



**Pat Jones** is president of Flagstick LLC, a consulting firm that provides sales and marketing intelligence to green industry businesses. He can be reached at psjhawk@cox.net or 440-478-4763.

## REINVENTING YOURSELF

Last month, I dragged my wife to a rock concert for the first time in years. It was a retro show featuring a bunch of gray-haired artists from the '60s like B.J. Thomas, the Fifth Dimension, Peter and Gordon, Ronnie Spector (and, of course, the Ronettes) and The Rascals. I loved every minute of it. My wife sat by my side patiently through the whole thing, but barely tolerated it.

The truth is my wife has abandoned the '60s (as well as the '70s, '80s and '90s) in favor of keeping up with our children. As opposed to her Luddite husband, she has an iPod filled with music from the 21st century. While I can recite every lyric of every song ever written by Lennon and McCartney, she can sing along with tunes from Korn, the Black Eyed Peas and rap groups whose names can't even be printed in a family magazine like this one. I just asked her what her current favorite band was and she replied "Flogging Molly." Apparently, it's an Irish punk group. I kid you not.

In short, she's hip, and I'm not. It makes me fearful for our future. As McCartney wrote, "Will you still need me, will you still feed me, when I'm 64?"

Yet, despite the fact I'm sneaking up on being an old fogey, and she's a hot young thing, she seems to still care for me. Perhaps she'll even change my bedpans in a few years.

So, on the cultural radio dial, my tuner is stuck on the "oldies" station. My tastes in music, clothing, books, movies and pretty much everything else were set in concrete by the time I was 25. In a nutshell, I'm a happy dinosaur.

That said, from a business standpoint, I've tried to keep up. I'm pretty competent on computers, I read all the business books I can get and I try to challenge myself constantly to get better at what I do. That's what led me to what I'm doing now. As most of you know, I had a pretty good gig as the publisher of another magazine three years ago. We built the publication from

scratch to success. But success had its price tag. I found that I missed the fun of struggling to do new things, and I wasn't particularly happy pushing paper around my desk. So, I reinvented myself. I sat down and made a written list of the things I loved to do and the things I hated. At the top of the love list was

- being with my family;
- writing;
- speaking and teaching;
- working with great folks; and
- helping superintendents.

At the top of the hate list was

- managing other people;
- traveling 180 days a year;
- corporate B.S.;
- meetings; and
- did I mention corporate B.S.?

**Start now and begin to reinvent yourself. It's all about being happy and satisfying the needs of yourself and, if you have one, your family.**

Through that exercise, I came to the conclusion that it was time for me to do my own thing. Thus, I started my little company. The only corporate B.S. I deal with now is scooping up the doggie doo out of the backyard of Flagstick LLC's global headquarters. (I guess that's corporate D.S.)

So, here's the point of this rambling: I want to challenge each of you to do exactly what I did. Sometime in the next two days I want you to clear your schedule, make sure no one bothers you, get a piece of paper in front of you and write down the answers to the following questions:

- What do I really love to do? What hon-

estly makes me happy?

- What do I genuinely hate about what I'm doing now?

- If I could create my perfect life, what would it realistically be like?

- When I go to sleep at night, what nice thought will I have in my head?

- Conversely, what keeps me up at night and how can I get rid of that pain?

When you complete this exercise, you'll have a piece of paper that can change your life. That's exactly what I did, and I'm pretty happy these days. You can be, too.

If you're good at what you do (and I know you are), you need to take control of your life and reinvent yourself. You can and should manage your life rather than letting others do it for you. Think about it: Why are you doing what you're doing, and does it make you happy?

So, here's my challenge to you: take one hour, just an hour, and reinvent yourself.

What do I mean by reinvent? I mean you need to take stock of your life, decide what's good and what's bad and make a plan to become the person you want to be.

I know that sounds like new-age gibberish, but I'm serious. Set a time and go through the process. I don't care if you're 19 or 91. It's a healthy thing to do. You need to have a plan for your professional and personal life.

To put it another way, if you were going to do a project on your course – let's say rebuilding tees or installing a new pump station – wouldn't you make a plan?

Wouldn't you specifically map out every step of the process and know, in advance, what resources, time and effort you'd need to get the job done? Wouldn't you have a specific goal in your mind before you even start?

Your career and your life are no different. In fact, they're higher priorities. Don't wait. Start now and begin to reinvent yourself. It's all about being happy and satisfying the needs of yourself and, if you have one, your family. Almost every superintendent I've met is a perfectionist at heart. Just for once, be a perfectionist about yourself. **GC1**