

# LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

## LITERATURE ROUNDUP

Get more information on the products you're interested in—simply return the reader service card today. There's no cost and no obligation.



Full-color literature showcases GRASSHOPPER's nine zero-radius front mowers—the most complete line available. Easy interchangeability of mulching and standard side-discharge decks, and six Quik-D-Tatch Vac® Grasscatching Systems, provide choices for clipping disposal and recycling in all mowing conditions. Year-round attachments for added versatility.

**The Grasshopper Company**  
One Grasshopper Trail  
P.O. Box 637  
Moundridge, KS 67107  
(316) 345-8621

Circle No. 301 on Reader Inquiry Card



MILES INC. has literature on its full line of turf and ornamental products. Brochure contains technical data and information on handling, application and storage of each product. MILES manufactures turf and ornamental fungicides, insecticides and herbicides.

**Miles Inc.**  
Specialty Products  
P.O. Box 4913  
Kansas City, MO 64120  
(800) 842-8020

Circle No. 302 on Reader Inquiry Card

## CUSTOMER SERVICE TIPS

### Training to communicate

by Ed Wandtke

■ One activity you need to do this winter is train your employees to better communicate with customers.

All too often, companies in the green industry focus their winter training on technical knowledge, equipment familiarity, vehicle safety and building maintenance or clean-up. None of these help deal with the source of revenue: customers.

Face the challenge this winter and implement a customer communications program. Here are some topics I've found to be very helpful:

1. Asking customers for a referral;
2. Getting neighbors of customers to become customers themselves;
3. Reinforcing the quality of service when talking to customers;
4. Handling difficult questions;

5. Ending conversations without offending customers; and/or

6. Explaining the differences in service programs.

Training your employees to communicate is necessary, but many owners assume their employees are already effective.

Try getting your more experienced employees to stand up in front of other employees, and train the latter to answer the above questions.

Don't be surprised to see some reluctance among employees. Not all are good communicators.

Have a professional trainer polish your personnel. The profits from investing in effective customer communication will be seen this spring as your employees go back to working with that most important person in your business, the customer.

—The author is a principle at Wandtke & Associates Management Consultants, 2586 Oakstone Dr., Columbus, OH 43231. For more information, phone (614) 891-3111.

### NORTON from page 26

Association of America.

"I'm proud to have been a director of PLCAA because I think it does a great job of representing the best interests of all lawn care companies, both large and small," says Norton.

On a personal level, business associates, including competitors, appreciate his wit, which can be warm or sharp—but always insightful. They value his observations and thoughts on the industry which he shares with other lawn care business people, particularly through his involvement with PLCAA.

"Its been an awful lot of fun and an experience I wouldn't trade for anything," says Norton of his involvement with lawn care.

Both he and the company he helps direct—Barefoot—do the marketplace, the industry, and themselves proud by delivering quality, customer-appreciated lawn services at a price that's fair to everybody.

Previous "Person of the Year" award winners: Jerry Faulring, 1984; Richard Lee Duke, 1985; Ron Giffen, 1986; Bill Fischer, 1987; Jim Marria, 1988; James Fitzgibbon, 1989; James Brooks, 1990; and Marty Erbaugh, 1991.

—Ron Hall