

best practices

GUIDELINES TO HELP AN INDUSTRY GROW

mowing

Mow and prosper

Making money by mowing grass is simple, right? Get yourself a pickup, a trailer and a big mower, and you've got yourself an instant landscape business. Shazam! What could be easier?

In most areas, all you need is a local business license to start rounding up customers. Customers? They're everywhere. You just find out what the next guy is charging and offer to start cutting for 10% less. Or whatever you feel it

will take to get the privilege of mowing that property.

Those of you who have survived that first dangerous flush

How do you determine what to charge?

of unfounded enthusiasm and have gone on to build successful and profitable mowing operations know that it's not that

easy. After working yourself almost to death and then facing that second or third year of payments for that once-shiny four-wheel drive pickup, you discovered that you have to charge a fair price for the services you provide.

We can't tell you what you should be charging. Every market is different. Every operation is different. What we can give you is what our research tells us the rest of the industry is charging.

For mowing, that number is \$36.78 per hour per employee. We base that number on the results of our 2001 State of the Industry Survey with almost 300 respondents. Caution, that number is a national average.

LM's Best Practices suggests you calculate your hourly rate based on the many factors particular to your operation and the market in which you compete, but if it's much below \$36.78, you better park your pickup out back and keep your eye out for the repo man.

Sound off

What do you think about our hourly charge for mowing? How do you determine your charge?

Every month we'll be providing space for feedback on this page. If we select your comments (even if you don't agree with us), we'll mail you a copy of the book, "Picture Perfect: Mowing Techniques for Lawns, Landscapes and Sports," by David Mellor, grounds supervisor for the Boston Red Sox. We've got several extra signed copies here in the office. You'll love it. Send comments to

Best Practices, Landscape Management, 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130. Or e-mail your response to jstahl@advanstar.com.



AVERAGE HOURLY RATES FOR MOWING

Company revenues	Rates
Under 100,000	\$41.83
101,000-250,000	\$38.57
251,000-500,000	\$36.67
501,000-1 million	\$35.06
1 million-5 million	\$39.96
Over 5 million	\$30.63
▶ National avg.	▶ \$36.78

SOURCE: LM 2001 SOI REPORT

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT (ISSN 0894-1254) is published monthly by Advanstar Communications, Inc., 131 W. First St., Duluth MN 55802-2065. **Subscription rates:** one year, \$46, two years \$67 in the United States & Possessions; \$76 for one year, \$113 for two years in Canada and Mexico; all other countries \$148 for one year, \$220 for two years. For airmail delivery, include an additional \$70 per order annually. Single copies (pre-paid only): \$8 in the United States; \$10 in Canada and Mexico; \$15 all other countries. Back issues, if available: \$16 in the U.S.; \$20 in Canada and Mexico; \$30 all other countries. Add \$6 per order for shipping and handling. **Periodicals postage paid** at Duluth, MN 55806 and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Please send address changes to Landscape Management, P.O. Box 6198, Duluth, MN 55806. Canadian G.S.T. number: R-124213133. Publications Mail Agreement Number 841919. Printed in the U.S.A.

Copyright ©2002 Advanstar Communications, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including by photocopy, recording, or information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use, or the internal or personal use of specific clients, is granted by Advanstar Communications Inc. for libraries and other users registered with the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Dr., Danvers, MA 01923 phone: 978-750-8400 fax 978-750-4470; call for copying beyond that permitted by Sections 107 or 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law. For those not registered with the CCC, send permission request in writing to Permissions Dept. Advanstar Communications Inc., 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130 or fax to 440-891-2740.

