

**A** “signature” hole on a golf course, because of its beauty, difficulty or uniqueness, distinguishes that course from all others. Who’s your signature client? Who’s that customer who’s been with you from the beginning? That client who defines what you can do?

Let me tell you about Brookwood Landscape and its signature client, the Fashion Valley Mall, an upscale, airy shopping mall near San Diego.

A couple of months ago I sat at a small round white table at an outdoor cafe there with Mark

Wilhite, one of the operators of Brookwood Landscape. On the surface, catching a bite to eat at a shopping mall, any mall, is no big deal. But, sipping an ice tea in a Southern California mall while contemplating the breezy fronds of Mexican fan palms and the smartly dressed, sun-tanned, female shoppers criss-crossing beneath them in the mall’s courtyard made for one enjoyable afternoon. . . the palms? Oh yes, back to the palms.

Wilhite was explaining to me how his family-owned company had had to lay the 30- to 40-ft. palms on their sides and dolly them into the mall’s courtyard. Couldn’t crane them in. Had to install them at night too, using block-and-tackle, forklifts and steady hands.

Actually, getting those willowy palms upright, straight and secure was just a small part of the landscape job that Brookwood did at the mall, maybe the third makeover the Wilhites have done there since Fashion Valley opened almost 30 years ago.

That’s right, Brookwood — operated by Mark, his brother Glenn and their father, Keith, company president — constructed and has periodically updated and continuously maintained this particular property for almost 30 years.

“We don’t like to lose a job. We’re really serious about this,” says Mark in something of an understatement.

Brookwood, in fact, maintains the landscapes at just about every regional shopping center in and around San Diego, not to mention dozens of smaller shopping centers. But Fashion Valley Mall is the one that means the most to the Wilhites,



Keith, Glenn and Mark Wilhite (l. to r.) of Brookwood Landscapes keep big commercial customers happy.

partly because the Wilhites ran Brookwood Landscape from offices beside the mall for almost 20 years before they outgrew the location.

“We never want to lose Fashion Valley,” says Mark. “We’ve spent a lot of years making the people here happy, one step at a time.” **LM**

## Who’s your signature customer?



*Ron Hall*

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*Let us know about your signature customer and what this particular customer means to your operation.*

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