

let's hear it

YOUR OPINIONS, COMMENTS, & QUOTES

In our August issue, we posed the question: **How do you keep your family business together?** Some of you re-

sponded with fascinat-

ing company histories.

One of these was from Michael Kravitsky IV, Grasshopper Lawns Inc., Edwardsville, PA.

We met Michael and his brother, Shawn, at PLCAA's "Day on the Hill" this past July. They were

on their way, along with a small group of fellow Pennsylvanians, to meet with Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA), concerning small business concerns.



The following is the Grasshopper Lawns story, as written by Michael Kravitsky IV.

Sometimes things get pretty crazy here

My dad, Michael Kravitsky III, started a lawn service in 1964 with a franchise called Lawn-A-Mat. He did all the book work, selling and servicing himself. A few years later my grandfather, Michael Kravitsky II, a retired chief of police, started helping my dad by doing some of the book work and selling.

I started full-time in 1980. (Actually I was on lawns, doing something with them, since 1969 — I was seven years old.) I, along with several nonfamily employees, did all the service work. My grandfather still did the books and sold.

My dad then somehow convinced my mother, Eleanor, to do some of the book work. This lasted for several years until Mom decided that enough was enough, and stopped doing the book work. Enter sister Michele, our new bookkeeper. This also lasted for a while, but Michele moved on to bigger and better things.

In 1984, youngest brother Shawn entered the business fresh out of high school. He, along with myself and several other employees, did all the service work. Now it was time to hire an actual bookkeeper.

Today, my dad is mostly retired — mostly, I say because he still wanders into our office (which is still in the basement of my grandparent's home) every day.

Shawn and I do not service lawns ourselves much anymore because we handle the day-to-day operations. Michele's husband, Vic, a retired police sergeant, takes care of most of our sales. We have another brother who is a Pennsylvania state trooper, who wants nothing to do with our business. (Jeez, you would think that with all the cops in our family that we would be hell-raisers!)

We conduct this business as we were taught: as a business. I am now known as "Mr. Inside" because I oversee the office staff. Shawn is known as "Mr. Outside" because he takes care of equipment, customers and service calls.

Sometimes things get very crazy because of differing opinions between Shawn and me. However, when we go home, all is forgotten. We cannot afford to hold a grudge. I think we make a good combination because of our different styles. We share almost equally in the rewards of this business.

in your opinion

ALMOST EVERY COMPANY HAS ONE EMPLOYEE

— perhaps an office person, a foreman, a technician or a mechanic — who's darn near indispensable.

If you're not afraid they'll ask for a big raise, let us know about them. Be brief, but tell us what they do for you and why you think they're special. If you have a photo of them, send that along too.

We can't promise that we can print all the responses, but we'll do the best we can.

FAX OR MAIL YOUR RESPONSE TO:

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