Alert Your Customers

If you've been keeping up on the local news in your area, you know that the fly-by-night service artists are still in business. Not only are they operating, but it's your business image which suffers when they reap their cash award and move on

Maybe now is a good time to alert your customers to the shoddy operation which promises much but cannot do a proficient job at the cut rate which attracts the business in the first place. You can use your local advertising outlets or your own direct mail piece. Perhaps you can handle a joint exposé promotion in cooperation with other legitimate operators.

Point out the guarantee of prompt service and quality work customers can expect from yearround, local businesses such as your own. Use examples of complaints which have made the local newspaper, radio, or TV outlets. Check on others from your Better Business Bureau. Likely, you can point to some of your own experiences where you have been called to correct a job.

Above all, point out the unique nature of service to vegetation, whether it be chemical applications, tree care, or other types of vegetation control. Results depend on time, whether a good or poor job is done. No customer can examine the chemical and judge its value. Nor can the customer judge the tree care job until it is done. In any case,

there is no second guessing. The fast buck artist has collected and moved on. By contrast, the local operator will still be in business, and not only will he be able but will expect to make the job right.

Warn your customers that vegetation maintenance and control practices vary from area to area. Local full-time operators know their area. They know the specific insects and diseases and the most effective related services to benefit the customer. Transient operators are unable to provide the experienced judgment needed for many local problems.

Despite the fact that local news media readily publicize the gyp operator, such transients still find work. Perhaps local operators need to speak with more force and do their promotion as a group. Customers need to be made to realize that shoddy tree care work cannot always be repaired, and when it can, it takes time. Shoddy spraying can wipe out years of landscaping effort for which the customer will have no recourse.

WEEDS TREES AND TURF is the national monthly magazine of urban/industrial vegetation maintenance, including turf management, weed and brush control, and tree care. Readers in-clude "contract applicators," arborists, nurserymen, sod growers, and supervisory personnel with highway departments, railways, utilities, golf courses, and similar areas where vegetation must be enhanced or controlled. While the editors welcome contributions by qualified freelance writers, unsolicited manuscripts, unaccompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes, cannot be returned.

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