

This is what really matters

Who could blame you for going nuts in the spring? Everything happens at once and you have to be everywhere at the same time. This is one of the prices that you pay as a landscape contractor. You sacrifice time now and, as the season slows and things become less hectic, you tally your sales and give yourself a score.

But there's more to life than signing up and servicing another account, even now when there's no such thing as time. There's something called *family*.

That's one of the things that I like about Brent Flory, president of Freedom Lawns, Delphi, IN. He appreciates *family*.

When I started to write this column, I was going to tell you about how his landscape company (86% maintenance/14% construction) got off to such a great start with a new client. How he massed his seven fulltime employees into a team and swept over the 17 acres of the international headquarters of the Great Lakes Chemical Company in West Lafayette, IN.

As things worked out, I visited Flory's firm the first day that his crew — equipped with hand pruners, power edgers, Scag walk-behind mowers and a powerful 455 Toro 4wd — tackled the new account.

Brent had established two goals:

- ▶ to make a dynamite first impression with the new client.
- ▶ to set a standard of quality to meet each time his crews visit the site.

A year later, he still treats the headquarter's property like it was his own and this past winter Freedom Lawns earned even more work at the site.

"I'd love to have a few more accounts just like this one," he says unabashedly.



Brent Flory, right, president of Freedom Lawns, can hardly fit another hour into another busy spring season.

Flory approaches the marketplace with focused intensity and, early this spring, brought in business consultant Frank Ross to help him grow his company beyond its 1999 sales of \$590,000.

Sure, when Brent and I get together, we talk about his plans for expanding Freedom Lawns, but what he really likes to talk about is his family. He credits his wife, Marilyn, who helps out in the business, and he's obviously proud of his two daughters, one a collegiate runner, and the sons who are also fine young men and athletes.

In fact, when he talks about the industry or about his employees, you sense that he views them in much the same light — like family.

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