

# Make your training work

**Can't find the time to train? Make it easy and quick and it will become a regular habit** BY PHIL FOGARTY

**I**s it possible for you to have an effective, ongoing training program? I think it is. But your staff must realize they need it, and the way to engage people is to discuss *their* issues.

When I ask contractors why their training is never accomplished, they say:

"We've tried to train before, but who's got the time?"



"We want to develop our people, but we're so understaffed we *have* to produce."

"Where do we start? Our new hires can't even fill out an invoice and our veterans have done it for years."

## Get started, even in May

Start by asking your staff what they need. Ask what they'd like to learn and when they want to learn it. Then, find your teachers. You could teach, but resist the impulse. Enlist the real teachers in your or-

## 48 weeks of ideas

American Cyanamid and *Landscape Management* co-sponsor the Skills Development Series, a program of quick training you can easily apply to your own op-

erations. This series, which is endorsed by PLCAA, is led by Phil Fogarty of JP Horizons. Phil's real-life experience as a successful lawn care operator is obvious in the slate of topics to be covered this year, such as:

- Fertilizing basics
- Efficient routing
- Safety in summer
- Fall sales plan
- Equipment maintenance
- Handling difficult people
- Working with people
- Developing leaders

### The SDS Inaugural Group includes these companies:

- Adams Gardening Service
- Arbor-Nomics Inc.
- Grasshopper Lawns, Inc.
- Grassroots Lawn and Irrigation Service
- Lawn Doctor of Colorado Springs
- Turf Doctor, Inc.
- Arborlawn, Inc.
- Crowley's, Inc.
- Grasshopper Property Maintenance, Inc.
- Lawn Classics
- Mountaineer Lawn Care, Inc.
- WLM Workaholics Landscape Management, Inc.

For more information about applying the Skills Development Series training system to your organization, call JP Horizons at 440/254-8211 or email:

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Hands-on demonstrations help employees learn the key points quickly.

ganization — your field supervisors and managers who have up-to-date information. In fact, involve everyone. All they want from you is a format and a small assignment so they can feel confident.

## Keep it simple and quick

People want to learn while doing in small, digestible amounts. Don't hold any all-day marathons. After four hours, most people are on cruise control. It must be quick, informative and regular. Here is the format we use in the Skills Development Series (see sidebar):

- ▶ Short sessions to involve people, like talking about positive development.
- ▶ Discuss and engage them in the topic. Ask for examples they've seen.
- ▶ Deliver the lesson (8 to 10 minutes).
- ▶ Give them an activity to make your point, like a hands-on demonstration.
- ▶ Have them repeat what they've learned. Pass along an inspiring thought.
- ▶ Remind them of next week's session (make this regular, remember?).

Ongoing training will create your organization's future. Just devote a small percent of your time to ensure your organization will be competitive in the future. **LM**