

Computer images: landscape selling tools?

A new computer imaging service allows landscapers and architects to show their customers what their properties will look like at maturity.

The graphic service is offered by LandScopes, Inc., a Virginia-based computer imaging service that helps designers sell customers imagined landscape plans for home or commercial properties.

The company merges a photograph of the site with digitized images of real botanical specimens and garden elements, and the designer receives a full-color computer printout of the site at plant maturity.

The service spares the landscaper the costly investment of purchasing computer-aided equipment or the expense of employing a graphic artist. Also, the realistic pictures significantly help the customer understand traditional overhead plot plans or architectural line drawings. The net result is improved customer understanding and reduced costs due to design changes, according to the company.

A truer image

"Traditional plot plans, line drawings, or even watercolor sketches leave a lot of room for mismatched visions between designers and customers," says Sheila D. McKisic, LandScopes' president. "Even CAD drawings can be visually misconstrued by clients, and making changes can cause lengthy delays resulting in missed sales opportunities."

With the LandScopes process, however, once the photograph of the site has been processed by the computer, any number of designs can be merged with the image as necessity, time and budget permit, she adds.

The landscaper provides to the company a standard plot plan, a list of plants and landscape elements to be incorporated and two 35 mm photographs of the desired "view." One of the photos is to include markers for accurate plant placement. A standard LandScopes package costs approximately \$200 and includes one view of the site and up to 15 different landscape elements.

"The simplicity of the process makes it possible for the landscaper to use the same plant in several locations without additional cost," says McKisic. The company charges a nominal fee if more than 15 plants or garden elements are used. The de-



The landscaper provides \$200, two photos of the property and a list of the desired landscape elements...



...and the LandScopes package creates the desired landscape using as many as 15 plants or garden elements.

signer receives a full-color, 8- by 10-inch printout of the property.

"The great flexibility of the process allows for a myriad of customized

printouts are available for framing," she adds.

More than plants

The LandScopes library of images incorporates the new American Association of Nurserymen coding standard. It includes images of non-botanical elements such as fences, walls, fountains, bridges, patios, etc. Even the image of the house can be changed to accurately show its color or orientation.

"Landscaping professionals know that many of their customers would prefer to look at a realistic picture rather than a line drawing," says McKisic. "Experience shows that it's easier to gain agreement and reach closure on a sale when the designer and client share the same vision of what the finished product will look like." **LM**

It's easier to sell when the designer and client know what the finished project looks like.

plans. Unwanted existing plants and elements can be removed; plants can be pruned or relocated, the grounds can be graded; custom elements such as sculptures or fountains can be added; panoramic views up to 360 degrees can be processed; and large