

Is Your Body Y2K Compliant?

Believe it or not, I heard this as a radio advertisement for a weight-loss program, and it made me think how weird this Y2K thing is getting. It seems the more people talk about possible Y2K "events" that might happen, the less they talk about forces that are pretty Y2K resistant: the human body, the dreams and goals that motivate us to succeed and, of course, Mother Nature.

Clearly, each of our bodies has its own personal deadline, but January 1st will come and go for most of us, whether we're fat or thin.

Our drive to succeed and make something of ourselves has been established as an awesome force, despite any temporary Y2K or other glitches. Healthy organizations with strong leadership should ride out that storm with little disruption.

But it is Nature's big surprises that have more devastating effects than the Y2K thing. As a professional landscape manager, you should have a handle on your normal weather cycles, but are you prepared for those "once a century" or even "once a decade" events? Do you think they won't happen?

As David Laskin recently noted in the Wall Street Journal: "Thanks to a confluence of geography, ocean currents and global atmospheric circulation patterns, the United States is blessed and cursed with the greatest variety of extreme weather in the world. Practically every region of the country has its meteorological disaster specialty."

It's unusual weather events that will wreak the most havoc on your customers, your employees and even your business' survival — events such as:

- ▶ freak snow and ice storms in the deep South;
- ▶ floods that linger;
- ▶ hurricanes hitting Southern California;
- ▶ tornadoes in unusual places, like Salt Lake City;
- ▶ prolonged, devastating droughts like the one this year; and
- ▶ dangerous blizzards or strings of heavy snowstorms.

Mother Nature won't stop surprising us with the new millennium, which makes it important to have an emergency plan. I have to wonder: Why wouldn't you have one in place already? Could you function if your office or papers are damaged; your employees are unreachable; your clients or departments all need to be prioritized, then called; and your phone's ringing with new requests for emergency services? By then, it's way too late to make a plan.

Find out how several contractors succeeded despite the hands Mother Nature dealt them in our cover story, "When disaster strikes, be prepared," starting on page 22. They managed to keep their customers loyal, perform incredible amounts of work in a short time, keep employees motivated and actually build their businesses at the same time.

Maybe it's time you review your own emergency plan. It might guarantee the survival of your business far into the future — when Y2K is just a dim memory and that weight-loss center is an empty storefront.

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