



Todd Williams

“Business has been challenging in the last couple years, but our long-term clients and contracts have helped us weather the storm fairly well,” says **Todd Williams**, executive vice president of Terracare Associates. Terracare’s ability to maintain strong client relationships and keep up with industry trends has enabled it to stay competitive during the recession, and now Williams stops to discuss with *LM* where the company — and the maintenance industry — is headed today.

TOP TRENDS

› **Sustainability.** We are seeing more clients focus on having landscapes that use fewer resources or are sustainable in nature. This trend is positive for our enhancement business, as landscapes are converted from turf to other types of uses. As an organization, our passion is to be stewards of our local environment while protecting the health, safety and welfare of our communities, clients and staff. Environmental sustainability is at the core of who we are. As our reputation and clientele continue to grow and diversify, the standard of excellence we strive to meet every day keeps us at the forefront of our industry.

› **Technology.** Technology is finding its way into our business more and more all the time. GPS, handheld data collection and Internet-based solutions are becoming the norm rather than cutting-edge. We utilize an integrated business management tool known as Asset, which eliminates the need for multiple software systems to operate our business and significantly reduces overhead by eliminating redundant processes in our company. Additionally, our field crews utilize CREWtek, a handheld device that lets our staff manage projects remotely, handle billing, manage equipment and schedule crews efficiently and effectively. It ensures our teams know where they are going and what tasks they need to perform. Additionally, we utilize our growing social media network to develop business relationships with our key clients.

› **Water efficiency.** We have converted a significant amount of the irrigation systems we maintain to evapotranspiration and Internet-based controls. Assisting our clients in conserving water and saving money is a key focus in how we approach the maintenance of a property’s irrigation system. Our technicians

INSIDE INFO

Company:
Terracare Associates
Headquarters: Denver
Employees: 250 full-time (plus 125 seasonal and part-time)
2010 revenue: \$26 million

Key to being a maintenance leader: Providing a progressive and supportive culture for employees is key. We try to really challenge our people, but at the same time provide them with the right amount of support so they can succeed. It is important our people feel they are a part of the family, and something bigger than just a job. As a company, we encourage participation by all employees in developing creative ways to solve problems, improve effectiveness and grow our business. Members of the staff often participate in company-sponsored volunteer committees tasked with improving our safety standards, expanding into peripheral business opportunities, or becoming more sustainable in our business practices.

are highly trained in evaluating and providing solutions to the customer with the most innovative water conservation tools available for the site conditions. Our goal is to save our clients water and money without sacrificing the beauty of their landscapes.

TOP OBSTACLES

› **Competition.** We are seeing the market prices for maintenance services go down fairly significantly. Creating continued efficiencies and cost savings is critical for survival. Unfortunately, we are seeing more work go for below fair market value, but you can’t blame owners for wanting to save all they can. Our goal is to target clients who place a value on the professionalism we bring to the table.

› **Labor availability.** The landscape industry is a very labor-intensive one. Forging of documents and now identity theft are rampant problems, and the current national immigration policy puts employers in a terrible position of having to be the enforcer of immigration laws — with very little tools or support to accomplish this. We use the H2B program in Colorado. It’s a seasonal guest worker program that allows employers to recruit and hire seasonal workers from other countries, but it is a program that is more difficult and expensive to use all the time.

TOP OPPORTUNITY

› **Enhancements, with landscape use changes and water efficiency in mind.** There is a real return on investment for many clients. Selling that return is key to generating the work. Our continued success depends on our ability to capitalize on our expanding service lines and project portfolio. This requires that we approach every project with a more holistic approach to landscape maintenance and environmental development.