

Since we must go to customers, rather than they to us, your time management is essential. Visits must be scheduled so that customers are serviced in an organized and efficient manner. Here are some hints:

1) **Clearly designate** routes or service zones. Except in very special cases, begin each year by treating all lawns in each zone in some type of order. Before the route is run for the first time, put these addresses in sequence by neighborhood, street, and number. Insist that they be treated in

that order the first time out.

2) **Include clear directions** to the site on each invoice. It may not always be possible to have the same person treat the lawn each round. Make sure a substitute has clear directions to the property.

3) **Take time** to acquaint new employees with the routes. Simply giving them a street map doesn't help much. Drive the routes with them and

provide written instructions on locations of specific subdivisions and new developments. Providing each truck with a Graphic Street Guide is also very helpful and quickly pays for itself in time saved.

4) **Clearly note** special customer requests on the invoice. Is this a "call-ahead" customer? Is there a locked gate? How about outdoor pets? Is the numerical address clearly shown on the house? If not, how do we identify it? Does the property have odd boundaries we need to remember?

All such information should be reviewed by the turf specialist before they leave your office, not while they are parked in front of the lawn.

5) **Give the turf specialist** a few more invoices than they are expected to treat. Despite our best

planning, there are often occasions when we simply cannot treat a scheduled lawn. By giving the specialist back-up invoices, you will save the time of having them return to the shop for additional work.

6) **Track invoices** and invoice scheduling. You should be able to tell, at any given time, the status of any given invoice. By keeping track of invoices, you will service customers according to the schedule you have set.

7) **Follow up** on a as scheduled route the day it is treated. This does not mean you distrust your employees. It is "quality control."

8) **Service new customers** as soon as possible. Later adjustments in schedules can be made after the lawn has been treated for the first time.

9) **Put customer needs** before your schedule. Most LCOs require their turf specialists to also respond to service calls in their respective routes. Whatever your service policy, be it one day, two or three, respond in that time frame by scheduling the service call in with the turf specialist's production route.

These are ways to efficiently service customers and avoid wasteful "windshield time." We understand the need for production sales goals, but we must also understand the need for quality work. Proper routing and scheduling of your service calls, and thus your employee's work day, will allow you to be more successful in meeting both objectives. **LM**

We must understand the need for both sales goals and quality work, too.

Scheduling for optimum effectiveness



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