

Rainy day training



■ Because they provide the ultimate in flexibility, video programs are invaluable as training tools in the golf/landscape markets. Outdoor maintenance tasks are dependent on varying weather patterns, so video training can be conducted on days when the weather precludes normal maintenance schedules.

Videos are also an inexpensive way to get the message of a recognized expert. They are one-way, instant and highly visual educational tools.

However, because video viewing is a

static rather than dynamic process, you must remember that the medium supports—not replaces—instruction. Encourage the trainee to interact with the medium.

To be most effective, the video should:

- be used at or near the working area;
- be accessible to everyone;
- feature close-up photography demonstrating exactly how to do a par-

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Video training sessions may not be as entertaining as ABC-TV's 'Tool Time,' but—when properly conducted—are much more informative.

"Advanced Pruning"

no length specified, no amount specified

VEP Video Productions

California Polytechnic State Univ.

San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

(800) 235-4146

"Annual Plant Bed Preparation and Installation"

15 min.

\$34.95 includes S&H

DeKalb Extension Service—Video

101 Court Sq.

Decatur, GA 30030

(404) 371-2821

"Basic Landscape Plan Drawing"

60 minutes

\$59.95 + \$5 S&H

Progress Products

8652 W. Progress Dr.

Littleton, CO 80123

(303) 973-1011

"Careers in Horticulture"

15 minutes

\$39.95 includes S&H

American Society for Horticultural Science

SOME AVAILABLE VIDEOS

113 S. West St., Suite 400
Alexandria, VA 22314

"Common Turfgrass Diseases"

no time specified, no price specified

Lesco Inc., Attn. Art Wick

20005 Lake Rd.

Rocky River, OH 44116

(800) 321-5325

"Common Turfgrass Insects"

no time specified, no price specified

Lesco Inc., Attn. Art Wick

20005 Lake Rd.

Rocky River, OH 44116

(800) 321-5325

"Common Turfgrass Weeds"

no time specified, no price specified

Lesco Inc., Attn. Art Wick

20005 Lake Rd.

Rocky River, OH 44116

(800) 321-5325

"Creating and Maintaining a Shade Garden"

45 minutes

\$39.95 + \$3 S&H

Benner's Gardens

Star Route Box 86

New Hope, PA 18938

"Equipment Use, Safety and Field Maintenance"

15 min.

\$34.95 includes S&H

DeKalb Extension Service—Video

101 Court Sq.

Decatur, GA 30030

(404) 371-2821

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VIDEOS *continued from page 22*

"Floating Fountains"
no time specified, no price specified
Lesco Inc., Attn. Art Wick
20005 Lake Rd.
Rocky River, OH 44116
(800) 321-5325

"Floyd Perry's ABCs of Grounds Maintenance"
softball 40 mins.; baseball 55 mins.
\$49.95 + \$5.99 S&H each tape
GM Video
P.O. Box 617018
Orlando, FL 32861
(800) 886-2006

"Irrigation Maintenance and Troubleshooting"
no time specified, no price specified
Lesco Inc., Attn. Art Wick
20005 Lake Rd.
Rocky River, OH 44116
(800) 321-5325

"Knowing Mowing Safety"
90 minutes
\$20 includes S&H
Briggs & Stratton
606 E. Wisconsin Ave.
Milwaukee, WI
(414) 223-7520

"Landscape Irrigation Maintenance & Troubleshooting"
no time specified, no price specified
VEP Video Productions
California Polytechnic State Univ.
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
(800) 235-4146

"Landscape Maintenance Estimating"
25 minutes
no price specified
Visual Education Productions
Caly Poly State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
(800) 235-4146

"Lawn Management—In Balance with Nature"
free
Monsanto Fulfillment
1325 N. Warson Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63132

"Pesticide Safety, Introduction to"
15 min.
\$34.95 includes S&H
DeKalb Extension Service—Video
101 Court Sq.
Decatur, GA 30030
(404) 371-2821

"Planting Procedures for Woody Ornamentals"
15 min.
\$34.95 includes S&H
DeKalb Extension Service—Video
101 Court Sq.
Decatur, GA 30030
(404) 371-2821

"Power Blower Maintenance"
10 min.
\$49.95 plus \$5 S&H
Advanstar Marketing Services
7500 Old Oak Blvd.
Cleveland, OH 44130
(216) 826-2839

"Power Shear Maintenance"
12 min.
\$49.95 plus \$5 S&H
Advanstar Marketing Services
7500 Old Oak Blvd.
Cleveland, OH 44130
(216) 826-2839

"Professional Hazmat Solutions"
free
Safety Storage
2301 Bert Dr.
Hollister, CA 95023

"Professional Shrub Trimming and Pruning"
40 mins.
\$59.95 plus \$5 S&H
Progress Products
8652 W. Progress Dr.
Littleton, CO 80123
(303) 973-1011

"Professional Turf Management"
no time specified, no price specified
VEP Video Productions
California Polytechnic State Univ.
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
(800) 235-4146

"Research—Practically Speaking"
4 videos/yr. 30 min. each
\$25.00 each
International Society of Arboriculture
P.O. Box 908
Urbana, IL 81801
(217) 355-9411

"Rotary Edger/Trimmer Maintenance"
13 min.
\$49.95 plus \$5 S&H
Advanstar Marketing Services
7500 Old Oak Blvd.
Cleveland, OH 44130
(216) 826-2839

"Rotary Mower Maintenance"
14 min.
\$49.95 plus \$5 S&H
Advanstar Marketing Services
7500 Old Oak Blvd.
Cleveland, OH 44130
(216) 826-2839

"Rotary Spreader Calibration"
no time specified, no price specified
Lesco Inc., Attn. Art Wick
20005 Lake Rd.
Rocky River, OH 44116
(800) 321-5325

"Safety Training from John Deere"
72 minutes
\$15.00 includes S&H
Deere & Company

Distribution Service Center
Safety Films Dept.
1400 Third Ave.
Moline, IL 61265

"Snow Plowing"
27 min.
\$59.95 plus \$5 S&H
Progress Products
8652 W. Progress Dr.
Littleton, CO 80123
(303) 973-1011

"Soil Fertility"
10 videos, 15-25 mins. each
\$20 each or \$150 for all 10
Potash & Phosphate Institute
655 Engineering Dr., Suite 110
Norcross, GA 30092-2821
(404) 477-0335

"String Trimmer Maintenance"
13 min.
\$49.95 plus \$5 S&H
Advanstar Marketing Services
7500 Old Oak Blvd.
Cleveland, OH 44130
(216) 826-2839

"Success with Bedding Plants"
20 minutes
\$130 (\$100 PPPA members)
Professional Plant Growers Assn.
P.O. Box 27517
Lansing, MI 48909

"Tree Care"
five-video set
\$25 per video plus \$5 S&H per order
(ISA, NAA members)
International Society of Arboriculture
P.O. Box GG
Savoy, IL 61874
or National Arborist Association
P.O. Box 1094
Amherst, NH 03031
(603) 673-3311

"Turfgrass Renovation"
no time specified, no price specified
Lesco Inc., Attn. Art Wick
20005 Lake Rd.
Rocky River, OH 44116
(800) 321-5325

"Using Pesticides Safely"
6-video set, 68 minutes total time
\$120 includes S&H
University of Maryland Video Resource Center
0120 Symons Hall
College Park, MD 20742
(301) 405-3928 or 405-3913

"Video Campus: Beginning Irrigation"
four videotapes, workbooks
no price specified
Rain Bird Sales Inc.
145 N. Grand Ave. Glendora, CA 91740
(800) 247-3782

TRAINING *cont. from page 20*

ticular process;

- be technically correct and complete; and

- be free of any sales pitches.

Setting up the training room:

- ▶ Flat-screen monitors like those manufactured by Sony are the best: they allow you to fan the seating wider—as much as 45 degrees—to the sides. However, if you must fan seating too far laterally using one monitor, two monitors placed in the corners of the room, at opposite inward angles, are better than one.

- ▶ Monitors should be placed slightly higher than eye level to offer all viewers good sightlines.

- ▶ If you have a large training room, you might want to wire additional speakers near the back of the room.

- ▶ Avoid glare. Use lights that can be

dimmed, if possible. The best lighting is low, but not so dark that trainees cannot take notes.

- ▶ Check noise levels. Make sure heating, air conditioning, ringing telephones, and/or outside construction do not interfere with video viewing.

- ▶ Be especially careful with chairs, as your employees are not people who normally sit for long periods of time. Chairs should be comfortable, but not too comfortable. Contoured wood, plastic or fabric with schoolroom-type desks attached are best; cushioned seats should be avoided.

- ▶ Test your equipment. Then cue the video before showing it. You'll save valuable time—and, sometimes, embarrassment—by not having to fast-forward or rewind in front of the trainees.

Showing the training videos:

- 1) Before the video begins, write its

main points on a board or provide summary notes to each trainee. Go over the points.

- 2) Encourage note-taking. The best teaching method is see/write/say/do.

- 3) Stay in the room as a proctor during the video, if possible. Actively supervise; you'll be sending a message that the information is important enough for you to watch (again).

- 4) Trainees should not view videos for longer than 20 minutes without a break of some kind. Sometimes, it's not a bad idea to pause the video every 10 to 12 minutes and lead a short discussion. It keeps viewers involved and interested. During the discussions, personal experiences help the viewers relate to each other. This is also a good time to reiterate key points.

- 5) Afterward, give the trainees a written exam.

—Jerry Roche

How to select an accountant

by Dan Sautner,
Padgett Business Services

- If you're in business for yourself, at the very least you'll need an accountant to help prepare your tax return, unless taxation is a major hobby of yours.

Use an accountant to prepare monthly, quarterly and annual reporting. Not following the government's strict regulations, can mean heavy fines, so it's best left to people who work with it every day.

The government has devised a tax system that places a large burden on the independent business owner. With few exceptions, the reports required of a five-person operation are similar to those required of much larger organizations.

Besides complying with government demands, a good accountant should also help with other financial considerations. This leads us to the major criteria for selecting an accountant:

(1) Will you and your accountant understand each other?

The lines of communication must be clear, and the accountant must take time to review the financial information provided. A good accountant drops the jargon and speaks conversationally.

Select someone who appears interested in your business and someone with whom you feel you can develop a rapport.

- ▶ Make sure you know your contact per-

son. Also: how will the communication work? On what schedule and under what circumstances will your calls be returned? Your new accountant cannot be available 24 hours a day, but it is reasonable to expect a return call within 24 hours.

(2) Can you get good turnaround?

To be useful, accounting information must be on time. Find an accountant who can set a delivery schedule that gets you the information near the end of the period. If it's a monthly P&L, you need the information within 10 days. If it's quarterly information, it can still be useful within 20 days of the quarter's end. If it's annual work, the information should be available within 45 to 60 days.

To truly run your business properly, get accounting information every 30 days. A good accountant tells you what information to supply, when—and then will stick to the schedule.

(3) Where do you fit in the accountant's scheme of things?

Your business will have to be important to the accountant. In the business, the largest clients are served first, because they generate the largest fees. Find out where your organization will fit into this scheme. If you are the smallest client your accountant is handling, can you really expect timely service? Look for a company that has selected your size of company as its target client.

(4) What is the accountant's education/experience level?

Look beyond education and experience, to experience in your field, in your industry, or in businesses of your size.

Good accountants are able to answer technical questions. Since no one practicing taxation can ever claim to know everything, your accountant should have the ability and resources to ask others for a second opinion.

(5) What services will be provided?

You should know exactly what will be provided, and how often. Be skeptical of the following offers:

- (a) A person who says he or she will do everything. (No one can.) Worse, "everything" can be defined by the accountant.

- (b) The accountant who wants to build your tax return into the price. This may mean that your return will be competing with "cash" returns when it is due.

- (c) An accountant who says he or she will do the tax return for free. (In your own business, how much importance do you place on "free" work?)

(6) What is the basis for fees?

Fees should be based on a combination of the volume and the condition of the accounting information. Also, you should not have to pay for extras that have not been discussed beforehand. You have the right to approve any fee increase before the work is done.

Fees should be affordable. For smaller companies, it depends on your location and volume of work. Shop for value. When comparing two different fees, make sure that you also compare the level of service.

—The author is chairman of Padgett Business Services, Inc., of Athens, Ga. This is the second in a series of basic accounting articles he is writing for *LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT*.