruit and retain talented students like his to work at landscaping companies like mine. They want to work at organizations that feel like family, are fun and provide a clear path for growth, Allen says. Companies that don't know their visions and missions from top to bottom are going to have difficulty attracting skilled graduates, he cautioned. Do *you* know your vision? Can you articulate and repeat it in a single sentence?

"Growth brings prosperity, but the demands it brings to manage and deliver are very real." All the ambitious owners I know are eager to grow their companies. But, as Mike Rorie, who grew GroundMasters into

"If you find yourself constantly frustrated with your team, take a good long look at the workplace you've created."

the largest provider of commercial landscape services in the Ohio Valley (before selling it to Brickman more than a decade ago), stressed: You have to grow *smartly*. If you don't have the people, the management and the systems in place to take on more work, you won't succeed. Worse yet, you'll do real damage to your reputation and erode the accomplishments you fought so hard to realize.

"Opportunity is the greatest motivator." Bob Grover, president of Pacific Landscape Management (PLM), told us this when we toured his facility in August as part of our annual National Association of Landscape Professionals Field Trip: PLM has accomplished extraordinary growth while staying true to its values. How? By continuing to put its people and their aspirations first — by investing in ongoing training and education, providing opportunities for advancement and setting up a scholarship fund for its team members' children. If you find yourself constantly frustrated with your team, take a good long look at the workplace you've created. In Grover's experience, as in mine, when you take a genuine interest in your team, they will take a genuine interest in delivering for you.

"The economy is going to change; have a plan and be prepared." Frank Mariani is CEO of one of the largest privately held

landscaping companies in the country. When Mariani speaks, I listen. And what he has been reminding me during the prosperity of 2018 is that the economy will, inevitably, change. Smart companies have a plan in place for good times and bad. Sit your leadership team down this month and start talking through what you'll do when the economy shifts. It may not be fun, but it is necessary if you want to survive and thrive.

"It's all about the people."

I recently asked Michael Hupf, CEO of Lifescape Colorado, what he thought was the most important factor in running a successful landscaping company. Hupf grew up on a farm in Nebraska, worked as a CPA with Deloitte and earned an MBA from Stanford before buying Lifescape and growing it from \$3 million to \$15 million in annual revenue. I expected him to tell me financials are the key to success, but instead, he said it all comes down to the people. Sure, his background enables him to really understand the business side of things, but without a dedicated team, you just won't win.

To go deeper into the insights these industry leaders have to share, please join us at The Grow Group's GROW! 2019 conference in Denver, Feb. 20-22. It's going to be an amazing event — I promise.

See you next month! 🍷





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