

# TAKE AIM AT SUCCESS

Success can be measured once you set and attain business, family and community goals.

by E.T. Wandtke

It's not easy to define success. The best definition might include success in four areas: personal finance, family life, company recognition, and public recognition.

What is your definition of success? Have you considered these four areas in charting your success? This article will give you a simple system to assist you in staying focused on your personal success goals.

## Financial questions

Many individuals in the lawn/landscape industry have failed to set financial success goals, and therefore cannot determine their progress.

Some business owners define success as being able to take time off in the off-season and not worry about cash. How much cash you need to be able to take considerable time off without worrying about the business depends on your personal spending needs. Most financial planners indicate to their clients that at least one year's cash reserve should be enough.

Another measure of financial success is being able to take time off from daily business duties to enjoy time doing other activities.

What hobbies or activities do you engage in when you're away from the office? Have you started to wonder what you would do if you ever sold your company?

These questions can be answered if you have set a financial goal which will provide you the resources necessary to take time off or retire early.

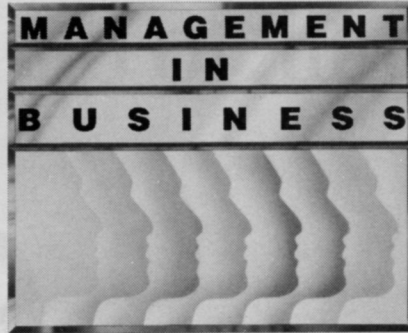
Set a personal financial goal for yourself that you want to achieve by the end of 1990. Do it now, and write it down.

## Don't neglect family

Starting a lawn or landscape business and making it profitable requires that you devote lots of time to all aspects of the business. This often means time away from your family.

How much time have you been spending at home? Do you leave for home early on Friday night? Do you really have to go to work on Saturday and Sunday?

Some suggestions to help foster stronger family relationships are: in-



cluding your spouse in attendance at dinner meetings or at national conventions, or establishing a strict one-night-a-week-out-alone policy rather than a weekend evening.

To stay in touch with the rest of your family, you may consider having them work in the business when they are old enough. Attend the children's school functions or volunteer to help coach activities your children take part in. And take the time to get out of town with the whole family twice each year.

## Meeting business goals

Most companies consider themselves successful if they meet or surpass their budgeted profitability for the year. However, many of you may not have set profitability goals for the year. How then can you determine if you have been successful?

Some measure their business success by how well they exceed the national standards of performance for a company of their size.

While this is one way of comparing your performance, it does not take into consideration the fact that your mix of service offerings may be different from the company you are comparing yourself to.

Another measure of business success is the continued financial viability of your company. This would mean that you completed the year with a profit, with positive cash flow, and have increased your customer base over last year.

Some individuals measure their business success by having reached certain milestones of volume performance. Being a million dollar company,

or being recognized as one of the largest companies in the green industry is a measure of success for some owners.

All of these business and financial measures of success can be used in any green industry company. The best way to use them is to write your company's financial success down and then work on it for the year.

## In the public eye

For most, this measure of success comes either in the industry or in the community. Being selected an officer in one of the green industry organizations such as ALCA, PLCAA or PGMS would be considered a sign of success by many. Others require more, like being recognized by the community as a successful business person.

Public recognition often requires involvement in public service, which then requires a commitment of time and possibly money.

What time and financial commitment can you afford? Would you like to have others in your company involved? These are some of the questions you will need answers to in order to set your goals for determining community recognition and success.

## Do it now!

Take time to write down your personal definition of success. Give yourself a target to shoot for. Quantify all items in order to be able to measure your degree of success.

Place a three-by-five card with your success goals on the mirror where you shave in the morning. Give a copy of your own definition of success to a good friend. Ask him to check with you from time to time to help keep you on track.

Once you have taken the time to write down your personal definition of success, you will become more focused in working to achieve the success you seek.

Next year at this time, you will be a success—or at least you will know what you need to work on to get there.

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