

10 Super small companies

What makes a small company "super?"

Care for customers and employees, and often much more

BY CINDY GRAHL

All Seasons Landscaping Hutchinson, MN

All Seasons serves commercial and residential customers with lawn care, landscape, irrigation, erosion control, renovation, snow removal, pond care and other services.

Owner Steve Wadsworth credits the \$3.7-million firm's diversity with its success — it can offer customers one-stop, start-to-finish projects. Word-of-mouth referrals allows All Seasons and its 50 employees to take work away from big firms without advertising.

Appletree Nursery and Landscape Construction Winnisquam, NH

Appletree's range of landscape services also includes a full-service garden center, and it fields a property patrol to watch over summer cottages



from November through March. Most revenues come from the design/build side (60%), with 30% going to maintenance and the balance to a variety of offerings. Owner Jay Rotonelli and many of the 26 employees in the \$1.1-million firm volunteer to paint and landscape women's shelters.

Farmside Landscape and Design, Wantage, NJ

Farmside offers design/build, installation and maintenance as an hon-

est product for dollar value, grossing \$2 million last year. Guided by their religious principles, owners Lisa and Miles Kuperus put extra effort into treating customers and employees with honesty and integrity, also achieving 95% employee retention.

Grasshopper Lawns Inc. Edwardsville, PA

Grasshopper handles lawn care for a 90% residential and 10% commercial client base. Michael Kravitsky IV heads the \$4-million family business, founded in 1964. He turns down unprofitable work and why not? The company boasts a 90% customer return rate. Grasshopper volunteers its time at Arlington National Cemetery, for PLCAA's Day on the Hill.

Green Earth Services, Inc. Columbia, SC

Green Earth built a positive reputation for professional quality maintenance for large commercial and industrial properties by putting communication first, for a 95% customer retention rate. The 20-year-old company provides several design/build and maintenance services, has 45 employees and reached \$3.2 million in revenue last year, said David Livingston, owner.

Lori Spielman Landscaping, Ellington, CT

LSL is the largest female-run firm in the state, earning \$5 million. For more than 17 years, Spielman has dedicated 50% of her services to wetlands mitigation, while also pro-



All Seasons Landscaping

viding a variety of landscape services in the area. Half of the landscape work is commercial, 30% residential and 20% government. Customers dig the employees' cleanliness, pin-striped trucks and natty uniforms, she notes.

Lucas Lawn Care Medina, OH

Lucas is a 26-year-old family business. They're small, with \$500,000 in revenues last year, but can point proudly to a 100% employee retention. The specialty is lawn fertilization, as well as tree and shrub care and related services. Homeowners appreciate owner John Lucas' commitment to his community and his firm's impeccable service.

Valley Green Lawn Care St. Cloud, MN

Valley Green made \$500,000 in revenues from lawn care services, with one-third of its work in irrigation. Owner Michael Hornung says keeping promises and providing equal care



to small and large clients has been the 12-year-old firm's secret to success.

Work-a-holics Landscape Management, Naples, FL

Work-a-holics got its name from a customer 20 years ago, and has since lived up to it, notes owner Cullen Walker. Along with plenty of work effort, his 45 employees are responsible for each project they undertake, with crew leaders doing their own hiring, and are paid based on what they produce. Accounts are commercial and multi-family.

U.S. Lawns of New Orleans/Baton Rouge

This franchise was selected as franchisee of the year because of its



rapid growth (revenues doubled in 2000) and attention to the U.S. Lawns' business plan and policies. The three-year-old commercial maintenance firm earned \$1 million last year and employed 18 workers, says owner Happy Lindeen.