

## The spark that LCOs need

**I**t's March and all heck is breaking loose. It happens every spring in the lawn care industry whether we're ready for it or not. As azaleas break bud in the south and the last patches of snow recede from northern lawns, we plunge into another all-out seasonal assault.

Some of the technicians we unleash on our customers' properties are knowledgeable. The sad truth is that many aren't. Lack of employee training is the biggest failing in our industry. It costs everybody —

customers, employees, industry image. But, most of all, it costs lawn care company owners.

That's why when Phil Fogarty approached LM this past winter and asked if we would like to

partner with consulting company JP Horizons Inc. in offering its "Skills Development Series," we jumped at it. Fogarty is associated with JP Horizons, the 11-year-old consulting/training company founded by Jim Paluch. Their new program challenges lawn care companies to provide 52 weeks of training.

This is not sit-in-front-of-a-video training on a rainy day. This is interactive instruction (in 1/2 hour increments, the same morning each week) that you monitor and test to see how well you're doing. But Fogarty's making it more than that. The Skills Development Series is also a contest which allows participating companies to measure their training efforts against other companies.

We at LM and the folks at American Cyanamid, sponsors of the Skills Development Series, realize that the lawn care industry can reach the next level of service and public acceptance only by committing itself to more consistent and effective training. Representatives from both our magazine and from Cyanamid were on hand in Tampa, FL, when Fogarty wrapped up PLCAA's 2000 Management Conference with the Skills Development Series — an afternoon-long "Training Jam Session."

Representatives from about 25 lawn care companies attended the jam session and several embraced the program and set aside time for training each week, including their busiest time which is now. Good for them. Fogarty followed up with a second jam session in Cincinnati a week later, again enlisting LCOs committed to training.

We at LM believe it's high time the industry turned up the heat on training and we feel that Fogarty can supply the spark.



Top, from left, Steve Bailey, Cullen Walker, and Richard Bare. Above, Louis Kobus, Jr., outlines topics for a January training session. Left, Phil Fogarty fires up the group.

Lack of training is the biggest failing in our industry  
—Phil Fogarty

