



## Role reversal & the Age of Necessity

It's the circle of life. As our children grow into adults and we grow into grandparents, we hope our children remember at least some of the things we did for them and lend us a hand during our times of need.

The world's economy is no different. Welcome to seniorhood, America.

"Nine out of 10 people under the age of 15 live in developing countries," says Richard Tozer, a University of Texas graduate-level professor and business management consultant.

Speaking recently to members of the United Producers, Formulators & Distributors Association (UPF&DA), Tozer maintains business owners can expect OK economic times ahead, along with continued access to healthy talent pools.

"There will be slow overall economic growth, thanks primarily to emerging nations — but the U.S. will continue to battle high unemployment and underemployment," Tozer forecasts.

Tozer notes 16% of Americans are unemployed or underemployed, and predicts that daunting rate won't improve much in the next decade because:

- ▶ Ever-improving technology will drive automation further;
- ▶ America's aging Baby Boomers are entering their saving, not spending, years; and
- ▶ Business globalization will keep expanding our world of competitors.

"We need to pinpoint what we do best that makes the most money, focus on that and cut back

on everything else," Tozer says. "It's the age of necessity, not luxury."

And so begs the question: In this Age of Necessity, how can you better convince customers and prospects your landscape company's services are "must haves"?

Here are a few perception game-changers — tips to help move your services from the "Luxury" to the "Necessity" column of consumers' ledgers:

- ▶ Remind every customer and prospect — in all bids, during all property visits, on all invoices, and in all e-newsletters, direct mailings and print advertising — an appealing lawn and landscape can increase a property's value 15%, according to the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET).
- ▶ Property owners investing in lawn and landscape services typically recoup 100% to 200% of their investments, according to information on PLANET's website, [www.landcarenetwork.org](http://www.landcarenetwork.org). In comparison, according to *Money* magazine, kitchen remodels provide investment recovery rates of 75% to 125%, and bathrooms 20% to 120%.
- ▶ Realtors estimate 95% of people looking to buy homes won't even get out of their cars if the for-sale properties lack curb appeal.
- ▶ Homeowners' and businesses' investments in tree installations can reduce nearby noise 50% percent and site temperatures as much as 9 degrees Fahrenheit, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and American Forests, a nonprofit conservation organization.
- ▶ Professional landscaping can reduce air conditioning costs up to 50% by shading the windows and walls of a home or business, according to the American Nursery & Landscaping Association's (ANLA's) website, [www.anla.org](http://www.anla.org).
- ▶ Ninety-nine out of 100 appraisers agree attractive landscaping increases the speed of home sales, according to a survey conducted by the Society of Real Estate Appraisers.

How's that for the customer's bottom line? Now, the key is to spread this good news with customers and prospects every chance you get.

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