

## LOOKING AHEAD

The last three years have been a helluva lot of fun here at GCI's intergalactic headquarters. As I'm planning for next year and thinking about what we've done well and what we can still improve on, here's my scorecard for how I believe we're doing.

Serving readers is the bottom line for any magazine, so it's always at the top of my list. What have we done to help you do your job and live your life better? Well, for one thing, we've tried to make GCI reader-driven – quite literally. The vast majority of our print and online content is written by current and former superintendents and other experts who have their feet on the ground in the market every day. It's all about relevancy and hitting the topics you guys are really concerned about agronomically, professionally and personally.

I wake up every day feeling absolutely gobsmacked that we've attracted the likes of Bruce Williams, Tim Moraghan, Henry Delozier, Dr. John Kaminiski, Monroe Miller, Dennis Lyon, Terry Buchen and Ron Dodson to our editorial team. Those voices, that experience and their willingness to tell it like it is have been key to our success.

It's paying off. I'm very proud to say that in a readership study done last month, we learned GCI has the best cover-to-cover readership in our market. Nearly 47 percent of you said you read GCI cover to cover and 53 percent of you read every issue. That makes us No. 1 in readership in this crazy business, kids. Yes, we do those studies to show advertisers that GCI is a great investment for their marketing dollars, but it's really gratifying to know that what we're doing appeals to you guys.

We are in the content business. We develop great information and then figure out what the heck to do with it. In the old days, the content business consisted entirely of print. We would write, edit, print, mail and repeat. Now, we have at least a half-dozen platforms to get you info: print, website, digital edition, mobile app, social media, e-newsletters, video, podcasts, etc. The Superintendent Radio Network is a perfect example. Who knew that so many of you would use an iTunes-based network to

feed your brain with short conversations with experts and authorities around the industry? Love that thing!

In the next year, you'll also see us creating iPad-based publications for golf and the other markets our parent company, GIE Media, serves. In our most recent study of how superintendents use digital toys, we found 40 percent of you have an iPad or table device. The experts on such things tell us that will climb to 75 or 80 percent within a couple of years. If you're one of those folks who already has an iPad, go to the App Store and download "A Garden Life," a publication we developed for the garden center market, to see what the future looks like. It will blow your mind.

And that commitment to using communications technology is also paying off. In the same readership study, you guys said GCI is the leader in digital and web communications by a 2-to-1 margin over the closest competitor. Nice!

It's all too easy to sit in Cleveland or wherever and pretend we know what's happening in the market. Instead, we get on airplanes and come to you. We attend a ton of

conferences, regional shows, chapter meetings and national events just to listen to what you guys think and track the trends and topics that matter to you. We also brought readers into our offices this year to get their candid opinions about what we do well and what we stink at. The consensus was that we're at our best when we're leading the market and talking about topics no one else will touch.

The other way we connect is through social media. People think I spend my day on Facebook and Twitter. I wish. Instead, it's something our entire team does in little dribs and drabs throughout the day. But it's our job to stay on top of what's going and break news when it happens. But, social media also lets us bond with readers we haven't even met yet and create relationships that lead to great stories.

I'm perhaps most proud that the readers said GCI is their No. 1 source for new ideas, opinions and trends. That means we are connecting and that means we're doing things right. In the end, that's all that matters. GCI



**Pat Jones**  
Editorial director and publisher

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