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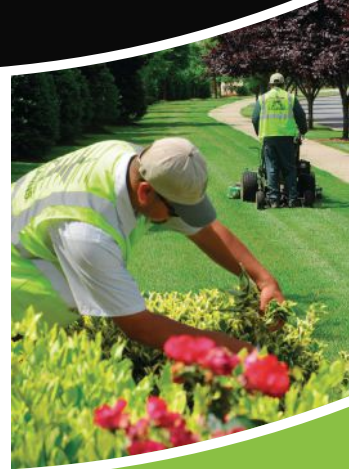
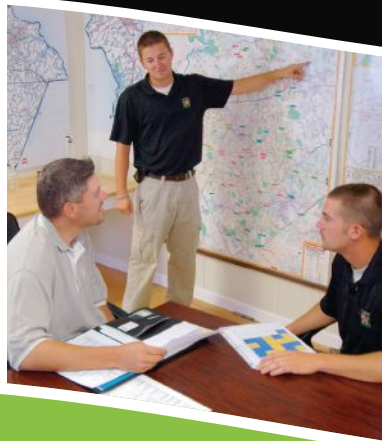
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LM MARKET MATCH We've made your life a little easier by supplying icons that direct you to stories targeting your core business.

B – Business, **D/B** – Design/Build, **I** – Irrigation, **LC** – Lawn Care, **M** – Maintenance

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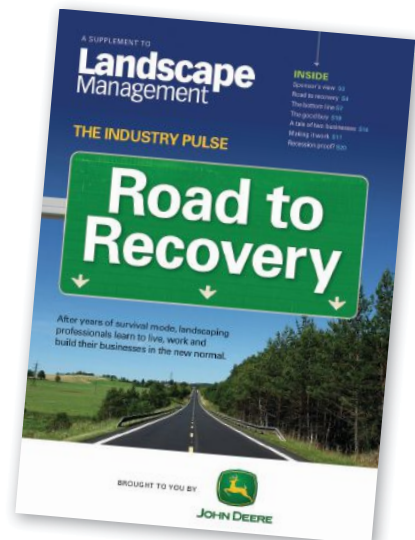
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SPECIAL REPORT

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After years of survival mode, landscaping professionals learn to live, work and build businesses in the new normal.

Landscape Management

OUR MISSION: *Landscape Management*—the leading information resource for lawn care, landscape maintenance, design/build and irrigation contractors—empowers Green Industry professionals to learn from their peers and our exclusive business intelligence from the *only* experienced editorial team in the market. Serving as the industry conscience for 50 years, we not only report on but also help shape news, views, trends and solutions.

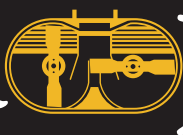
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LM PODCAST

RISE president Aaron Hobbs (top) and Dave Morris, commercial leader — pest management and turf & ornamental business — for Dow AgroSciences and chairman of the RISE Governing Board, discuss the impact of legislation on the Green Industry and how contractors can and should influence those rules and regulations.



SURVEY SAYS

To go or not to go?
How valuable do you find trade shows?

45%
Somewhat valuable

I go most every year and usually pick up info.

19%
I do not attend trade shows.

9%

Very valuable

I get new product information and ideas about how to run my business better.

9%

Not valuable at all

I've been to shows and get nothing from them.

18%

Of little value

I'll attend if it's nearby and I've nothing better to do.

THE LM DAILY

BUGGING OUT Most of *Landscape Management's* forays into pest management are related to grubs, armyworms and billbugs. It's not often we get to venture into the world of larger insects.

Visit *LM's* blog (landscapemanagement.blogspot.com/) to read about our recent spotting of one.



THIS MONTH'S POLL QUESTION

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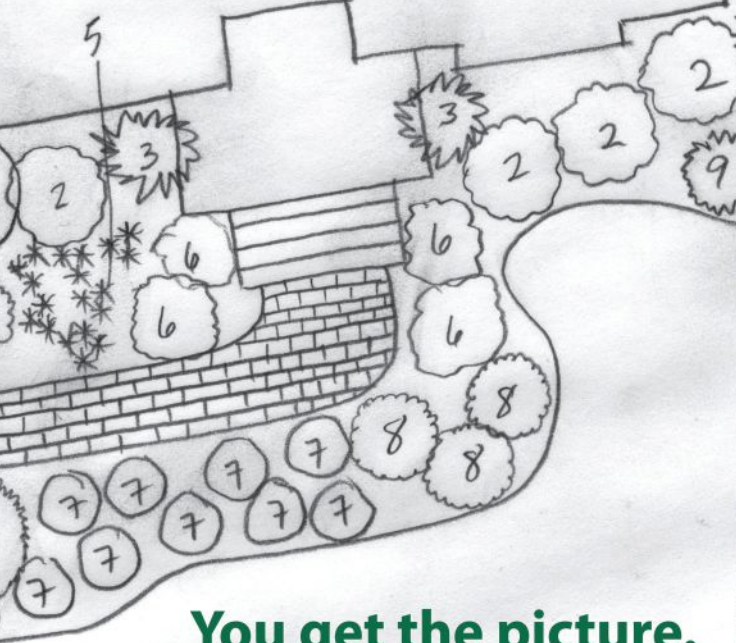
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To submit a story: In the subject line of your e-mail to us, please put: When Disaster Strikes. In the body of your email, please detail the name of the person hit hard, his/her company, title, phone number and email, and a paragraph summarizing what happened.

Please e-mail LM Editor-in-Chief Dan Jacobs or Senior Editor Beth Geraci if you've battled back from a storm-triggered business disaster.



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'Multitasking' can be just another word for 'distraction'

Watching my 16 year-old, high school junior daughter do homework is an astonishing thing. Between listening to music, checking her Facebook page, having a snack, playing with the dog, answering questions from her mother and father, texting friends and a few other things I'm probably not even aware of, it's a wonder Sammie gets anything done.

I guess the first thing I need to tell you is Sammie's an excellent student. Her grades are good, she's a member of student council, a member of the varsity volleyball team, a member of the varsity softball team (and she plays in other softball leagues throughout the year), and there are a few other school activities in which she participates, which I'm now forgetting. In fact, her mother and I had to deny Sammie's recent request to add yet another activity to her list.

Sammie does a little multitasking between softball games.



Somehow, Sammie organizes her life so she's able to complete her homework and all of these activities — typically with a high degree of success. I say she's distracted. She calls it multitasking.

It's hard for me to criticize Sammie. Her grades are good. But I wonder, "Could they be a little better?" No matter how well Sammie deals with several tasks at once, if her attention is divided, my intuition (and a few studies I've heard about) tells me she can't be giving her best effort to the task at hand.

My guess is your life and business are much the same. If you're the one in charge of everything — planning, strategizing, scheduling, purchasing, accounts payable, accounts receivable, marketing, bidding, etc. — then something likely is slipping through the cracks. It's a matter of delegation.

Sammie can't delegate her homework to someone else (although she'd very much like to try). She's simply going to have to give up some of the other distractions. Unfortunately, business owners don't have that luxury. You can't simply stop worrying about accounts receivables. What you can do is transfer that responsibility to another person.

The most successful business owners I've met are the ones who know what they don't know or at least what they're not good at. Entrepreneurs are usually the most passionate about the business or industry. My guess is you became a Green Industry business leader because you like working outside and with people. You have a passion for helping customers enjoy their homes and yards. You didn't start a business so you could track down deadbeat customers or browbeat slacker employees.

Focus on the things you need to grow and strengthen your business. Leave the rest of the tasks for others. ... And if you know anyone good at calculus, please feel free to send his or her name along. I really can't help Sammie with her math homework anymore.

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Green Industry loses a pioneer

Burton Sperber, founder of ValleyCrest Landscape Cos., will be remembered as a businessman, Korean War veteran, community leader, elite magician and devoted family man.

CALABASAS, CA — Burton S. Sperber, FASLA, founder and Chairman of the Board of Directors of ValleyCrest Landscape Companies, passed away September 30, 2011 at the age of 82 of complications from surgery. He was born May 14, 1929 in Los Angeles. An iconic figure in the landscape industry and respected business and community leader in Los Angeles for decades, he was counted on by titans in business and real estate to bring their projects to life through landscapes. Ultimately, he was revered for having created a world-class organization. But he preferred more simple recognition for his horticultural expertise as ValleyCrest's "head gardener" and his role as a devout family man.

Since founding ValleyCrest in 1949 at age 19, Burt led ValleyCrest's family of companies with vision and wisdom through more than six decades of dynamic growth. Under his leadership, ValleyCrest became the nation's largest, privately held integrated landscape services firm. Today, the Calabasas, Calif.-based company is led by Burt's son,

President and CEO Richard A. Sperber, who joined his father as co-CEO in 2008 after serving as President and Chief Operating Officer of the company since 2001. Prior to that, he served as President of the company's Development Division for seven years.

"The unexpected passing of my dad came as a complete shock to me, the family and everyone who knew him," said Richard A. Sperber. "I had the great privilege of working with him side by side every day and saw how he loved nurturing people. Nothing made him happier than watching everyone at ValleyCrest grow and seeing people do great things both inside and outside the company. He always encouraged us to do the right thing and was an

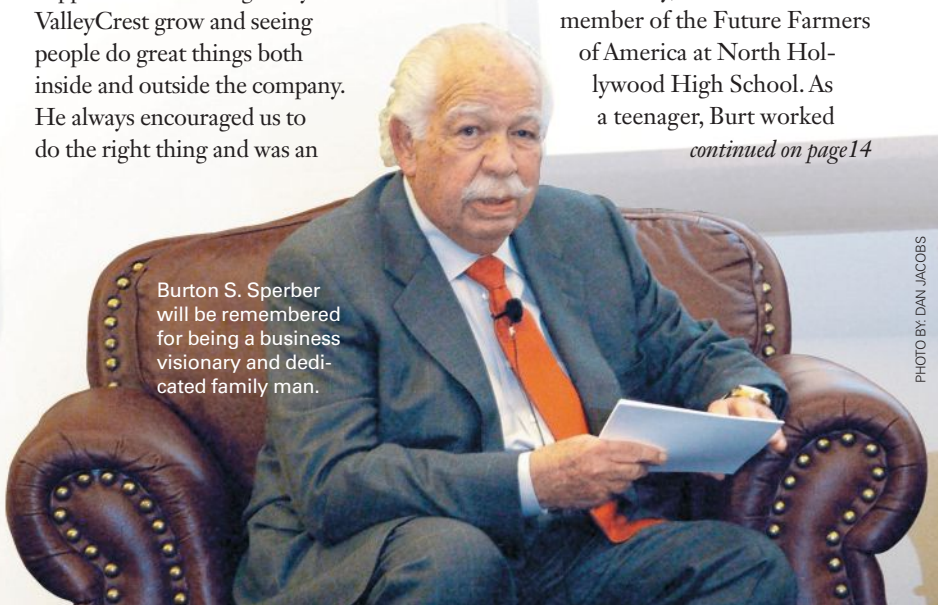
amazing family man. I'm taking on the personal responsibility to carry on his legacy and values he instilled in me as I lead the company forward."

Burt's hard work, dedication and shrewd decision making were coupled with an entrepreneurial spirit, keen sense of adventure and knack for understanding people. A pioneer in establishing high levels of innovation, professionalism and respect within the landscape industry, Burt was a founding member of several state and national landscape associations and was a Fellow in the American Society of Landscape Architects (FASLA). He served as a Director of Los Angeles Beautiful and was a former Director of the Landscape Architecture Foundation.

Awarded throughout his career as a landscape architect, contractor, business executive and philanthropist, Burt's election into the Green Industry Hall of Fame in 2010, and his selection for the Lifetime Achievement Award for Contractor of the Year (1999) and the City of Hope Man of the Year "Spirit of Life" Award (1971), reveal his true legacy to business and the community.

Burt got his start in the landscape industry early in life. His father owned a retail nursery, and Burt was a member of the Future Farmers of America at North Hollywood High School. As a teenager, Burt worked

continued on page 14



Burton S. Sperber will be remembered for being a business visionary and dedicated family man.

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continued from page 12

after school at the MG Nursery in North Hollywood, CA, and a Sears, Roebuck and Co. nursery in Los Angeles. In 1949, Burt purchased the MG Nursery business with his father as a partner when the owner, Mos-simo Giannulli, passed away. Sixty-two years later ValleyCrest has more than 9,000 employees, operations in more than 150 locations nationwide, and is respected around the world. Even at 82, Burt came to work every day, revered by employees as the founder and chairman of a landscape services company that earned a spot on Forbes Magazine's 2008 list of America's 500 Largest Private Companies. ValleyCrest is counted on by architects, developers, commercial real estate owners, public agencies, property managers and luxury homebuilders to help create, build or maintain some of the world's extraordinary natural environments.

Among the hundreds of celebrated landscape projects in which the company has played a role are: Walt Disney Concert Hall, The Getty Center, the Palm Garden at Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and The Grove, all in Los Angeles; The Garden of Flowing Fragrance at the Huntington Gardens in San Marino, CA; Americana at Brand in Glendale, CA; Fashion Island in Newport Beach; CityCenter, Cosmo-politan, Bellagio Hotel & Casino, two Wynn hotels and Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas; Disney's Animal Kingdom in Lake Buena Vista, FL; Sea World Discovery Cove in Orlando; Four Seasons Hualalai Resort in Kailua-Kona; Florida Marlins Stadium and SoundScape Park at Frank Gehry's New World Symphony in Miami; the Salvador Dali Museum in St. Petersburg, FL; Hudson River Park in New York; Dallas Center for the Performing Arts' Winspear Opera House and Wily Theater in Dallas; Boston's Central Artery (Big Dig); the U.S. Federal Courthouse in San Diego; the U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C.; venues for the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games and 1984 Los Angeles



Sperber's legacy lives on not only in his hometown, Los Angeles, but also in his landscaping projects around the country.

Olympic Games; Dallas Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, TX; AT&T Park in San Francisco; University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, AZ; and Patriots Place in Foxboro, New England.

Equally passionate and accomplished as a magician, Burt was inducted as a member of the prestigious Inner Magic Circle of England, the highest degree a magician can earn, and was one of only a few Americans to achieve such elite ranking. He was also named Magician of the Year in 2011. His passion for magic encompassed a lifelong pursuit of collecting and writing magic books. His extensive collection is one of the largest in the country and includes rare books dating back as far as the 1500s.

Throughout his life Burt was active in many efforts to build and support the Jewish community in Los Angeles. He helped to build Temple Ramat Zion in Northridge, CA, where he was made a lifetime member. Years later he was instrumental in the building of the University of Judaism, now American Jewish University, located on Mulholland above the 405 freeway. He was also involved

in countless community, charitable and educational endeavors, including USC's School of Architecture and Cal Poly Pomona's Horticulture program.

A decorated Army veteran who served as a Master Sergeant in the Korean War, Burt is survived by his wife Charlene; their three children, Ellice Sperber, Michelle Sperber and Richard A. Sperber; a sister, Deanna Colton; and seven grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a daughter, Wendie Jo Sperber, and brother, Stuart J. Sperber. He met Charlene at age 16. The two were married in 1949, and for 62 years they enjoyed a perfect partnership in life. Along the way, they built a family and business. Charlene's practical management skills complemented Burt's strong work ethic and outgoing personality, a combination that earned him the respect of customers. Burt's meticulous attention to customer service endures as one of ValleyCrest's core values today. Burt's creative and adventurous side was balanced with his deep commitment as a native of Los Angeles to make the city a better place for all. **LMM**



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1 A crew of 5 consists of a driver and 4 passengers.
 2 Based on a comparison of Automotive News classification of full-size commercial vans.
 3 In base configuration.



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RISE honors Jim Armbruster

WASHINGTON — During its 21st annual meeting held in Florida in September, Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE) honored one of its longtime volunteers for his exemplary leadership in the specialty pesticide and fertilizer industry.

Jim Armbruster, PBI/Gordon Corp., was honored as the third recipient of the E. Allen James Leadership Award that annually recognizes the outstanding contributions of a RISE volunteer leader. The award is named after RISE's former president of 20 years, Allen James, who retired in 2010. RISE's annual meeting keynote speaker Michael Durant, a master pilot and inspiration for the movie "Blackhawk Down", presented the award to Armbruster during the opening session attended by approximately 100 RISE members.

Armbruster has volunteered on RISE committees since 1998, most recently

serving as chairman of the RISE Science & Technology Committee. He's invested time and expertise on numerous issue management teams, including those working in the Northeast.

"RISE volunteer leaders are the backbone of our association and play a vital role in the work we do," said RISE President Aaron Hobbs. "Jim Armbruster is a thoughtful, knowledgeable expert who's made many outstanding contributions to science and advocacy that are at the heart of the RISE mission. He is much deserving of this year's award."

As PBI/Gordon's vice president of research and development and regulatory and technical services, Armbruster will retire this year after working with the company since 1988. Besides his

volunteer efforts with RISE, Armbruster's expertise in the areas of pesticide chemistry, weed science and patent law was also invaluable to The Industry Task Force II on 2,4-D Research Data, Chemical Producers and Distributors Association and the American Society of Agronomy, among others.

Nominations for the E. Allen James Leadership award are taken from peers who have worked directly with the nominee and have personal knowledge of the RISE member's exceptional leadership contributions to the industry and RISE initiatives during the current year. For more information or to nominate someone, please contact RISE's Karen Reardon, kreardon@pestfacts.org.

Dave Morris, commercial leader – pest management and turf & ornamental business – for Dow AgroSciences (left); PBI/Gordon's Jim Armbruster; Keynote Speaker, Michael Durant; and RISE President Aaron Hobbs.



PHOTO COURTESY: RISE



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New landscape design/build website

Former landscape design/build professional and current *Landscape Management* columnist Jody Shilan has launched FromDesign2Build.com, a new website designed to be an “online community of professional landscape design/build contractors.”

“Did you ever wish there was some place you could go to talk shop with other landscape design/build contractors and business owners,” asks Shilan on the new site. “A place where you can get knowledgeable help and experienced advice from people that really understand the business?”

Well I’ve got some great news for you — your wish has come true.”

FromDesign2Build.com, is an exclusive “members only” website.

Whether you’re just starting out or a seasoned professional, FromDesign-



The site offers a number of departments, including: business strategies; sales techniques; and estimates and proposals. There’s even a “What Were They Thinking” section that highlights some of the industry’s less stellar ideas.

2Build.com will quickly become your online community of professional landscape design/build contractors, Shilan says. He adds that it’s a virtual resource where contractors can discuss

and share ideas about everything “From Design 2 Build,” whether it’s about sales, employee issues, production concerns, helpful advice or other issues relative to the field.

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†Figures are published in our Franchise Disclosure Document (FDD) of March 2009 as mandated by the Federal Trade Commission. The above figures are actual. However, the FTC requires us to include the following statement: Caution: There is no assurance that you will do as well. If you rely on our figures, you must accept the risk of not doing as well.

U.S. Lawns celebrates 25 years

Hundreds of franchise owners gather this week to celebrate 25 years of entrepreneurial excellence that has made U.S. Lawns the fastest-growing commercial landscape franchisor in the country.

The company increased revenue by 9% in the most recent fiscal year.

There is plenty to celebrate for U.S. Lawns:

- ▶ The company now has more than 240 franchises.
- ▶ The number of franchisees is up more than 50% since 2007.
- ▶ Despite turmoil in the economy overall, revenue system-wide is up 52% over the past five years and 38% since 2008, as the recession got underway.
- ▶ U.S. Lawns now operates in all 48 contiguous states.

▶ Snow and ice management is now a major company service. “In our 25th anniversary year, we are deeply gratified and proud to see how our business model continues to succeed amid economic difficulties that, for many others, have been devastating,” said Ken Hutcheson, U.S. Lawns president. “U.S. Lawns is committed to

helping our franchisees thrive because we understand the critical role small businesses play in America’s economy.”

U.S. Lawns continues to expand at a fast clip, adding 31 new franchises since summer 2010. This places the company among the country’s fastest-growing franchises overall, according to *Entrepreneur Magazine*.

GILBERT RESENDEZ NAMED HORTICULTURIST OF THE YEAR

AZUSA, CA — Gilbert Resendez, a longtime craftsman at Monrovia, was honored recently by the Southern California Horticulture Society as an outstanding individual and named Horticulturist of the Year for 2011.

Resendez began his long career with Monrovia Growers working in the nursery as a pruning craftsman in 1962. He rose through the ranks to become vice president of sales and marketing, helping Monrovia’s sales force become what many consider to be the best trained in the industry. Resendez was promoted to executive vice president and spent 10 years in that position before serving as Monrovia’s president from 2004 to 2007.

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The Green MBA Program presents the best business practices in the context of green building enterprise.

Course and textbook lists and a roster of our independent green building accrediting experts for these programs are available through info@sfia.net.

For more details, go to www.sfia.net, and see "Green MBA" and "Master of Science in Green Building" degree program descriptions under "Distance Learning."



Morbark event focuses on equipment productivity

WINN, MI — Morbark Inc. demonstrated several new product innovations for the forestry and recycling markets at the company's annual Demo Days event, last month. These innovations will help Morbark users streamline their processes and reduce costs.

More than 300 people from 15 countries attended the 2011 Demo Days event, which featured factory tours, seminars, vendor booths, networking opportunities and equipment demonstrations. Biomass equipment demonstrations included a new Advantage 3 Drum for whole tree chippers, the 3800XL Horizontal Grinder, and several proprietary pieces of equipment in development and demonstrated for customer input and performance feedback.

PHOTO COURTESY: MORBARK

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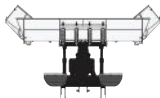
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Wanna Live Large? Dream Big.

I'm dedicating this month's column to big dreamers and doers — people like College Football Hall of Famer Lou Holtz and future National Basketball Association (NBA) Hall of Famer Mickey Whitford.

Real difference makers dream big. Equally important, they follow that up with action — driven by an unquenchable desire to achieve the seemingly impossible.

At age 28, Holtz was unemployed and had no money in the bank. It was the lowest point of his life. Holtz was feeling very sorry for himself, so his wife, Sarah, bought him a copy of "The Magic of Thinking Big." Sarah told Holtz his main problem was he didn't have any goals.

Holtz read the book, and one day soon after sat down and wrote a list of all the things he wanted to do: Go to the White House for dinner, meet the Pope, be on "The Tonight Show," be head football coach at Notre Dame, make a hole-in-one, parachute out of an airplane, etc. All told, Holtz created a list of 107 life goals.

When Sarah came home from work, Holtz

excitedly showed his bride his life list. Sarah — eight months pregnant with their third child — was not overjoyed her husband had spent the entire day making his lofty list, instead of looking for a job.

But after making his life list, Holtz went on to achieve almost all of the seemingly unattainable goals. Why? Largely because the list had given him clarity about his future and the things he wanted to be, do and have for himself and his family.

As Holtz — who led the Fighting Irish to the national championship in 1988 — frequently says, "If you're bored with life ... if you don't get up *every* morning with a burning desire to do things ... you don't have enough goals."

Another big dreamer and doer I really look up to is our 16-year-old son, Mickey. Filled with dreams and a burning desire as big as his golden heart, Mickey recently created a "Bucket List" — his list of things to accomplish before he moves from this life to the next.

Check out Mickey's goals in the sidebar below. Then sit down and jot down yours — and chase those lofty goals like you own them!

MICKEY WHITFORD'S BUCKET LIST

Eat a cake from Carlo's Bakery (aka "The Cake Boss").

Visit Spain.

Volunteer for a missionary trip.

Meet NBA all-star Kevin Durant.

Dunk on a 10-foot-tall basketball hoop.

Bench-press 200 pounds.

Watch a buzzer-beating shot from the stands of an NBA game.

Ride a jet ski.

Star in a movie.

Meet the President.

Attend the Summer Olympics.

Be in New Orleans for Mardi Gras.

Run with the bulls in Pamplona, Spain.

See the Golden Gate Bridge.

Visit all 50 states.

Be interviewed on a talk show.

Receive knighthood from the Queen of England.

Be listed as one of *People* magazine's "50 Most Beautiful People."

Make the front page of a major newspaper.

Own a Chevy Camaro.

Stay in a log cabin.

Go to the Super Bowl.

Throw out the first pitch at a Major League Baseball game.

Eat Chipotle, Taco Bell and McDonald's all in the same day.

Hit a buzzer beater.

Make a half-court shot during a contest at an NBA game.

Eat in the world's fanciest restaurant.

Visit Dubai.

Pay for a stranger's meal.

Send a message in a bottle.

Ride an elephant.

Visit Alaska to view the Northern Lights (aurora borealis).

Be at Times Square on New Year's Eve to watch the ball drop.

Storm a football field after a major victory.

Storm the basketball court after a major win.



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*Warranty applies to all Honda GX Series Engines, 100cc or larger purchased at retail or put into rental service since January 1, 2009. Warranty excludes the Honda GXV160 model. See full warranty details at Honda.com. For optimum performance and safety, please read the owner's manual before operating your Honda Power Equipment. ©2011 American Honda Motor Co., Inc.



PROGRESS



Light it up

Landscape lighting pros revel in the field's dramatic progress.

Environmental consciousness

The International Dark Sky Association (IDA) was founded in 1988 by astronomer David Crawford, Ph. D. and Dr. Timothy Hunter. Today it has strong support among landscape lighting professionals questing to reduce nighttime light pollution.

"We're trying hard to come up with meaningful criteria to still allow a good lighting portrait to be done and still maintain Dark Sky," Herren says.

LED lighting is gaining momentum, too. Herren, for example, says he has been "100 percent LED" for four years. "LED is the biggest movement right now," he says. "Literally, it's changing the way we look at lighting."

Gosselin goes so far as to say that the change from halogen and incandescent lighting to LED "has been the biggest and most dramatic change in lighting in the last 100 years." LED has invigorated the industry, he says.

Whereas in the 1990s LED lights "were so white they looked blue," they now resemble a typical halogen lamp, Dross says. LED lights are more expensive than other types, but they're worth it, Gosselin says. Not only do they last between 10 and 15 times longer than halogen lamps — about 40,000 hours — they also are easy to install, cost less to maintain and use 75% less energy. "You save money in so many ways," says Gosselin.

Lighting up the future

The "big bad monster" in LEDs is heat, which will destroy an LED, Gosselin says. But LED electronics that facilitate heat dissipation are reaching new milestones, so much so that LED is at the core of landscape lighting's future.

shaped and a partial dome shaped, Dross says. Not to mention, there were few color options, reducing glare was hardly a priority, and fixtures were large and monochromatic.

"In the early days of lighting there was no such thing as a demo kit, so there were really rudimentary tools," says Tommy "The Lighting Geek" Herren. "It was mostly about fixtures."

Lighting as an aesthetic

In the mid-1990s people began thinking of lighting as an aesthetic that could enhance a home, says Dross.

"People were actually using light as a method to design," he says. "Prior to that people felt that landscape lighting was relegated to making sure you didn't trip on the steps when you're going to visit Aunt Mary."

The shift gave consumers an "emotional connection to their yards," says Herren. "That's a completely different ballgame than just buying fixtures."

Depending on the level of its artistry, lighting can add value to a home or take it away. "Bad lighting can make a really great house look like just a trailer," Gosselin says. "And really good lighting can make a cheap place look great. It finishes it all off. It ties the ribbon around it."

In residential communities today, there is an "I want to be better than the neighbors" attitude, Dross says. Homeowners seek drama in their exterior lighting, savoring the stark contrast of darks and lights.

Landscape lighting has come a long way since its nascence. Gone are the clunky fixtures, glaring bulbs and high, electric shock-inducing voltage that dominated the days of yore. In their place are smaller fixtures and wires, more environmentally sound bulbs and myriad more varieties of everything.

Early days

Bill Locklin pioneered lighting for landscapes in 1959, when he invented low-voltage landscape lighting.

"He's basically the grandfather of landscape lighting. He made landscape lighting a viable industry," says Paul Gosselin, president of the Association of Outdoor Lighting Professionals (AOLP).

The "Grandfather of Landscape Lighting" improvised with everything from mayonnaise jars and coffee cans to headlights and 12-volt batteries. He also coined the term that inspires the field's artisans today: "See the effect and not the source."

Low-voltage landscape lighting changed the industry, says Jeff Dross, corporate director, education and industry trends at Kichler Lighting.

Fifty years ago, before low-voltage lighting became widely used, says Dross, hard-wired landscape lighting was the norm. It was expensive, buried deep below ground and with 120 volts, presented a high risk of electrical shock.

Low-voltage lighting, on the other hand, "was closer to the earth, buried 6 inches," Dross says. "There's not a risk of electrical shock with 12-volt. You won't get that jolt that would throw you against the wall."

Initially, the industry used only a couple types of lights — a basic cone-





LAWNENVY

DAVID SWANIGAN

Area Sales Manager, Bayer

“Using **Celsius**[®] has allowed me to have **peace of mind** and worry less after treating a customer’s yard.”

— Darren Wentz, Earth Keeper

HOW TO ACHIEVE AN ENVIABLE LAWN WITH A HERBICIDE

A LAWN TO ENVY

For lawn care operators, the best advertisement is a lush and green lawn. Darren Wentz, owner of Earth Keeper, turned a poor quality, weed-infested lawn into the most effective advertisement in town (pictured right). How did he do it?

Using Celsius[®] WG as the foundation of his herbicide treatment program, along with good agricultural practices.

When Wentz first treated the lawn, in late April, it was riddled with an assortment of weeds, including dollarweed. With the results he achieved by early August, Wentz was able to save a customer from re-sodding a lawn while promoting his business in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

“It’s hard to find a product that covers such a large spectrum of weeds, works on a majority of problems on different turf types, and offers turf safety,” said Wentz. “Other products cover a broad spectrum of weeds but can’t compete with the ability that Celsius can be used year round. It’s nice that I can use Celsius in the heat of summer when weeds really become a challenge. “Using Celsius has allowed me to have peace of mind and worry less after treating a customer’s yard.”

HOW TO GET THE RESULTS

Celsius is a new generation post-emergent herbicide developed by Bayer that provides post-emergent control of over 120 broadleaf and grassy weeds in several types of turf. Celsius is intended to be applied as a foliar spray at rates between 2.5 - 4.9 oz per acre to St. Augustinegrass, bermudagrass, zoysiagrass and centipede-grass.

Industry professionals have multiple options when making post-emergent



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herbicide applications with Celsius. Factors such as spray equipment, the size of the area treated and the weed density within that area, determine which application method to follow.

Broadcast applications can be made to entire or smaller areas, known as zones. Broadcast applications are made using a specific amount of product per acre, or per 1,000 ft², and can be done with a boom sprayer or a hand held gun. It’s important that the applicator and the equipment be calibrated, so that an accurate amount of product is delivered properly to the area.

For more information on applying or purchasing Celsius, visit www.BackedByBayer.com or contact your local Bayer Area Sales Manager, Bayer authorized distributor or Bayer Customer Service at 1-800-331-2867.



Protect yourself against theft

DETERMINED THIEVES CAN SOMETIMES THWART EVEN THE MOST CAREFUL CONTRACTORS. INSURANCE IS ONE WAY TO PREVENT INTERRUPTIONS TO YOUR BUSINESS.

STOLEN EQUIPMENT AND property is a huge issue in the landscape industry. After all both are left unattended, as crews finish up the job. Other times equipment is stolen right from headquarters. With thieves becoming increasingly clever — and bold — it's important to take preventative steps to protect your property. But because you can't protect against *everything* it's also critical to be covered by insurance.

Zachery Bruce, loss control manager with Hortica Insurance & Employee Benefits, has seen it all.

"Thieves will actually use the insured's vehicle to hook up their trailer and drive away," says Bruce. "Typically we're able to recover the vehicle and the trailer because it's the items inside that they want. They're easier to resell without being traced."

Bruce says that a trailer left outside headquarters isn't always safe either. Even though some may park their trailers up against the building so that it's difficult to open the back doors, Bruce says there've been cases where thieves have literally cut right into the side of the trailer and unloaded it that way.

"Unless you've stored everything inside of an alarmed building with security cameras and locked doors, you aren't going to find a security method that is 100% thief-proof," says Bruce. "But fortunately there are a lot of precautions you can take. The more difficult for a thief to steal from you, the more likely they'll just move on to the next guy with no security methods in place."

One of the more commonly stolen landscape items is a zero-radius turn mower, says Bruce, because of its high resale value. Anything portable such as backpack

blowers or weed eaters are a target of theft. Bruce says it's important crews don't leave those types of items unsecured and unattended in the back of a truck. "If you don't take the time to secure those items, they could easily disappear while your crews are working."

Bruce also recommends registering high-value equipment with the National Equipment Register (**NER.net**) and getting your company name or logo on as much equipment as you can.

"If it has your name and/or logo painted on the side, a thief might not want to mess with it," he says. "They're looking for items that are easy to resell. Etching the serial number somewhere other than the data plate because that's the first thing a thief will remove. If you etch it somewhere hidden, that's something to tell law enforcement, and they can look for the etching should the piece be recovered."

Bruce says to choose carefully where you leave your equipment overnight. Simple lighting can make your facility more secure. "You also want to think about how open it is," says Bruce. "If you have trees or shrubbery blocking the property, a thief might go unnoticed," he says. "Consider cutting down large trees and keeping shrubs pruned. Some of our clients have installed heavy duty security fences and barbed wire."

But even with all of these precautions, Bruce says that determined thieves are going to find a way to get in.

"We had one case where the thief stole a company vehicle and just drove it right through the gate," he says. With Hortica, if you have business interruption coverage on your policy, the company would pay for rental of equipment until the equipment is replaced.

"If the company purchased the mulch from a distributor, it would be covered," says Bruce. "We would cover the wholesale price of the stolen product."

If equipment was stolen, it's important to file a police report and getting in touch with your insurance agent. "You can't prevent everything, but you can make yourself less of a target," Bruce says.

Payton is a freelance writer with six years of experience covering landscaping.

When barbed wire doesn't cut it, insurance can save the day.



RC VS. ACV

While every insurance policy is different, it is important to know whether your equipment is insured as "Replacement Cost" (RC) or "Actual Cash Value" (ACV). With a total loss, RC coverage will reimburse the full cost to replace the damaged unit with equipment of like kind and/or quality. It is important to note that with most insurance policies until you actually replace the item, only actual cash value is due. With an ACV policy your carrier owes you what that piece of equipment is worth at the time of loss. In most cases this is established utilizing the cost to replace with new equipment of like kind and/or quality less depreciation based on the age, condition and life expectancy of the equipment in question. At Hortica, if the mobile equipment is specifically scheduled on the insurance policy, a claim is settled on the RC Basis.

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INSURANCE & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS
To guide and provide

Roger Jacobi founded AgriLawn in 1991, with a “We Care” attitude. An Oklahoma State University-educated agronomist and International Society of Arborists-certified tree care professional, Jacobi began planning for his future early on by turning AgriLawn into an employee-owned company. Reflecting on two decades in the business, Jacobi talks about his company and how the industry has changed.

Why did you and your wife Ramona, choose to become an employee-owned company in 2007? We were looking at options to remove ourselves from the business over time, while maintaining our commitment to our employees and customers. When we learned more about the employee share ownership plan (ESOP) model, it was a great fit. We chose this route as opposed to entertaining buyout offers from national players.

What benefits do you find in being an employee-owned company? Even prior to establishing the ESOP, we strived to create an ownership culture within the company. Now that our company is valued on an annual basis, the employees see they have a stake in the outcome.

How has the industry changed in the 20 years you've been in business? Thanks to the Internet, it's easier to access resources such as product manufacturers, trade associations and universities, to enhance our field

knowledge. Also, the introduction of new products has broadened our pest management options. And many new technologies are available to help manage the business.

What challenges did you face growing your business to its present size? Making sure we were properly staffed at critical times to handle growth cycles. Also, adding employees who had more knowledge, experience and contacts than me in areas such as information technology/networking, marketing, compliance with Department of Labor regulations, and maintaining our fleet of trucks and equipment.

Your company has participated in a number of charitable activities, including GreenCare for Troops. Why are those programs important to the organization? We have a large military presence in our area (Tinker Air Force Base),

and we are proud to help these families in some small way. We look for opportunities to help out the larger community, and we enjoy the camaraderie these experiences provide.

What challenges do you see in the coming years for the industry? Regulatory pressures are always on the radar, as is being able to attract desirable job applicants to support growth. Also, maintaining margins that are sustainable — in light of increased competition and the volatile costs of fuel and fertilizers.

What are the biggest opportunities moving forward? Educating and supporting field and office staff to deliver exceptional customer service; valuing professionalism; committing to excellence; and maintaining positive relationships with coworkers, customers, vendors and regulatory agencies.



COMPANY: AgriLawn

FOUNDED: 1991

HEADQUARTERS: Oklahoma City, OK

TITLE: Founder/President

YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY: 25

INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT: PLANET, ISA, NPMA, Pesticide Rules Advisory Committee member (Oklahoma), Turfgrass Advisory Committee member (OSU at OKC)

SERVICE AREA: Oklahoma City and surrounding communities

NUMBER OF LOCATIONS: 1

EMPLOYEES: 34

SERVICES: fertilization and weed management on lawns; targeted insect and disease management on lawns; plant health care for trees and shrubs; perimeter pest management; indoor pest management; soil testing; lime and sulfur applications; aerations; and seeding

HOBBIES: running marathons, gun range target practice, reading, watching sports

FAMILY: wife Ramona, and children Jessica, Juliana and Justin

WEBSITE: AgriLawn.com

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You have enough things to worry about. But with **FreeHand[®] 1.75G herbicide**, money-draining re-treats aren't one of them. **FreeHand 1.75G** enables you to control a wide range of grasses, broadleaf weeds and sedges with one application. And since **FreeHand 1.75G** utilizes two highly effective active ingredients and two unique modes of action, it's a great resistance management tool, too. Don't lose profits to re-treats. Treat it right the first time, with **FreeHand 1.75G**.

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WEEDWATCH

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BARNYARDGRASS

Echinochloa crus-galli

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- › Ligules are absent in this summer annual.
- › Rolled in the shoot, leaves have a distinct white mid-vein that becomes keeled toward the basal portions of the leaf.
- › Its thick stems are tinted maroon at the base, and are often branched at the lower nodes. It may reach 5 ft. in height.
- › Seedheads form terminal panicles comprised of individual spikelets.

CONTROL TIPS

- › Apply a pre-emergent herbicide labeled for barn-

yardgrass control in mid to late spring for optimal control. One barnyardgrass plant can produce thousands of seeds, so preventing germination of the seed is critical.

- › These seeds germinate and thrive in moist conditions in soils with high nutrient content. Cultural practices that will help reduce germination include proper fertilization and watering for the soil and turfgrass species present. Light, frequent irrigation increases the potential for barnyardgrass seed germination.



PEARLWORT

Sagina procumbens

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- › This native, perennial broadleaf weed resembles moss, and typically inhabits disturbed sites or areas of moist, frequently irrigated turf.
- › Prostrate to ascending stems root at nodes and form a mat.
- › Leaves are narrow and hairless with pointed stems. They run opposite along the stem, but appear to be arranged in whorls.
- › Seeds are spread by water splash and foot traffic.

CONTROL TIPS

- › Prevention and early eradication of this weed is important because of the prolific nature of the plant to set seed — and the ease of which the seeds can be spread.
- › Two- and three-way herbicides that contain fluroxypyr will eradicate existing plants. Proper maintenance of turf will keep lawns healthy and diminish bare spots where pearlwort will thrive.
- › A pre-emergent herbicide containing isoxaben prevents germination.

* State restrictions on the sale and use of Snapshot apply.

For more information regarding these and other turf weeds — and related control technologies and tips — please visit www.DowProvesIt.com or call 800/255-3726.

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P R O V E N S O L U T I O N S

PREPPING FOR THE

Record-setting snowfall, coupled with strong winds, socked cities across the United States this past winter. For many the snow has been an unwelcomed surprise. And in most parts of the country, people equipped to rid their region of that snow remain in high demand.

For safety and sanity, it's critical to remove snow and ice from traveled areas quickly and thoroughly. A haphazard approach will create more problems than it solves, making it imperative for winter contractors to be thoroughly prepared.

After 36 years in the snow-removal business, Randy Strait could easily be considered an expert on getting rid of the white stuff. He owns Arctic Snow & Ice Control Inc., and has tackled everything from his own driveway to parking lots at some of the nation's largest businesses. He says the key to quality work and reduced liability is to be prepared for each and every snow removal job.

No matter the size of the job, Strait says, "it's better to be safe than sorry when it comes to preparing for snow removal." Although there are many issues that need to be addressed beforehand, such as the size of the lot and the state of the equipment, taking a little time to do so will ensure any event is handled quickly and effectively. This is especially true, Strait says, because "the climate is changing and you never know what Mother Nature may bring."

By learning to expect the unexpected, snow contractors will be poised to handle any winter weather scenario. And knowing how and for what to prepare when a snow event hits is critical to success.

Property pointers

Although all parking lots may seem the same to the average person, snow removal contractors know each is vastly different. To clear each unique

property well, snow contractors must consider several factors before ever arriving onsite. The first aspect is the property's size.

Imagine a building contractor preparing for a new home construction job. When drawing up blueprints, he or she must know the dimensions of the empty lot. This will help determine the size of house that can fit on the property, how large of a crew is needed, the quantity of supplies that will be required, and how long it will take to complete the project. In the same way, a snow removal contractor won't be prepared to plow without first knowing the size of the property being cleared.

The property size will dictate the type of equipment necessary, and the number of machines and personnel required to expediently handle the situation. However, when attempting to estimate equipment needs, Strait stresses the importance of using machines and plows currently owned.

"You should always estimate based on the plows and equipment you currently have," Strait explains. "I've seen companies that feel they need to buy new equipment and plows to suit a

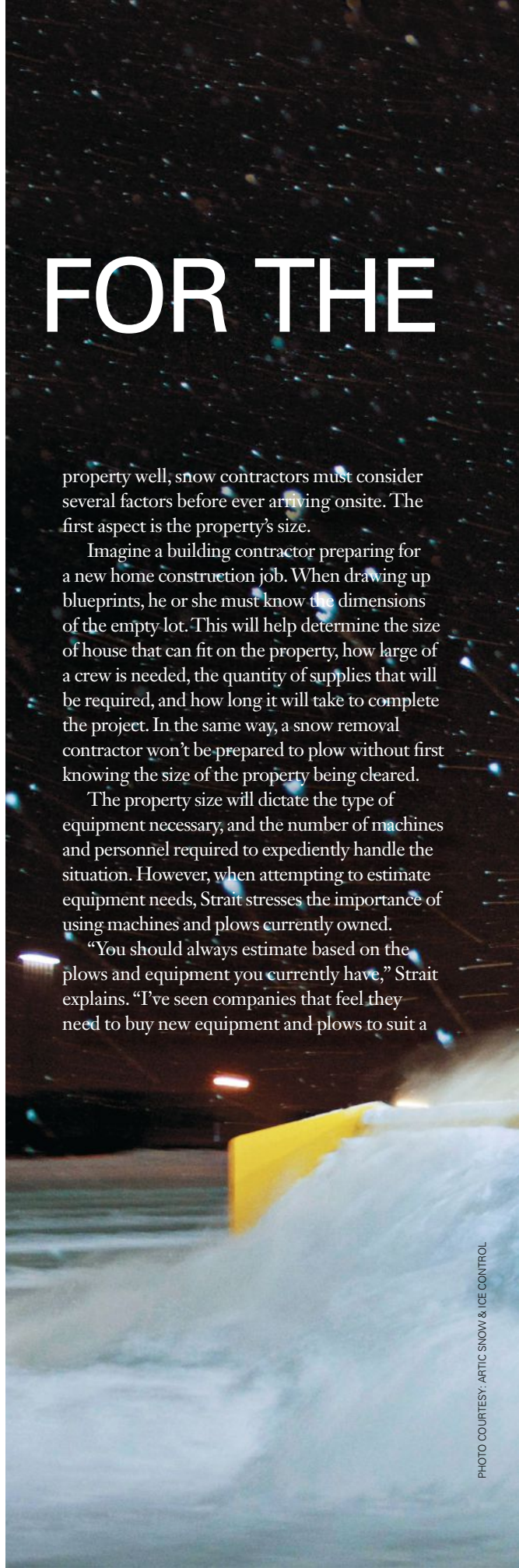


PHOTO COURTESY: ARCTIC SNOW & ICE CONTROL

POWDER

How to prepare for *any* snow event

BY RANDY STRAIT



new client's lot. But the problem with purchasing a special machine and new plow for just one particular lot arises when, maybe that client doesn't renew the contract. Now the contractor is left with too much equipment for his size and operational needs, and it becomes a waste."

This touches on Strait's next point: Knowing the property's size can help prevent overstocking, and reduce the likelihood of time and money wasted on excess machines and staff. It will also avoid bringing equipment that may be too large for the job.

"Everyone always wants to push more snow, faster. Efficiency drives the majority of our decisions," Strait says. But he stresses that the largest plow may not always be the best plow for the job. For example, a snow contractor with a 19-ft., loader-mounted snow pusher may want to



BE WORTH YOUR SALT

Rather than take the time to plan for fast, complete snow removal, many contractors rely heavily on salt as a primary tool. Salt has advantages, but also comes with its fair share of disadvantages, all of which snow contractors must be aware.

There's no doubt salt can be beneficial in some situations, but recent shortages have affected many contractors' abilities to secure adequate amounts for their workload. In addition to shortages and, of course, the high cost of salt, the narrow window of its effectiveness is another factor to consider.

"Salt is most effective when the temperature reaches 20°F and above, and the sun is out to activate it," Randy Strait explains. Obviously, these types of ideal days are few and far between. The best bet is to remove the snow and ice as completely as possible to reduce or fully eliminate the need for salt, and prevent slip-and-fall hazards as well.

opt instead for his 10-ft. skid-steer snow pusher to properly handle a mid-size supermarket parking lot. A 10-ft. snow pusher will be ideal for clearing narrower aisles, handicapped parking spaces, and will even work in the case of plowing during the day, when traffic is present.

Finally, an accurate estimate of how long the job will take should be determined. Many contractors that use containment plows utilize a formula based on acres and pushing capacity of these types of plows. For example, one 10-ft. containment plow with a pushing capacity of 13 yds. will take roughly 30 minutes to plow anywhere from two to three acres — but of course, this will be dependent on several outside variables that will change from event to event.

A snow event with 4-in. accumulation of heavy, wet snow will take longer to clear than an event dropping 2 in. of light, fluffy snow. A contractor using, for example, a 16-ft. model with a 28-yd. capacity can estimate the same job in the same weather conditions to take about half the time as the 10-ft. plow mentioned above.

But running an efficient snow removal operation involves more than just sending out the crew and instructing everyone to start plowing. Having a plan in place for how to clear the lot is crucial for maximized efficiency, especially in the case of larger properties. For example, it may be wise to divide the area into sections and assign each operator his or her own area. This gives each individual a specific portion on which to focus efforts, leading to more efficient plowing and eliminating the possibility of doubling-up on a single area.

Parking lots pose additional challenges of which contractors must be aware to ensure quick and thorough plowing. Whether a commercial facility, shopping center or supermarket, a business' parking lot often includes obstacles such as light poles, cart corrals and medians. Noting and planning for these small details will make a big difference, both in providing top-notch customer service and doing a thorough job to prevent accidents.

Furthermore, some property owners will only require the lot be cleared; others expect curbs and sidewalks to be taken care of as well. Contractors responsible for clearing these additional areas for pedestrian traffic will want to note them all, and factor in the appropriate equipment and personnel, as it will require additional time and resources.

This level of adequate preparation is key, as every minute in snowfall response time can be crucial.

Pick your plow

For a business to successfully achieve clean, clear results, a good snowplow is an essential part of the snow removal team.

A snowplow is more than just a piece of equipment, it's the real workhorse of a snow removal operation. The better the plow, the better the snow removal job will be, leading to less chance of excess ice build-up. For example, containment-style plows, also known as box plows, have come a long way over the years, and many different styles and models exist, each with their own technology and features.

Looking for a plow that incorporates features
continued on page 36



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SNOW REMOVAL



It's important to understand what size of equipment is best for which job.

continued from page 34

designed for fast, efficient removal of snow and ice will be key in effective operation and preventing liability issues.

Many snowplows incorporate steel cutting edges, which are very effective at scraping even hard-packed snow and ice down to the pavement. Some manufacturers offer sectional moldboard designs, which contour to variances in the pavement grade, allowing the plow to get into dips and depressions in the pavement. This allows for cleaner results, and more snow and ice to be removed with each pass. Recently, special drop-and-go hitch designs have been introduced to further enhance the amount of snow and ice removed with each pass. These hitches let the plow move freely from the equipment — and automatically adjust the plow to any change in pavement.

Beyond boosting the effectiveness of a snowplowing operation, the equipment can affect a business' ability to respond to and handle each snow event quickly and efficiently — both positively and negatively. To ensure the equipment doesn't slow down the crew, it's imperative to keep inventory well maintained and serviced.

Keep equipment in check

In nearly every area of the country, a snow event will show up unannounced at some point. It's not uncommon for the weather to go from 60°F one day to blustery, blizzard-like conditions the next. For any contracting company, it's crucial to keep all machines adequately maintained so they're ready to tackle any job — and last throughout several hours of tough plowing.

The first step in any proper routine maintenance plan is the most basic: Keep the snow-

plow clean. Taking just a few moments at the end of each shift to quickly clean the plow will provide a two-fold benefit. First, a good cleaning will remove any excess ice or salt that could damage the plow or cause corrosion. Second, it will allow the operator to spot any obvious issues, such as damaged or severely worn parts. Replace these immediately to avoid a decrease in performance or a full-scale breakdown in the middle of a plowing job.

Good maintenance is an ongoing process, and should receive adequate attention, both during the season as well as the off-season. Investing a small amount of time into basic plow upkeep will pay dividends, as the plow will be ready and waiting to go as soon as the flakes begin to fly.

To further ensure readiness at the drop of a flurry, Strait also advises owning all snow removal equipment and machines, rather than renting. If a machine breaks down at 3 a.m., waiting for the rental center to open and finding time to fix it is out of the question. Worst-case scenario, according to Strait: "The operator could be held up several days waiting for a piece of equipment to be repaired."

In addition to owning equipment, having a mechanic on staff to address issues promptly will ensure minimal time is lost.

It's beneficial for a snow removal fleet to include more equipment and machines than needed at any given time. In the event a plow becomes damaged during use, having an extra one on hand to replace the damaged one immediately will eliminate costly downtime. Rather than leaving a machine idle while its plow is being fixed, it can be fitted with a backup unit and be right back

continued on page 38



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SNOW REMOVAL

continued from page 36

out on the jobsite making money.

Readiness comes down to more than just a shiny, clean fleet of equipment and eager snow removal operators ready to move the white stuff. A few final details will ensure precious minutes aren't lost when heading out for a snow removal job.

Ready when you are

All snow events must be handled with urgency, as every minute counts. When it comes to the argument of whether to wait for the snowfall to stop before plowing, or get out there and attack the white stuff while it's still coming down, Strait's philosophy is simple: "Don't hesitate for a minute. As soon as the snow begins to

fall, we're out there immediately."

When faced with an impending winter storm or blizzard, Strait urges how crucial it is for the operator to respond quickly so the snow doesn't get too far ahead. The longer it takes a crew to respond, the more time snow has to accumulate and ice to build up — and the more likely it will be to cause a detrimental slip-and-fall accident.

The first impediment to a quick response time is obvious: bad weather. A snow event will make travel conditions to the jobsite less-than-ideal, so the closer personnel and equipment can be to the jobsite, the faster they can respond.

"We park equipment onsite and hire guys who live close by the account to service those areas so they can get to the equipment quickly," Strait says. While this process is ideal for larger businesses with a sizable fleet of equipment and resources to hire based on location, smaller contracting companies may need to find an alternate way to ensure each job is handled in a timely fashion.

A company with a limited number of operators and equipment may want to consider a phone tree calling system or a chain-of-command based on location and desired minimum response time. By planning this out ahead of time, and having a point person in charge close to each site, less time will be wasted deciding which operator should be sent to a certain area.

Finally, even the simplest policy can save time. Consider backing equipment on the lot, facing the exit, so it's ready to go in an emergency. This will shave off crucial minutes in the event of an urgent snow situation, leaving less time for snow accumulation.

Although responding to a snow event immediately seems like the obvious way to handle a storm, it's easier said than done. Knowing how to prepare, and for what to prepare will ensure every snow event is handled quickly and efficiently. **LJM**

Strait is president of Arctic Ice & Snow Control Products (ArcticSnowAndIce.com).

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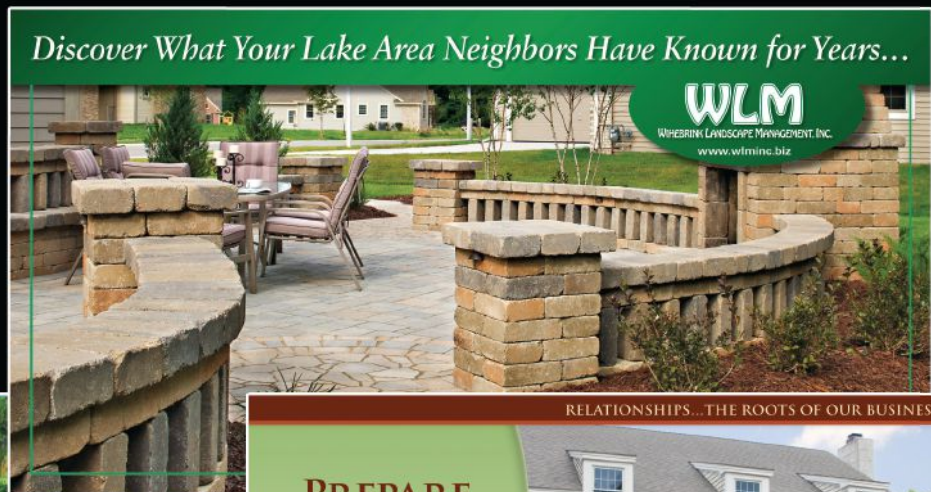
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BEST PRACTICES

BRUCE WILSON

The author, of the Wilson-Oyler Group, is a 30-year industry veteran. Reach him at bwilson@questex.com.

To manage is to enable

I was extremely lucky early in my career as a manager to have a great mentor: Dr. Joseph Trickett, the head of the Santa Clara (CA) University Graduate Business School. I met him when a student of his selected our company to do an employee attitude survey and study. Trickett visited our company in person to verify this was a worthwhile project.

At the time, I was new to managing people. I knew I had some instincts for it, but I had a long way to go.

Trickett would visit our company to monitor the student's progress, and he and I would sometimes get into long conversations about managing people. His passion was understanding employee behavior. He was quite impressed a company like ours, which paid relatively low wages, could get people to work so hard and still like what they did.

One day he asked me a simple question. Why do people get a job? He followed that by asking me whether I thought newly hired employees wanted to be successful. He told me he has met managers who treat employees as though they got the job to deliberately screw up and get fired. It's treating employees this way that ends up demotivating them.

I told him I believed people want to be successful when they start their jobs. He responded that my role is to enable them to be successful.

It's such a simple thought, yet it has guided me throughout my career. I believe it is the single most important thing leading to my success: A good manager is an enabler.

For me, managing became much easier when I realized that is all there is to it. If I always asked myself, "Am I enabling the team to be successful?" I always knew what to do. If you, too, think this way, managing will be easier for you — and team success will be the result.

10 BEST PRACTICES FOR 'ENABLING' EMPLOYEES:

- 1 An enabler must build a culture of coaching and mentoring.
- 2 An enabler must realize coaching and mentoring is not an event. They are ongoing. Many managers only give feedback during reviews. A coach coaches all of the time.
- 3 An enabler tries to make people's jobs easier, looking for ways to ensure they have confidence-building success.
- 4 An enabler leads with positive coaching, but also is firm in correcting bad or destructive habits.
- 5 An enabler shows the way as a good role model.
- 6 An enabler creates an environment that encourages team success.
- 7 An enabler sets high standards so team success is ensured.
- 8 An enabler is very good at observation and listening.
- 9 An enabler recognizes success in others, and shares credit for success.
- 10 An enabler manages the company culture.

If I always asked myself, "Am I **enabling the team** to be successful?" I always knew what to do.

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~ Chris Wilson, Les Wilson & Sons Excavating Contractors, Westbrook, ME

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~ Todd Matson, Subcontractor for Troy Clogg Landscape Associates, Trenton, MI

“It more than pays for itself. I used to be kind of gun-shy about taking on new accounts in case I couldn't get them all done on time. With the XLS, you can take on more accounts because you can get more done in less time. It can definitely help you make more money.”

~ Mike Ferreira, Mike's Snow Removal, North Dighton, MA

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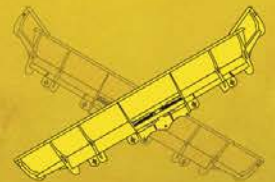
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Spatial awareness

THE MISSION

Create a colorful, turf-free environment in a very narrow space.

When called to this waterfront property, Dix Hills, NY-based Stephen Dubner Landscaping was asked to design a functional, low-maintenance and tranquil environment. Specifically, Dubner and his team were asked to design the plantings, screen the house mechanical systems and create spaces for outdoor enjoyment.

The clients did not mind the maintenance of flowering shrubs and perennials, but made it clear that they did not want turf — they thought it would be wasteful to cut the lawn every week.

The first part of the design process was to determine how guests should experience the garden. “The concept of having the walks meander between intimate spaces of the garden not only creates different experiences and views,” notes Dubner, “but it also creates the illusion of depth, making the narrow space feel much wider than it actually is.”

The team chose to use *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* in lieu of turf, both for its durability and its bright red berries. “It thrives in the waterside environment, while giving us the spatial mass at the groundplane that a traditional turf would normally have occupied, all without the maintenance of grass,” Dubner points out.

“Careful examination of the planting and site design demonstrate a carefully molded relationship between lush plantings and intimate spaces,” he continues. “The natural look and mass of *Nipponanthemum nipponicum* proves the perfect balance to a detailed pergola.

“Now, whether the clients choose to cut flowers for a vase, walk the garden down to the beach or simply enjoy the view from the indoors, they are part of a great environment at this seaside retreat!”



PHOTOS COURTESY: STEPHANIE BARONE, STEVEN DUBNER LANDSCAPING

3



4

5



THE WORK

1 | Beauty beckons. The custom cedar arbor directs guests into the garden beyond. Lush plantings of *Hydrangea macrophylla* and *Spirea x bumalda* 'Goldflame' blur the lines of the built and the natural.

2 | A pop of color. Upon rounding the path, guests enjoy a foreground of *Nipponanthemum nipponicum* and *Imperata cylindrical* 'Red Baron' — whose bold red contrasts against the neutral pavers and the deep green needles of an existing *Pinus thunbergiana*.

3 | Hide and seek. A little nook set off the main patio provides a place where one could escape to enjoy the views or some quiet time. *Thymus serpyllum*, with the ability to withstand light foot traffic, was planted between boulders and flat stones. *Juniperus chinensis* 'Torulosa' and *Hydrangea macrophylla* envelop the space for an intimate feel.

4 | A swinging view. The classic bench hung from the *Campsis radicans*-covered cedar pergola makes a great space to relax. *Cryptomeria japonica* in the background give scale to the space, while *Buxus sempervirens* relate it to the plantings along the back of the garage. *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* and *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Gracillimus' flank the tumbled paver walkway.

5 | Sea portal. The team chose to leave the stairs leading to the beach in place, to represent a departure from the "built" environment back to the simple beauty of the sea. The mass of *Nipponanthemum nipponicum* provides one last splash of color and texture before hitting the beach.

Steven Dubner Landscaping is Long Island's award-winning landscape development firm, creating landscapes and gunite pools for more than 40 years. SDL offers a full service from initial concept to completion: landscape development, site master plans, seasonal color and design, gunite pools and spas. With a separate division for premium commercial spaces, the firm has constructed some of the most prestigious commercial landscapes in the New York Metropolitan region. This project garnered a 41st Annual Environmental Improvement Grand Award from the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET). For more information, visit StevenDubnerLandscaping.com.

BETTER PRACTICES: PROPER GRADING



Good edging contributes to improvements in both aesthetics and safety.

Impress customers and reduce the risk of falling with proper grading.

BY **CASEY PAYTON**

Harry R. Rotz Jr., owner of Rotz Turf Renovation LLC in Chambersburg, PA, says it's not enough to put up warning or "No Trespassing" signs in areas where sidewalks weren't edged properly. He'd like to see proper grading done the first time around. But the seeming lack of interest in this issue has always bugged him, especially from a safety point of view.

"I've fallen several times myself and have seen others fall also," says Rotz, whose business does about 70% residential work. "I never want to be blamed for someone falling because of my shoddy work, so I always put in the extra time to do proper grading. Unfortunately, I have lost a lot of seeding jobs because of this problem through cost differences. I always dig the areas out and place good soil to make sure it is properly graded and not a fall hazard. Yet, it seems like I am always laughed at for it — and it never seems to matter since 'everyone else' leaves a dangerous edge. I see this not only in sidewalks, but in the islands of business and shopping centers."

Rotz says this has been a pet peeve of his for years, yet it never seems to be a problem to anyone else. "Most people say 'I can't see it from my house, so I don't

care,'" he says. "Or maybe people just don't think about it because it's been done wrong for so long that it's just taken for granted."

But Rotz says there are a few good reasons to start thinking about proper grading. Besides being a fall hazard and ultimate liability, poor grading is also not friendly to the environment. "If good soil is placed to grade correctly, it not only makes the job pretty, but it can help control erosion," he says. "The healthier the grass, the more oxygen is produced — and the more carbon is sequestered. It takes less labor, gas and chemicals to maintain the area."

Proper grading can also make long-term maintenance easier and more cost-efficient.

"[When done properly,] all you need to

continued on page 46

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GRADING

continued from page 44

do is run the wheel of the mower on the edge along these areas and you're done!" he says. "There's little or no trimming. There is less time spent going back with a string trimmer to clean up those spots. Also, if the person running the mower is instructed properly, there is no scalping to the grass

area and no damage to the mower."

Because Rotz always does this extra work, he says his prices do end up higher.

"It does take more time and effort, and everyone expects to be paid for their time so it's certainly an extra cost," Rotz admits. "Sometimes I don't get the work because my estimate is higher.



Help customers see the value in grading. Talk to them about the benefits.

'Under-valued' is the understatement of the century. But anyone whose heart is in it and is trying to

do a good job knows his reputation is always on the line. The low-bidders are here today and gone on to something else tomorrow. Fortunately, I've been blessed with work, so my effort seems to be working."

Though he's been frustrated by a lack of regard for this important issue, Rotz says sometimes clients do recognize the extra effort he puts in, and why he's doing it.

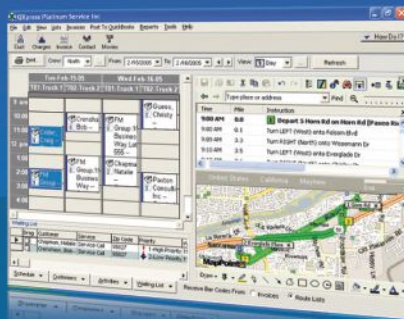
"Most of the time it's the little guy that appreciates it," he says. "Many of the big guys just don't care — they want to do whatever they can to keep the cost down. But if it's the owner, I like to talk to them about the benefits. Then I can point to all the pros taking the time to do it right — how it will save them years down the road in maintenance costs, and the liability issues from lawsuits related to fall hazards. It's all about being able to see past the end of your nose and trying to make safety the top issue from the start, which will, in turn, also leave a more appealing job." **LM**

Payton is a freelance writer with six years' experience covering landscaping.



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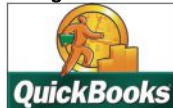
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HOW TRUGREEN LANDCARE'S SHIFT TO PRIVATE OWNERSHIP IS PAVING THE WAY FOR NEW BEGINNINGS

TRUGREEN LandCare®
Exclusive interview with Mac McIvried, President

Q: What does being a stand-alone company mean for TruGreen LandCare?

Whereas TruGreen LandCare was formally part of the ServiceMaster brand, we are now an independent company with different ownership, a newly engaged leadership team and strategic goals that align to our individual company's direction and mission.

Q: What is happening with TruGreen LandCare today?

On a daily basis, we are in the midst of setting foundational systems, processes and placing people in place to sustain, grow and develop our business while continuing to meet the needs of our customers. We are focused on engaging and leveraging resources, expanding our portfolio, and achieving financial goals for our stakeholders.

Q: What opportunities do you see in the road ahead?

In all aspects of our business, especially as a stand alone entity, we have the opportunity to create. That said, we want to implement refreshing ways of doing business and reach customers in a way that signifies our intent to establish and continue lasting relationships. Additionally, we are optimizing the best resources to attract talent by partnering with industry organizations, colleges, universities and local communities. Our mission is to remain a highly regarded landscaping company with operational excellence. Our foundation must be strong and we must practice continuous improvement each day.

Q: Where do you see TruGreen LandCare in the upcoming 12 – 36 months?

TruGreen LandCare will be solidly established as a leader with a strong brand. Our systems, people and processes will be aligned with the continued growth of our business.

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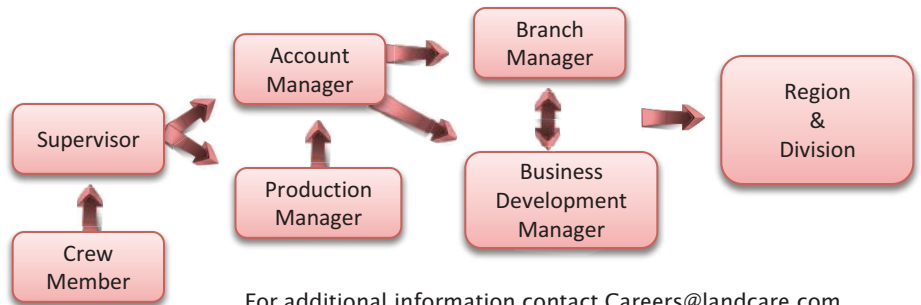
Talent Acquisition Group

We dove into conversations with TruGreen LandCare's senior leadership to find out what strategies are making their new vision a success.

1 Modifying organizational structure leads to more Opportunities –

Leadership and support teams for operational advancements and people development are being formed. Restructuring at a branch level has created additional career path opportunities for employees. New management tiers are focused on key initiatives allowing redistribution of workload.

- **2 tiers in Mid-Management**
Account Manager: Operational Oversight, New Business development, Customer Service
Production Manager: Field Productivity, Safety/Practical Training, Quality Control
- **1 tier in Sales Development**
Business Development Manager: Strategic Sales Initiatives



For additional information contact Careers@landcare.com

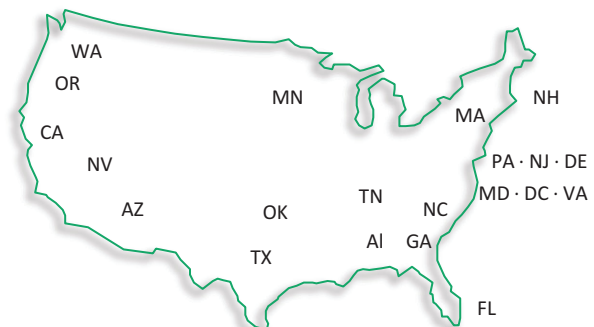
2 Delivering a Comprehensive Portfolio of services –

TruGreen LandCare has emerged as a leader in commercial landscaping. The company attributes this to its talented group of specialized professionals driving the businesses across the country. With full-scope capabilities, having the right people in place and delivering clients a comprehensive package of landscape management services is essential.



3 Keeping a strong hold in Prevalent Markets –

Branches operate as independent units with the advantages of a national company. Staff is empowered to manage the business as entrepreneurs delivering customized local service. TruGreen LandCare continues to have a strong hold in markets throughout the United States. Its footprint extends throughout major metropolitan areas from Coast to Coast.



Tropical trees can turn a Minnesota backyard into a pool-side paradise.

ADD-ON SERVICE

Offering palm trees outside of a tropical climate may not be a big profit booster, but this Minnesota business owner found it offers value in other ways.

BY CASEY PAYTON

Palm trees and Minnesota are two things that don't seem like they'd go together. But James P. Sweeney saw an opportunity to fill a niche market by bringing palms to the Twin Cities. Sweeney, who is also founder and senior designer for Mom's Landscaping & Design, founded PalmTreeDirect.com to deliver a unique, resort-like theme to his clients' properties.

Several years after founding Mom's Landscaping, Sweeney decided that the idea of offering a palm tree service could really deliver that extra "wow factor" to his clients. "It's a fun and inter-

esting service," he says. "We all dream and aspire to the creation of an oasis or a little getaway, but including an actual palm tree in the landscape is unique and unexpected in a market where there are no hardy tropicals."

Though PalmTreeDirect.com is a subsidiary of Mom's Landscaping, from the start Sweeney wanted to market it as an "add-on piece that could also stand on its own," he says.

"The idea was to create a website and market and brand it differently than the main business," he explains. "By doing

continued on page 73

A SUPPLEMENT TO

Landscape Management

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THE INDUSTRY PULSE

Road to Recovery

After years of survival mode, landscaping professionals learn to live, work and build their businesses in the new normal.

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Optimism rebounds in these challenging times



Ken Taylor, CLP
Sales Manager — Commercial
Business Development

The recent economic pressures have, undoubtedly, been challenging on business. In talking to Green Industry service providers who have been in the industry for more than 20 years, many have claimed that this has been the toughest time they've encountered since they started their business. In many cases, due to competitive pressures and fundamental supply and demand realities, the prices a contractor is able to charge today are actually less than what they were charging five years ago, while facing rising input costs.

At the same time, I hear optimism and focus from these service providers about opportunities to grow and differentiate their business during these challenging times. Instead of succumbing to flat growth, many are renovating their businesses by implementing lean principles, understanding better ways to effectively manage cash flow, diversifying services and, yes, even growing in the more complicated business environment we work in today.

Today's economic reality calls for new and innovative approaches to business and gaining deep customer understanding. John Deere is dedicated to providing you with the support and integrated solutions to help you grow and prosper, and our commitment to your business doesn't stop with providing innovative and quality products. Our experienced John Deere dealer network is there to support your business needs after the sale with the most extensive factory trained service technicians and knowledgeable parts staff in the industry. And John Deere Financial Services provides flexible finance tools to help you manage your business' cash flow.

We have one priority: To ensure uptime in the most responsive manner, because downtime is not an option when you are running a business!

Founded in 1837, Deere & Co has served the needs of those with close ties to the land for 174 years. Over the years, we've all faced business challenges and have refined our businesses, moving and adapting to the times, taking advantage of new opportunities by building and growing our people and our brand along the way.

While the future has elements of uncertainty, those who have the ability and passion to adapt and embrace change will continue to find new ways to drive revenues and profits. By finding new value added services that they can offer their customers, contractors have the opportunity to maximize labor efficiency and their return on assets.

We hope the work we do in 2011 and beyond will move us closer to becoming your most trusted partner on the job site. We look forward to seeing you soon, whether at an industry event, or even at a John Deere location.



JOHN DEERE

By Dan Jacobs/Editor-in-Chief

The Road to Recovery



By all accounts the economic conditions are going to remain challenging for some time. Contractors must start dealing with this new normal.

It's time to shut up and put up. The time for whining about economic conditions, the housing market, government intrusion, lowball competitors, taxes or any of the other myriad factors impeding growth, is over. Yes, those conditions still exist, but they've always been hindrances to growth. Are they worse now? Perhaps, but moaning and kvetching like the doddering curmudgeon sitting on his front porch yelling at neighborhood kids to get off his lawn isn't going to do anyone any good.

This is the market we've been left with. And with the housing market — at best plodding along slowly and at worst we've yet to see the bottom — still significantly down, prospects for a quick rebound are not looking good.

Blaming someone else isn't doing you any good. And more importantly, while you're spending time finding excuses for your lack of progress, other companies have moved forward. They've become leaner and more efficient; they've found new services to offer their customers; and they've grown. In fact there are a number of companies expecting to post at least a 20% net profit this year. (To find out how they did it, read *The bottom line*, by Editorial Director Marty Whitford beginning on page S7).

Let's start with the good news. According to *Landscape Management's* exclusive Industry Pulse survey more than

half of you say sales are increasing (and 10% say the recovery is in full swing). Last year that number was 44% (with 8% saying the recession was over). On the flip side, 6% of contractors expect we're headed into a double dip recession (last year, 5% thought the recession was worsening).

That data does conflict with a broader survey of small business owners. The National Federation of Independent Business's optimism index dropped to 88.1 in August. It was the weakest level since July 2010 and the sixth-consecutive decline.

GET YOUR PRIORITIES STRAIGHT

Ranking of Top 9 issues business owners will focus on over the next six months.

1. Maintaining current business/sources of revenue
2. Growing my business
3. Managing cash flow issues
4. Innovation (finding new ways to do business)
5. Cutting expenses
6. Adding new services to offer more to core clients
7. Employee management (hiring, training, etc.)
8. Adding /improving green/sustainability services
9. Green/sustainable internal improvements (alternative fuels, etc.)



SOURCE: LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT





Maybe contractors are a more optimistic group. Certainly many in the lawn care segment of the industry were bullish on the future (for more about that see “The year of the weed” in the August issue of *LM*).

Similarly, when asked to assess the health of their markets, 48% of contractors described their regions as very healthy or relatively healthy.

To be sure, there are challenges out there, many the same ones that have been plaguing businesses for the past several years. A prolonged recession was the option most selected by contractors when we asked their biggest concerns. Second was high taxes followed by consumer confidence.

When asked about issues beyond their control, contractors ranked rising fuel costs ahead of the prolonged recession. Those two were followed by rising health care costs, taxes and lowball pricing competitors.

Interestingly (and in line with our theme), when asked about the issues they plan to focus on in the next six months the top two answers were maintaining current business levels and growing the business. Managing cash flow and innovation (finding new ways to do business) were the next

THE BUDGETING AND PLANNING PROCESS

Did you prepare a budget for 2011?

Yes **57%**
No **43%**

Do you have a 3 to 5 year plan?

Yes **53%**
No **47%**

How often do you review your plan?

Quarterly **24%**
Once every 6 months **14%**
Annually **30%**
I do not have a business plan **32%**



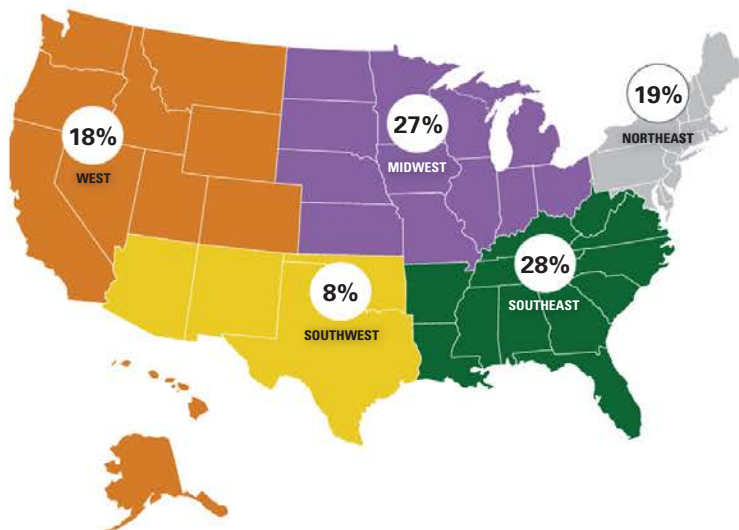
TOP 6 SERVICES OFFERED

1. Spring/Fall cleanup 71%
2. **Mowing 70%**
3. Seeding 69%
- T-4. Sodding 68%**
Edging/trimming 68%
6. Fertilization 67%



LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

The regions in which respondents are located.



highest ranking priorities. Next was cutting expenses, which suggests that while still important, many companies have already worked through that often painful process.

And some of that hard work is starting to pay off. Nearly one in 10 companies responding to our survey expect to earn more than 20% net profit by the end of the year and another 12% should bring in between 16% and 20% net profit. In other words, one in five contractors are earning more than 16% profit in this economy. On the flip side a nearly equal ratio expects to earn less than 4% in 2011, so there is still work to be done for some companies.

On the following pages are a number of stories and strategies that many of the most successful companies have employed to increase their revenues and their profits. **LM**

THINGS ARE LOOKING UP

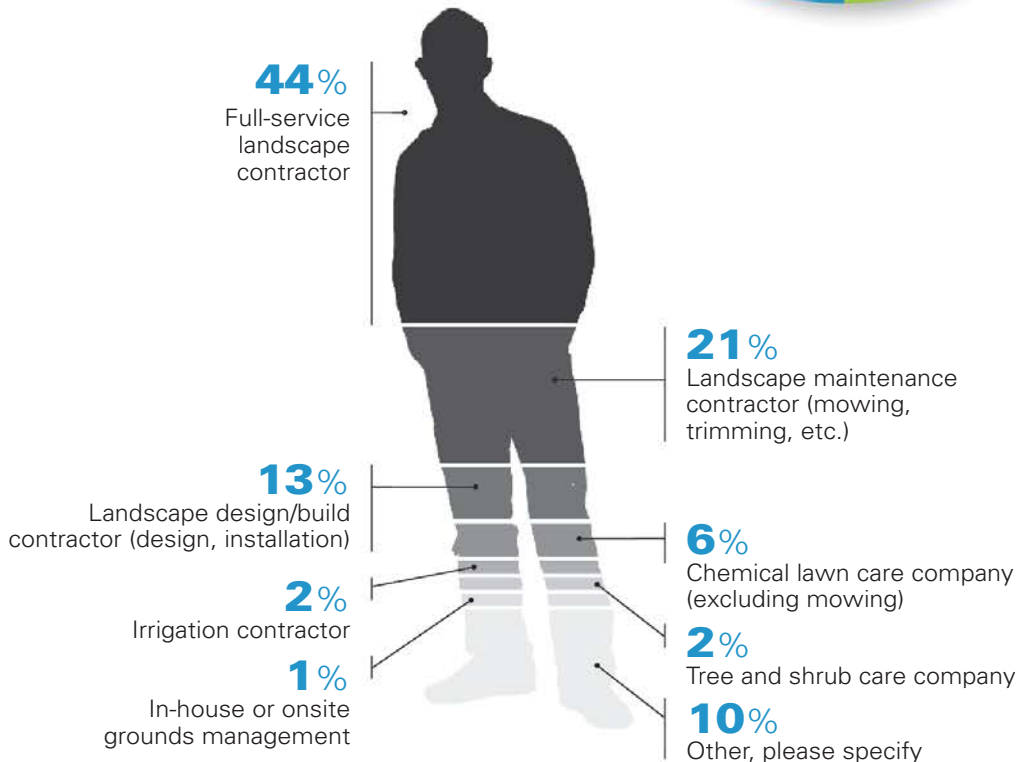
How are customers responding to your services this year?

SOURCE: LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT



MARKET SEGMENTS

How readers describe their businesses



EXCEPT WHERE NOTED, ALL ILLUSTRATIONS/PHOTOS BY: ISTOCK INTERNATIONAL INC.

DUE TO ROUNDING, THE TOTAL ADDS UP TO 99%

SOURCE: LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

The Bottom Line

Three landscapers share how they routinely record profit margins of 20% or more.



Profit. Gain. Net. Proceeds. Margins. Its list of aliases is extensive. But no matter the words — or language used — at the end of the work day, it's all about “the bottom line.”

When it comes to building in solid profit margins, some landscape professionals get it. Some don't.

Despite the plethora of challenges posed by the “Great Recession,” several respondents to *Landscape Management's* Industry Pulse survey report they routinely record profit margins of 20% or more. Sweet cabbage! Now there's a positive trend worth looking into, and trying to mirror.

Here are profiles of three such margin leaders in the landscape industry and how they're typically “winning” more profit than many others:

Growing green

Keith Fisher, owner/operator of Growing Green Lawn Care LLC, projects the Lawrenceville, Ill.-based company will increase sales 27% and margins more than 20% this year. Fisher's crystal ball shows the firm maintaining 20% margins in 2012 with a 14% revenue boost.

Fisher cites five key areas the six-employee operation has built margins in 2011:

1 Controlling fuel costs — “We shop around for the best fuel prices, and we pay in advance and purchase in

14
% revenue boost
in 2012.

bulk for better discounts. We also regularly tighten our scheduling and routing to best suit both our company and our customers.”

2 Purchasing products at reduced costs — “We constantly embark on exhaustive searches that pinpoint the best products at the lowest prices, again taking advantage of discounts by paying in advance.”

3 Managing employees better — “Accountable, trustworthy, committed employees are the key to a better company and a better bottom line. We help our associates best manage their time and resources — without ever compromising quality.”

4 Increasing labor efficiency — “We routinely upgrade our equipment with more-efficient tools and our people with continual, hands-on training.”

5 Overhauling the company's website and expanding digital marketing — “We're better leveraging the Internet to educate consumers, offer special promotions, and more quickly and cost effectively build our brand and business.”

Fisher says landscapers must closely control both sides of the profit margin equation: costs and pricing.

“We cut costs primarily through proper planning and execution, close communication with customers and coworkers, and closely managed daily workloads,” Fisher says. “We boost pricing by



employing trained professionals who provide the best quality work on budget, on time.”

Most customers care as much about the timely delivery of quality work as they do project pricing, Fisher concludes.

“Want to maximize your margins?” Fisher asks. “Employ only the best to deliver the best. Make each customer feel you are his or her top priority. Always go above and beyond. Always leave them feeling like they’re getting more than they’re paying for — even though your bottom line knows different.”

Solomon says...

Solomon Services LLC is on track to hike sales 95% in 2011. Equally impressive, the Denver-based company has bolstered its profit margins 3.5 percentage points this year, to 24.5%, adds Tom Teehan.

Executive vice president of the 30-employee company, Teehan forecasts Solomon will record 2011 revenue of \$1.27 million. 2012 looks like

238

% increase in net profits over two years.

more of the same goodness, with sales expected to rise 65% to \$2.1 million, with a 22% profit margin.

The bottom line for Solomon is expected to soar from about \$136,500 in 2010 to \$311,150 this year to \$462,000 in 2012. That’s a 238% increase in net profits over two years.

Teehan says Solomon bolstered its margins this year by better leveraging technology and increasing sales and margins with new clients, as well as with existing snow removal, design/build and irrigation customers.

On the cost-cutting front, Teehan suggests landscapers:

→ Take the time upfront to develop processes for day-to-day activities. “Before our crews leave the shop in the morning, they go through check lists — we call them ‘pre-flights’ — for all trucks, trailers and equipment, ensuring crews have all the tools and materials needed to complete all jobs scheduled for that day.

→ Train, train, train. “A smart employee is a cost-effective employee. All Solomon employees

are offered training both onsite and through various programs offered by vendors and associations we belong to.”

Teehan says landscapers must become intimately familiar with their cost of goods (COG).

“This is where the rubber meets the road,” Teehan adds. “If you don’t know exactly what it costs to do the work you’re quoting, you’re doing a great injustice to yourself and the client. Ultimately, you might leave money on the table or set yourself up for failure by not having enough money built into the job.”

Another of Teehan’s tips is, “Sell your service — distinguish yourself.”

In Colorado, Solomon has several, smaller competitors. Teehan says they tend to sell mostly on price. While it helps some break into markets, a “low price leader” tactic typically results in diminishing returns for the companies and the industry as a whole.

“Often, the landscaper can’t maintain the property for the amount negotiated for that long,” Teehan notes. “Eventually, the service level drops accordingly, the client becomes frustrated and the service provider loses the client. The industry also suffers as the customer is either lost from our pool of prospects or he or she returns with unrealistic low price expectations and a general distrust of landscapers.”

Two more bidding tips from Teehan include:

→ Let the prospect tell you what he wants. “I ask the prospect to share how long he’s been at the property, what are the features he likes and dislikes, what are the positives and negatives of current or past service providers and what landscape budget he has in mind. This process sets you up for realistic expectations as well as for upsell opportunities.”

→ Be honest and perform your work with integrity. “In our industry, there tends to be a perception of ‘smoke and mirrors.’ By creating what we call a ‘trust bond’ with each client, we put ourselves in a

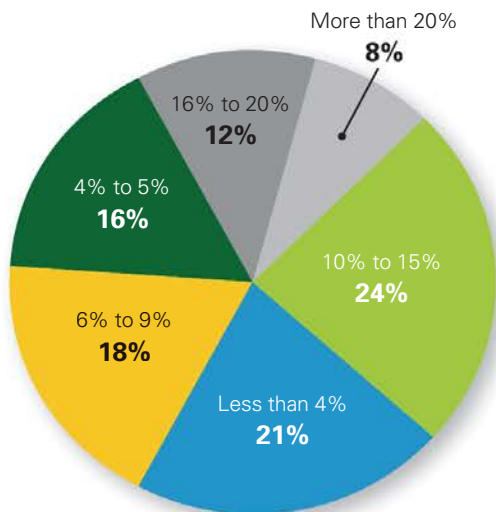


position to be a valued resource, and even a partner on certain projects. Don't be afraid to tell the client a project might not yield the benefit he is expecting — because of his budget limitations and/or the timing of the project. Take the time to educate your clients about the how and why you do the things you do, so you are the perceived expert. Sell value — and then deliver it, every time."

PROFIT CENTER

What do you project your net profit will be by the time 2011 ends?

SOURCE: LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT



DUE TO ROUNDING, GRAPH ADDS UP TO 99%



Robert Haddad

HADDAD'S HAMMOCK

"The better your margins, the more time you can spend relaxing in a hammock," half-jokes Robert Haddad, owner of Atlanta-based Haddad Landscaping.

Haddad finally has a positive outlook for his two-employee, small landscaping business. Haddad Landscaping's annual revenue has dropped every year since 2005. The company's 2010 revenue was about 75% of what it was in 2005.

"It's been absolutely vicious out there," says Haddad, who's been in the landscape business 37 years. "Fortunately, we've bottomed out.

There's nowhere to go but up — with sales and margins."

And up Haddad Landscaping is headed. Haddad forecasts a 10% climb in sales this year, with 30% to 35% net profit. 2012 should be even better.

"We're pricing and working smarter," Haddad says.

One of Haddad's margin-building tips is landscapers should be more selective in both the clients and work they take on.

"Do your math — upfront," Haddad says. "Don't ever take business for the sake of business alone. We might lose nine out of 10 bids, but I guarantee the ones we win have solid margins. They're worth our time."

Haddad advises landscapers to establish and stick to profitable pricing principles.

"Another key is being debt-free," Haddad says. "We don't have vehicle or equipment overhead. That really helps us protecting our pricing and profit margins.

"Plus, I'm a hands-on owner," Haddad adds. "Our labor typically is 20% or less of our tab. The more I do, the more I keep."

“Don't ever take business for the sake of business alone.”

- Atlanta-based Haddad Landscaping owner Robert Haddad



By **Beth Geraci**/Senior Editor

A Good Buy

Even in a lagging economy, purchasing still has power.



Whether it's cutting hours, services or supply, landscape companies have gotten used to tightening their belts in response to rising costs and the weaker spending power of customers. But cut back as they might, companies aren't so quick to skimp on the quality of their equipment. They realize that it can drive a company's success in more ways than one.

Spending to grow

If the economy is lackluster, it's not apparent in the robust way companies are spending on equipment. Take Webb Landscape Inc., for example. The Bellevue, ID-based company, specializing in landscaping, nursery and other services, had a total 2011 capital expenditure budget of \$320,000.

"It's less than we would budget in 2006 and 2007 and it's more than we budgeted in 2009 and 2010," says Webb Chief Executive Officer Steve Mills.

"We have retooled our business model to meet the big recession head on. And we have capitalized on our brand and our quality and our responsiveness, and so our business is fairly healthy."

To date through August, Mills adds, Webb has tallied up \$8 million in revenue and is aiming for a total of \$11 or \$12 million by year's end.

Taylor-made Landscapes in Las Vegas, NV, also ramped up equipment spending this year, by 20% over last year. The increase was thanks to the company's growth. In fact, Taylor-made doubled its

revenue from 2010 to 2011.

Taylor doesn't see the sense in taking a chance on equipment. "It's necessary to sustain our growth," he says. "If our equipment's not operating, we can't do our jobs. It's right up there with having honest, ethical employees."

Out in drought-prone California, weather-based irrigation systems are integral to regulating water use. That's why water systems and smart controllers are at the core of Valley Soil Inc.'s business.

The Temecula, CA-based company specializing in high-efficiency water conservation systems has invested nearly \$1 million in weather-based irrigation controllers and high efficiency nozzles in the last year.

"It was a pretty good year," says company president Eric Anderson. "Normally we're at \$600,000-\$700,000."

In the last five years, Anderson says, Valley Soil increased its purchasing "quite a bit" in response to customers' increasing environmental and economic awareness.

"They know that there are products out there that can help them reduce their higher tier charges, higher rate charges and energy bills.

Those are tied into each other a lot," Anderson says.

RAMPING UP

20

% increase in equipment spending over last year.

“You're going to end up with loss of efficiencies and increased maintenance costs every couple years. You're going to have to end up telling customers, 'I don't have the machine right now.'”

Webb Landscape Inc. CEO Steve Mills

New vs. Used

Up until this year, Taylormade only bought used trucks, both from dealers and residents. In fact, in its five-year history, the company only purchased one new truck ever — in 2007.

“I’ve been really lucky to have purchased equipment that’s given me a lot back,” Taylor says. For example, Taylormade owns a used 1997 F-350 super-duty diesel truck with 220,000 miles on it. The company paid a relatively meager \$4,500 for it, yet, says Taylor, “that’s the one that makes me the most money.”

In 2011, Taylor leased vehicles for the first time. They were a Ford Ranger and Ford F-150. “The larger ticket items like the trucks we’ve been leasing to keep our cash flow in check,” he says. “That’s something new for me. Usually I try to pay cash if I can, but now I’m worried about cash flow issues.”

Other than his trucks, Taylor leases all his trailers, which cost between \$3,000 and \$6,000 each. He invests only in new handheld equipment, such as weeders and blowers, which he bought new both in 2010 and 2011.

Because they rev up and down

and are turned on and off more often, handheld machines have a shorter life expectancy, reasons Taylor, who specializes in residential landscaping and relies heavily on handheld equipment.

Unlike Taylormade, Valley Soil invests only in new equipment. And last year the 8-year-old company invested more in new equipment than ever before, buying software, weather stations and 1,400 smart controllers.

About 70% of Valley Soil’s business involves irrigation. Over the last four years, Anderson says, the company’s performed 8,500 audits and installed 3,400 weather-based controllers and more than 150,000 high-efficiency nozzles.

“We’re growing quite rapidly,” says Anderson, adding that Valley Soil is diversifying, preparing to open a non-profit organization centered around training, education and product testing.

Valley Soil wanted to buy a new truck and SUVs this year but held off. “We wanted to see which way the industry was going first,” Anderson says. “We could afford it, but we wanted to wait.”

Webb also invested “pretty extensively” in new equipment this year, as it always does, says Mills.

70

% of Valley Soil’s business involves irrigation.



UPS AND DOWNS

How did your equipment spending budget change from 2010 to 2011?

For those who increased their budgets, the average was

37%



For those who decreased their budgets, the average was

11%





“We pride ourselves on being the best in the Pacific Northwest,” Mills says. “We constantly are having to purchase.”

Over the last year, Webb purchased equipment in three major categories: equipment and vehicles; facilities and property improvements (such as greenhouses); and information technology, including software, hardware, GPS and iPhones.

Webb also replaced tractors, loaders, mowing equipment and planting equipment. The company runs fleets of trucks and loaders by brand, Mills says, “and we try to get on a rotation where we replace the oldest every few years.”

The most valuable purchase the company made this year was an \$85,000-\$90,000 large CAT loader, Mills says. It was money well spent, because the CAT can work through the winter and be used by both the nursery and construction divisions.

Holding on to equipment

If a company doesn’t replace equipment regularly, says Mills, “you’re going to end up with loss of efficiencies and increased maintenance costs every couple years. You’re going to have to end up telling customers, ‘I don’t have the machine right now.’”

But Taylor doesn’t feel the need to spend on new equipment when a product works just fine as it is.

“I hang on to equipment — I try to run ‘em till



they die,” says Taylor. “I try to get the most out of my equipment that I can. If I didn’t do that I’d have to have more equipment on hand and that’s just a larger cost.”

Taylor tries to be as frugal as possible. “It pays off in the long run,” he says. “Take good care of your equipment and it will pay you back sevenfold. Overspending isn’t something I’m willing to risk right now.”

Whether a landscape company decides to take the used route or the new route, they all agree on one thing: that owning and operating quality equipment empowers a company to be as reliable as possible.

“It’s pretty much common sense,” Mills says. **LM**

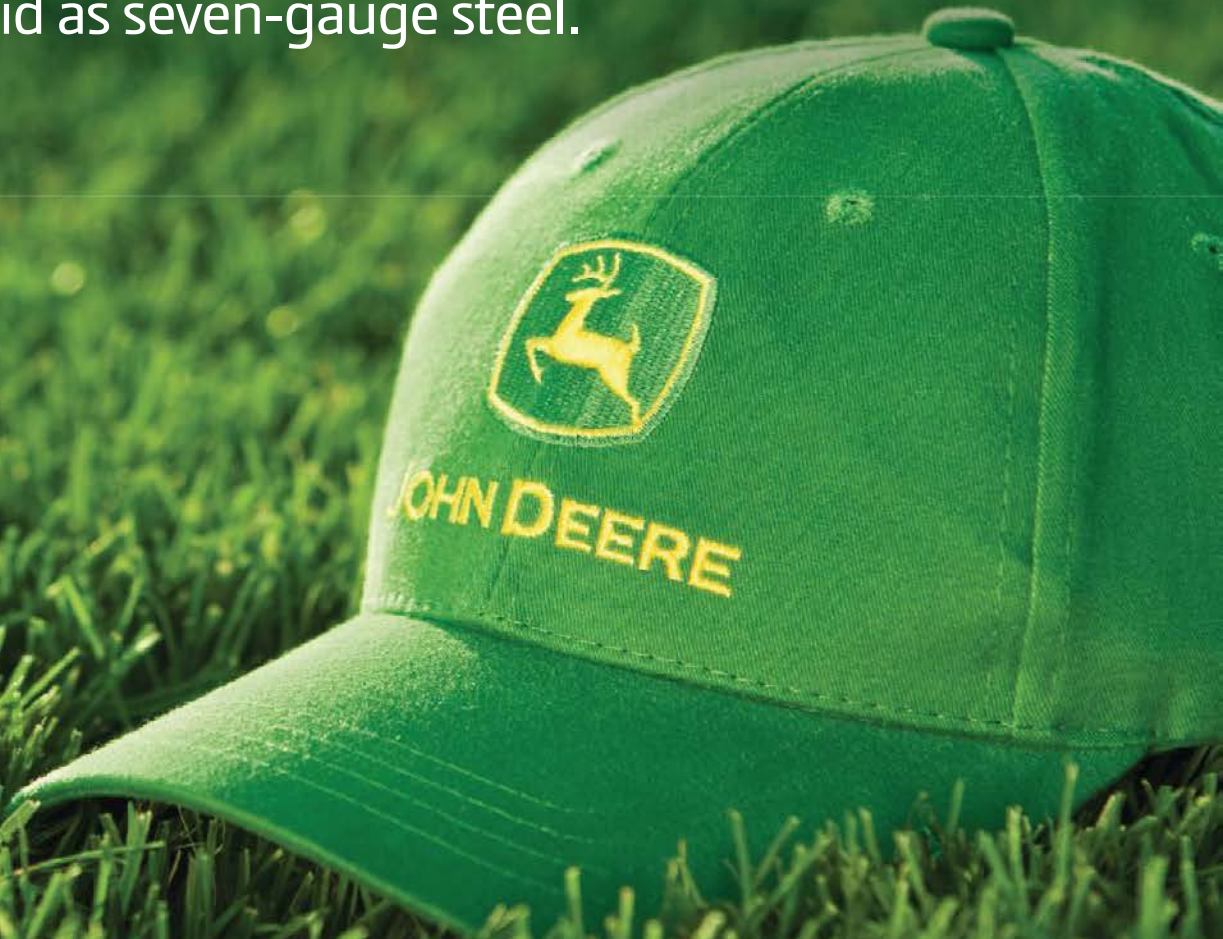


WHAT’S IN YOUR CART?

Percent of contractors who purchased the following types of equipment in last 12 months

Mowers	44%
Skid-steers/loaders/mini skid-steers/excavators & attachments	15%
Sprayers/spreaders	43%
Handheld equipment (blowers, edgers, trimmers, etc.)	58.6%
Trucks & trailers	47%
Landscape lighting	35.5%
Irrigation systems & products	46%
Herbicides	47.6%
Insecticides	59.5%
Fungicides	39%

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By Heather Taylor

A tale of two businesses

Whether they've seen ups or downs in the past year, two full-service lawn care companies are working toward a similar goal.



A snapshot of two lawn care and landscape companies over the past year conjures thoughts of the opening of Charles Dickens' classic, "A Tale of Two Cities" — "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..."

That might be a bit drastic, but the fact is that the economy, weather and other factors are causing some contractors to suffer drops in one or more business segments this year. Still, others have enjoyed upticks in certain segments and are scrambling to bring in the appropriate help to manage the growth.

These two relatively new companies — each led by an industry veteran — differ when it comes to the level of success in certain areas of their businesses in the past year. They have at least one thing in common, though: a desire to fine-tune business practices to ensure that situations beyond their control don't batter their bottom lines.

Selective growth

Curtis Depner has worked in the Green Industry for more than two decades, but it's the business aspect that has provided the biggest learning curve as he went out on his own.

"There are always things I'm learning," says

Depner, owner of Richmond, IL-based Landscape Services and Management. "Even to this day, after two years in business, there are new things I'm encountering — from managing the office to the field personnel and account managers. All ends of the business."

Landscape Services and Management employs 20 in the peak season and brings in about \$1 million per year in sales. Depner has seen revenues increase in all his service offerings over the past year.

Depner says the jump is partially due to his company's marketing strategy, which includes newsletters that are sent to clients every two months, small postcards that update clients at the beginning of each season, and letters introducing new hires. He and the account managers also put in plenty of face time with clients and prospects. This includes meetings with property managers at commercial properties.

In addition, Depner focuses on creating good word-of-mouth marketing by striving for good customer service.

"It's definitely an aggressive field; there's a lot of competition out there," he says. "Service is key — we're making sure we're visible and communicating with our customers."

He learned from the downfall of his last employer that maintaining an even business mix can be essential to survival. His customers are 50% commercial, 25% retail/commercial and 25% residential.

“I learned not to have all my eggs in one basket,” he says, adding that he wants to have other sources of income lined up when, for example, commercial customers may scale back on services because they’re trying to lower costs.

“Right now I’m seeing the residential end spend more in extras, such as additional planting, hardscape, retaining walls, mulch and flowers,” Depner says. “The commercial customers had to dig into their budget from the landscaping end to pay for snow plowing.”

Many homeowners are looking to add value to their properties, he added, acknowledging that business still isn’t what he believes it would have been if he were in business a few years ago.

He also tries to ensure business is steady by insisting on cross-selling maintenance and snow contracts, and he’s not opposed to turning down contracts if he doesn’t think that’s possible.

“When I look at contracts, I’m very selective,”

he says. “On any maintenance contracts, I look at opportunities to get the snow removal contract as well. I don’t like to just take one or the other. I also like to lock in the customer for a 12-month program.”

Depner also strategizes to make sure the company doesn’t bite off more than it can chew in other areas as well.

“I watch our overhead make sure we’re not too large,” he says.

He has rationalized a couple new hires — industry veterans — in recent months because of increased demand. He says the new employees’ experiences, reputations and contacts should help the business continue the healthy growth.

“I know it’s an investment that will pay off in time,” he says.

Contending with Mother Nature

Lawton, in southwest Oklahoma, is a military town, so a good chunk of Brian Honeyager’s business could dry up when soldiers are reassigned. Still, Honeyager, owner of All American Landscaping and Lawn Maintenance, has found a way to increase his lawn care business 100% from last year to this

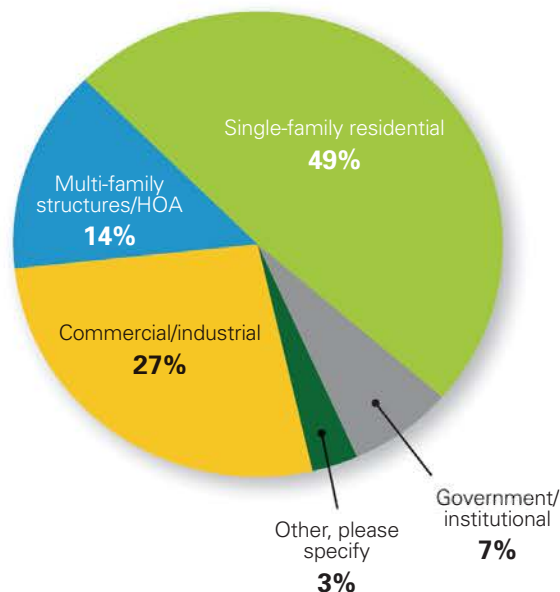
FINDING OPPORTUNITY

Contractors rank the most advantageous revenue opportunities.

1. Residential design/build/installation renovation
2. **Commercial maintenance/mowing**
- T-3. Residential maintenance/mowing
Snow and ice management
5. **Chemical lawn care services**
6. Commercial design/build/install renovation
- T-7. **Irrigation/water management**
Green/sustainability services
- T-9. Water features/pond installation and maintenance
Landscape lighting

HOME IS WHERE THE MONEY IS

In which ONE customer segment do you see the best opportunities for growth for your company in 2012?



SOURCE: LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT



year. His business is only a couple of years old, but like Depner, Honeyager has more than two decades of experience in the Green Industry.

He's also had uncontrollable circumstances to deal with in 2011 — the region has had about five inches of rainfall so far this year — extremely short of the annual average of about 30 inches. Drought-like conditions have persisted.

People don't want to replace their dead shrubs or plant new ones because they know it'll be a lost cause unless they can devote a lot of effort to watering. Honeyager doesn't try to persuade them otherwise, because he knows they will be disappointed with the results if they can't manage to keep up with the watering.

A more drought-tolerant, low-maintenance option hasn't sold well either.

"Customers are interested in the Southwest look, like you see in Arizona and New Mexico, until they realize the cost of getting sand or gravel and the different plant varieties in there," Honeyager says.

All of this leaves him with a 75% decrease in his design/build business compared to last year.

All American has been compensating with increases in other areas of the business. Honeyager had 70 lawn maintenance accounts in 2010 and lost 20 at the end of the season, mostly due to military relocations. This season, he's up to 110 accounts, and his weed spraying service is selling well.

Honeyager has also been focusing his efforts

on educating his clients about these other areas of business and learning what they want. He mailed a survey of about 30 questions to his clients to get feedback on the company's service and quality of work.

He also reaches out to prospects with marketing materials in an effort to uncover new leads. Last year, two employees took 5,000 flyers door-to-door. He sent an additional 4,000 pieces out this year and plans to increase his reach again next year.

Honeyager calculated that it takes 50 labor hours to distribute 5,000 flyers. It costs about \$200, as opposed to \$1,500 to \$3,000 for the same amount to send a mailer. The flyers produce about a 1% response rate.

To further spread the word, he created a Facebook page to keep clients and prospects informed about the business and share tips about good lawn and landscape maintenance practices.

Honeyager isn't too concerned about the near future. He expects his design/install business to come back in a big way next season — weather permitting — because of the postponed projects in the pipeline.

"I'm starting to pull out a lot of dead shrubs," he explains. "People are asking about replanting. I say wait until next year and see what (the weather) is going to do. I have a feeling my design/build business will be really good next year." **LM**

PULSE PROFILE

A TALE OF TWO COMPANIES: BY THE NUMBERS

LANDSCAPE SERVICES AND MANAGEMENT

Richmond, IL
Principal: Curtis Depner

Total revenue	30%
Irrigation	up 10%
Lawn Care	up 15%
Design/Build/Install	up 30%
Maintenance	up 30%



Curtis Depner

ALL AMERICAN LANDSCAPING AND LAWN MAINTENANCE

Lawton, OK
Principal: Brian Honeyager

Total revenue	110%
Lawn Care	up 100%
Design/Build/Install	down 75%
Maintenance	up 40%



Brian Honeyager

By **Beth Geraci**/Senior Editor

Making it work

Landscape companies are still feeling the pain from a poor economy, but it's not all gloom and doom.

It's no secret that the Green Industry is struggling from coast to coast. In an economy that presents challenges such as price undercutting, rising fuel and health care costs, and a customer base that is reluctant to spend, it's hard for many landscape companies to see a silver lining.

But even as they feel the dire impact of today's spiraling economy, landscape companies across the country are doing their utmost to carve a brighter future for themselves. We talked to some of them about the challenges they face today and their best hope for tomorrow.

In Winchester, VA, where Bruce Sheppard operates a Weed Man franchise, government restrictions are impeding his company's ability to grow as much as he'd like it to, he says. In some Virginia municipalities and others nationwide, landscapers are forbidden from going door to door and leaving fliers for free lawn care estimates, Sheppard says. "It just depends on how the sheriff wants to police it."

The bulk of Sheppard's business is residential, and having more leeway to knock on doors would fuel his growth.

Fuel costs rising

Speaking of fuel, Sheppard's fuel costs are up 25% this year, and the rise has hurt his bottom line. "We weren't expecting it to be that much," he says. "I budgeted for 10%." Now he has to figure out how to compensate for the difference.

"Gas prices went up so quickly, we weren't

covering them in our proposals," says Jeff Swano of Dig Right In Landscaping, Brookfield, IL. "We raised our prices as a result. We literally had to double our prices."

Mark Lawrence, president of Simply Yards Landscape and Design, Anacortes, WA, spends \$4,000 a month on fuel. "Fuel prices just cut your profits down," he says. "It's done that substantially."

But fuel prices are just one player in the industry's economic meltdown, he says. "You can't just pin it on one thing. That's the hard part," he says. "It's everything that keeps adding up. It's just a snowball effect."

Lack of financing, lowball competition limiting cash flow

Fewer handouts from banks contribute to that snowball effect as well. Swano's certainly not counting on any loans this year. "We know the banks are not lending," he says.

Lack of financing is hardly stimulating the economy, says Sheppard. "You have to figure out how to obtain financing to make things work. You can't go out and borrow money and not pay it back. That's why we're foreclosing on homes right now. The financial situation and housing situation just killed

**SIMPLY
YARDS
LANDSCAPE
AND DESIGN
SPENDS**

4

thousand dollars a month on fuel.



us, and it'll take us a while to get out of it."

"You go to the bank and ask them for money and they laugh at you," adds Simply Yards' Lawrence.

As if rising costs and lack of lending don't pose enough of a challenge, lowball bidders aren't doing landscapers any favors either. In fact, most landscapers who participated in our survey said price undercutting continues to be a major obstacle

for them this year.

"Inexperienced contractors are our biggest challenge these days," says Kevin Reynolds, president of Border Creations, Inc., Lutz, FL. "Customers are being misled, and it's translating into loss of sales for our company."

Lawrence has laid off eight workers — about 25% of his workforce — since 2009. "We're losing customers every day," he says. Lowball bidders, he adds, "go out and get a mower and blower and do work for free. They're offering work for 30% less or more than we are. And that's been brutal."

In fact, Lawrence, whose business is 60% residential, says has lost two customers in the last two days. "They say, 'We can't afford it anymore,'" he says. "In response, we've fine-toothed combed everything you could possibly go through — receptionist, gone. Every little thing from cell phones to rent to gas."

Lawrence says price undercutters have been a problem for the entire 30 years he has worked in the business, "but now they're getting gutsier."

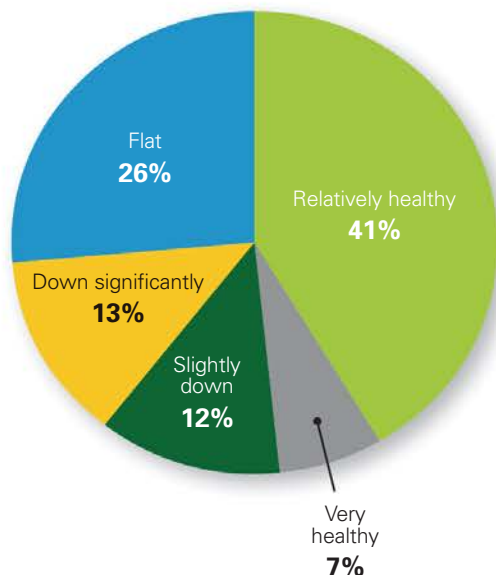
They're even getting gutsier out in Wyoming, says Aaron Rodolph, owner of Rodolph Brothers Inc., Casper, WY.

"Lowball bidders are out there, taking work off the table," Rodolph says. Price undercutting escalated in Casper in 2006, when Denver's housing bust drove Coloradoans to Wyoming in search of jobs, explains Rodolph, who works mostly in the residential market.

Workers immersed themselves in commercial

TODAY'S PULSE

Describe the state of the landscape and lawn care service market in your region.



DUE TO ROUNDING, TOTAL ADDS UP TO 99%

landscape projects, driving commercial landscapers already in the business to the residential market, creating competition for Rodolph.

Brighter future ahead

But overall, Rodolph's business continues to thrive in this economic downturn for two reasons: He diversifies, and Wyoming's economy has gone largely unscathed.

In 2010, after reading a business article, Rodolph Brothers hired a marketing firm to reach a wider audience, with the goal of doubling sales within two years.

"My whole thought process was, the owner has to be willing to throw everything he knows out the door in order to grow the business."

As the company moves into 2011-2012, Rodolph is optimistic about meeting his goal of doubling sales. From 2010 to 2011, sales were up 70%. And this year, Rodolph Brothers launched a lawn care arm, bought about \$250,000 in new equipment and hired eight people. "It's been a huge blessing," he says.

Swano's Brookfield, IL customers are investing more in hardscaping, an aspect of his business that has grown 12.5% in the last year. His maintenance business was up 50%, due in part to the fact that customers were attracted to organic yard care, which the company has been specializing in since 2008.

Swano's best opportunity for the coming year lies in residential design/build projects, he says. And fortunately for his organic-based business,

residents in the Chicago suburbs are growing more environmentally conscious.

"If I can get the education out that we provide those services, then we can make a connection," Swano says. "The brand is pretty strong right now, and we get a lot of word of mouth."

Dig Right In also is experiencing growth, by providing yard drainage solutions such as rain gardens, infiltration systems and piping. All the rain Illinois received in the last year helped create profits for the company's installation division.

In 2012, Swano aims to increase productivity, so when 2013 comes around the company will be in a better position to generate profits.

In 2008, Reynolds zeroed in on residential landscaping. The switch has given the company a big financial boost in the last year and a half, generating an additional \$250,000 in business. In 2012, Reynolds sees the most opportunity in his residential design/build business, especially patios, pools and decks.

In the coming year, Lawrence will continue to focus on diversifying, adding snow removal, gutters and windows to the mix and becoming more of a full service business.

"We'll do anything to try to make a dollar," he says. "But we've always done a certain level of work, and I'm not going to compromise."

Sheppard, too, sees greener pastures ahead. "The market is continuing to grow," he says, "and business will breed business." **LM**

BEYOND YOUR CONTROL

Factors that will have the biggest influence on growth this year

1. Rising fuel prices
2. **Prolonged recession**
3. Rising health care costs
- T-4. Rising Taxes**
- Lowball pricing competitors**
- T-6. Consumer confidence
- Continuing housing market challenges
8. **Immigration/H-2B issues**
9. Increasing legislation on pesticide use
10. **Increasing legislation on water use**
11. Increasing legislation on noise/emissions



CONTRACTORS' BIGGEST CONCERNS IN 2010

Contractors who ranked each of the following their biggest concerns for 2010

Prolonged recession	50%
High taxes	37%
Consumer confidence	21%
Properly and competitively pricing my services	14%
Lack of time to chase new opportunities	12%
Lack of staff to respond to business opportunities	12%
Accounts receivable	11%
Making payroll	10%
Accounts payable	8%

By Dan Jacobs/Editor-in-Chief

Recession proof?

It's all in the



While other companies are tightening their marketing spending, Clintar Landscape Management bucked the trend and is reaping the rewards of focusing on efficiency and vendor relations.

It's no surprise that companies that have survived this economic downturn are leaner and more efficient than they were just a few years ago. Business owners have found ways to do more with less and the result has been a jump in productivity (what that means for quality or the physical and mental health of the people left in your organization are separate issues). Cutting back on “discretionary” spending is almost always the first step consumers and business owners take when money is tight. But it might not be the best solution. There's an old line “it takes money to make money” and Clintar Landscape Management has taken that notion to heart.

The company continues to spend about 3% of its revenue for advertising promotion and education. That's not much different from previous years. Instead the company has taken a closer look at where its marketing money is spent. As a result the

company has redirected money to increase “sales” education (more about that below). The result was a 4.9% increase in revenue from 2010 over 2009 and a 15.9% increase this year over last.

With the most impactful recession of the millennium still holding strong, the landscaping industry is picking up the pieces and rebuilding. Clintar Landscape Management is doing that by investing in marketing. We had the opportunity to talk with Bob Wilton, president of the Toronto-based company, to learn how marketing allows Clintar to grow in the current economy.

4.9
% increase in
revenue from
2010 over 2009.

Q. Why is Clintar doing so well while other companies are struggling?

A. We are attributing Clintar's growth to a consistent, and ‘over the top’ marketing effort. Today, more than ever, there is an abundance of competition in every market we service. So what does that mean for us? It gives us great opportunity

to become the leader of the pack, or as we like to say 'getting out of the pile.' The Clintar brand has stood for consistency, honesty, and professionalism for almost 40 years, and we make sure our customers know that. We do what we say we're going to do, when we say we're going to do it and this is exactly what our success is accredited to.

Q. Can you describe your marketing efforts?

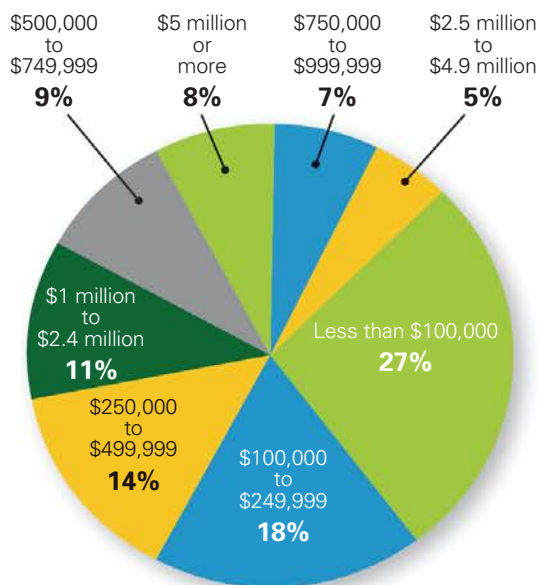
A. We're in the businesses of creating a crisp, professional and clean atmosphere for each of our customers on the outside; how could we sell the concept of perfection with a less than ideal looking crew, and sloppy machinery? Our crews and equipment alike are both famous for being the cleanest in the industry. Some statistics say that almost 50,000 people will see our trucks on the road on any given day, and we hear constantly that we are the cleanest on the road. What is your fleet saying about you?

Clintar has always been diligent when it comes to marketing. Our campaigns reflect our philosophy of services: consistent, professional, and reliable. Our intense direct mail campaign is a religion. Simply passing out a quarterly newsletter won't cut it either. We are sending out monthly postcards to each and every one of our customers to be on their desk as often as we can possibly be. These promote a different service to them just days before they started thinking about it themselves.

Q. It must take more than that?

A. Marketing is nothing without the follow up sales calls to back it. With each piece of direct mail we send our customers there are follow up phone calls. To make these sales calls more effective, each of our owners and their key staff are invited to a professional sales training seminar held by a professional sales coach periodically throughout the year. We have increased the frequency of this training in the last little while as a response to the recession, and the interest of our group (Which has embraced every minute of it). Our customer service is second-to-none in all our markets.

WHAT WAS YOUR TOTAL REVENUE FOR 2010?



DUE TO ROUNDING, TOTAL ADDS UP TO 99%

Q. How do you ensure your message reaches the right audience?

A. Without your customers, you have nothing to sell, and with nothing to sell you don't have a business. Understand each of your customers on an individual basis. In our 40 years in operation we have never come across two contact people who are exactly alike. Find out what is important to them, and deliver it on a consistent basis. What are you providing to them that no one else is? Find this out, and make sure they know it. Use your differentiation as a marketing tool, and push it every opportunity you can. Bragging about your strengths

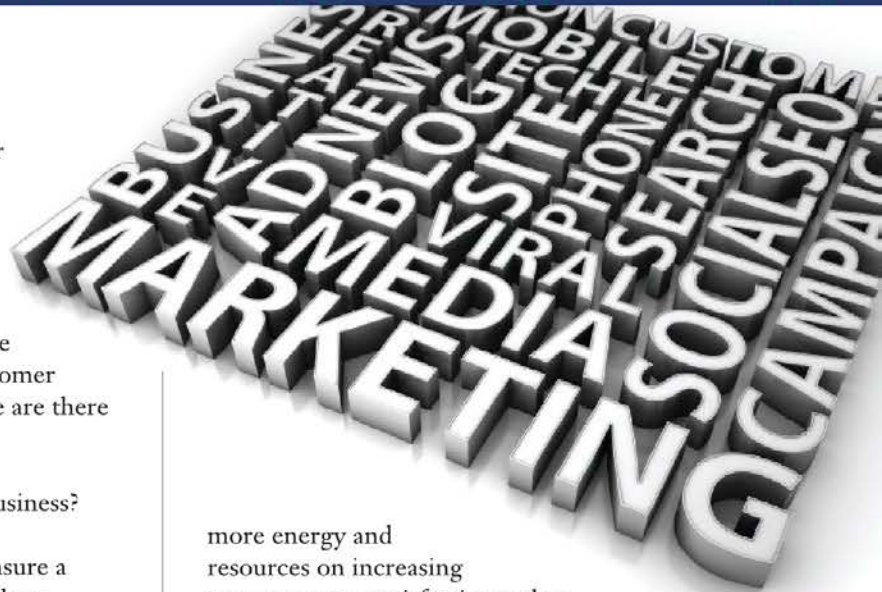




is what is going to separate you from your competition. Clintar has adopted a 24-hour live phone answering policy. This means that our customers can call at any hour, and they will be able to talk to a live person. This is invaluable when it comes to any client that needs to be able to talk to someone immediately. Our customer is our boss, and we need to ensure that we are there whenever they need us.

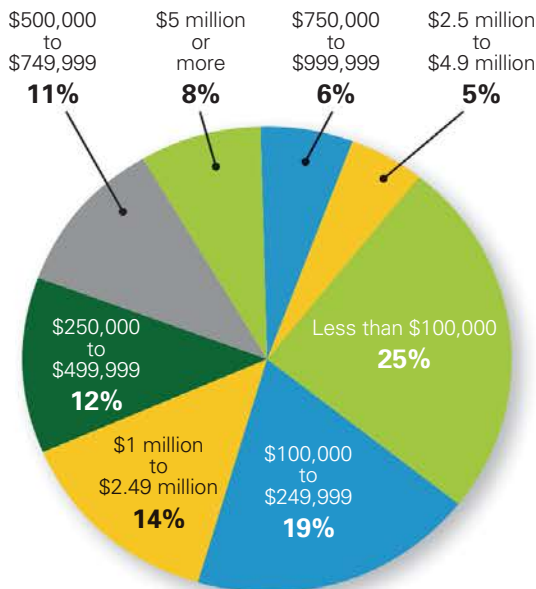
Q. What effect does this have on your business?

A. Customer service is the best way to ensure a positive cash flow, and losing touch with them can provide a negative effect. We have conducted formal survey systems to ask our customers simply how we are doing. The result: Issues are uncovered and resolved leading into more business. The net effect of these surveys allowed us to dig deeper into our services and find out exactly how our customer perceived us and in a few cases, resulted in extra work just for asking. If you could focus



more energy and resources on increasing your customer satisfaction rather than cold calling, you will be surprised on how much your business will grow financially and sustainably. Maintaining consistent service is one of the most predominant challenges any franchised organization must face, but with a successful program, we can use these services as their own marketing force. If our customers know that their property in Toronto is being maintained exactly to the quality they see at their condo in New Jersey, then they know that no matter where they go in North America, a local Clintar Landscape Management is going to be providing exactly the same quality. **LM**

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT YOUR TOTAL REVENUE FOR 2011 WILL BE?



WE ARE SPENDING ABOUT

3%

of our revenue for Advertising, Promotion & Education.

LAST YEAR (2010) OUR REVENUE INCREASED

4.9%

over 2009, and this year we are up 15% over 2010.

Compared to prior years, we have looked more closely at where our marketing dollars have been spent, and as a result have re-directed monies to increase "Sales" education rather than increasing the % of total revenue spent.



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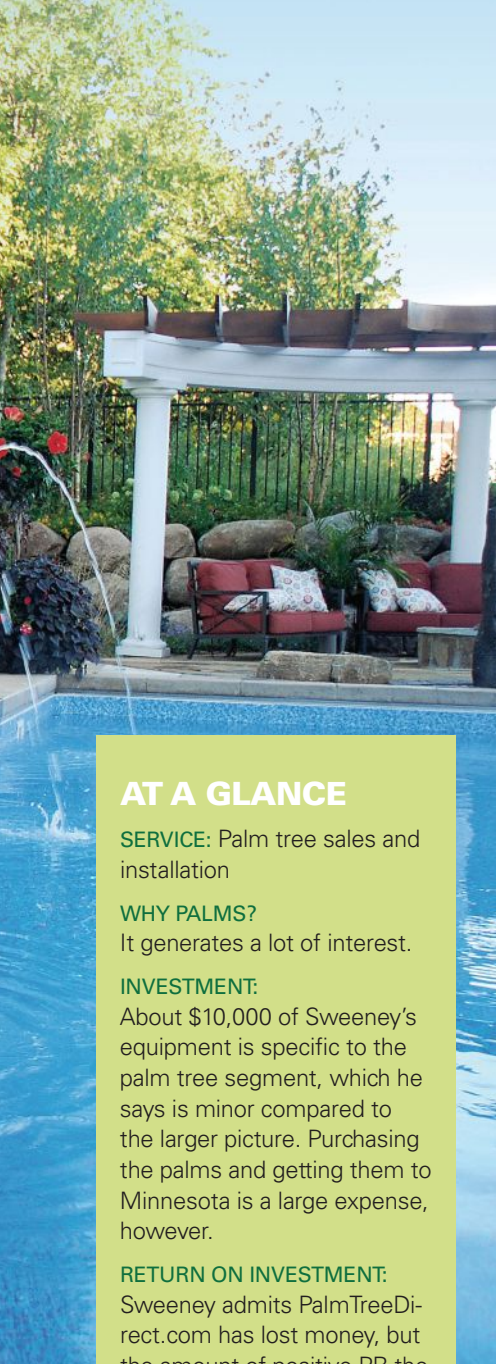
One hat does it all. **Visit us in booth 1116 at GIE.**



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AT A GLANCE

SERVICE: Palm tree sales and installation

WHY PALMS?

It generates a lot of interest.

INVESTMENT:

About \$10,000 of Sweeney's equipment is specific to the palm tree segment, which he says is minor compared to the larger picture. Purchasing the palms and getting them to Minnesota is a large expense, however.

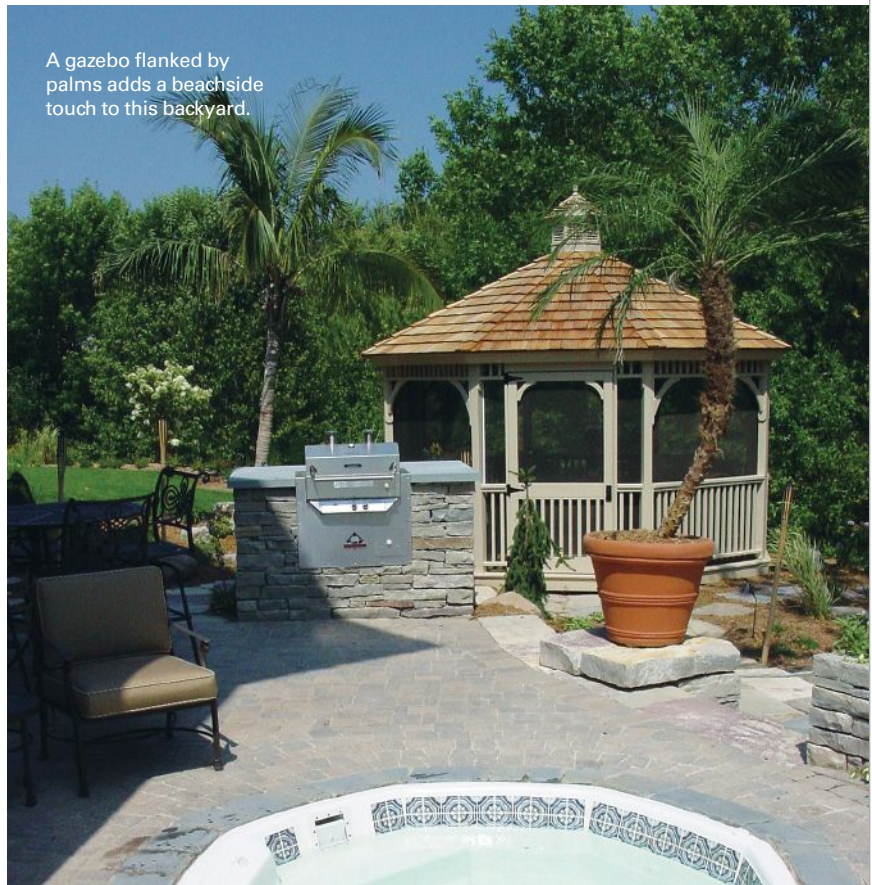
RETURN ON INVESTMENT:

Sweeney admits PalmTreeDirect.com has lost money, but the amount of positive PR the service has generated, combined with business it's driven to his primary company, far outweighs the expense.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

Transporting and handling the palms is never simple, and the season is really short. "We decided that we wanted them big for the true wow factor," he says. "The majority of them are in the 15- to 25-ft. range. The logistics of handling that kind of tree aren't simple."

A gazebo flanked by palms adds a beachside touch to this backyard.



continued from page 48

that, it has been able to stand alone and be specific to its target market."

Initially, Sweeney pursued a rental market by trying to rent out the palm trees for events. But he soon realized that there were opportunities for repeat customers from his landscape clientele.

"It turned out that people who would get a palm tree put in their backyard wanted to do it on a regular basis," Sweeney says. "We bring the trees out around Mother's Day, and normally come out to cut them down sometime in November."

Adding the palm tree service didn't require any major investment. The same staff and equipment used to do everyday landscaping could also handle the palm tree installations.

"We have very little palm tree-specific equipment," he says.

Getting the palms into Minnesota is costly, however, and Sweeney admits that there's no big money to be made

with a palm tree segment. In fact, he admits he's lost money providing that service.

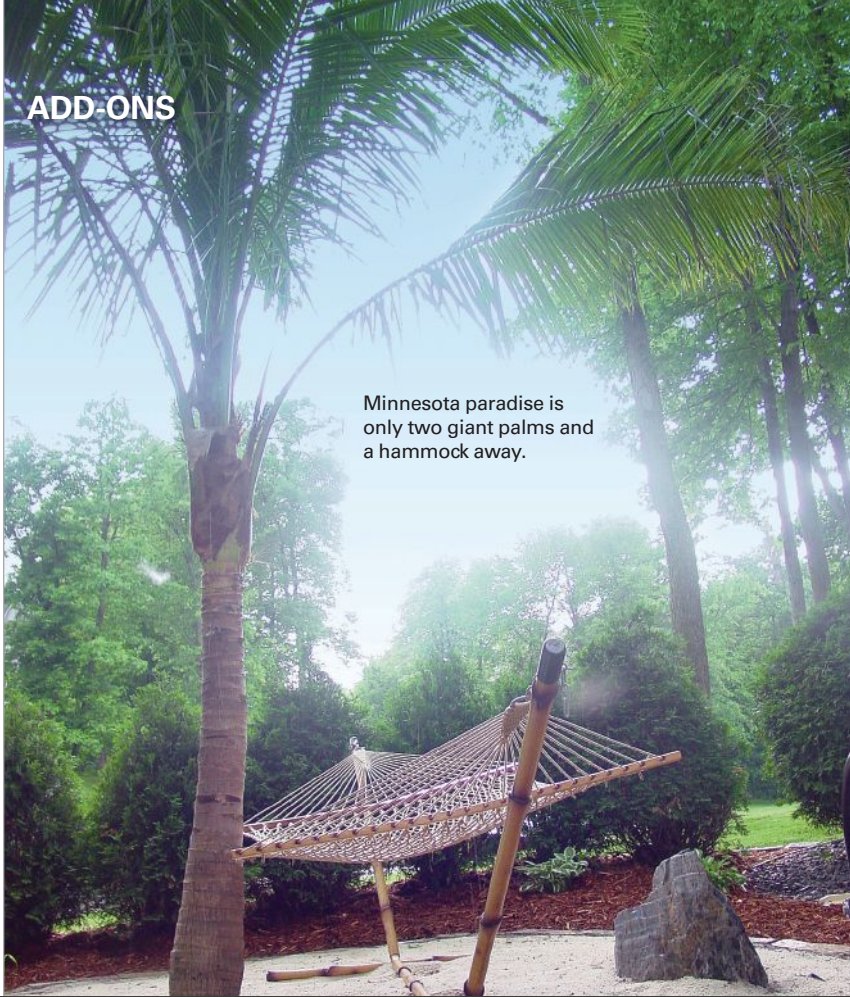
So why does he continue to offer it? Sweeney says it brings value in other ways. For one, he says he personally enjoys working with palm trees. But more importantly, it keeps some of his top customers happy. Plus, Sweeney says, this service has brought his company extra exposure.

"The palm tree business creates a lot of interest, which makes it valuable enough to continue doing it," he says. "The great PR it's gotten us has been well worth the cost. People are really interested in it."

In fact, that interest has generated business even through customers who didn't end up customers of PalmTreeDirect.com.

"A unique thing that's happened is that people see our ad about palm trees and call us up because the palm trees got their attention," says Sweeney.

ADD-ONS



Minnesota paradise is only two giant palms and a hammock away.

“While we come out to do a consultation and talk about the space the family wants to create, a lot of those people don’t actually end up going with a palm tree. But marketing the palm tree service to people has been valuable in showing them we’re creative and we think outside of the box — even if they don’t go with a palm tree.”

Sweeney says that in the end, it boils down to creating a space that’s interesting. By offering a palm tree service, his clients know he can add some original flavor to their landscape.

“Almost every single person can connect the image of a palm tree to this relaxing and wonderful oasis feeling,” he adds. “The sunlight coming through the palms and the movement of the palm fronds is so fantastic — it’s something that everyone enjoys.” **LM**

Payton is a writer with six years of experience covering landscaping.

PHOTO COURTESY: MOM'S LANDSCAPING & DESIGN

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The advertisement features a blue and white color scheme. On the left, a white fiberglass sprayer tank is shown with a pump and nozzle assembly. A small dog is sitting next to it. Below this, a truck is shown driving on a snowy road, with the sprayer tank mounted on the back. On the right, a white truck is shown parked on a green lawn, with the sprayer tank and pump assembly mounted on the back. The Reddick Equipment Company logo is prominently displayed at the top and bottom.

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THE BENCHMARK

KEVIN KEHOE

The author, owner-manager of 3PG Consulting, is a 25-year industry veteran. Reach him at kkehoe@questex.com.

Build a sales machine, Part II

I spend a great deal of time these days working with salespeople. This is as it should be, since the great challenge we face is increasing revenues in a declining market. This is no easy task.

In my last column, I talked about five elements of a sales machine: plan, price, person, methods and message. I focused on message. This month, I want to briefly focus on person.

It seems obvious, but do you have the right person in that position? Of course, producing sales can confirm this. But in the absence of results, are there characteristics you can look for? Based on my observations and research, successful salespeople possess the following characteristics:

1. They are persistent. They face obstacles that get in their way. They look for new solutions. They are tenacious. If your salespeople are rationalizing or providing excuses regularly, you may have the wrong people.

2. They are goal setters. They visualize their target, determine how they will achieve their goal, and take action on a *daily* basis. If your salespeople cannot communicate to you a weekly plan outlining number of leads, proposals, meetings and closes they plan to make, you may have the wrong people.

3. They ask quality questions. The best salesperson asks questions to determine the prospect's buying needs. They know that the most effective way to present their product is to uncover their customer's goals and concerns. If you are going on sales calls and not observing this behavior, you may have the wrong people.

4. They listen. Average salespeople will ask a question, then give the customer the answer, instead of waiting for their response. Great salespeople know that customers will tell them everything they need to know, if given the right opportunity. They ask questions, taking notes and summarizing the customers' comments. Again, if you are going on sales calls and not observing this behavior, you may have the wrong people.

5. They are passionate. They love the company and the product. You are not doing yourself or your customers any favors by representing something you can't get excited about. If your salespeople aren't excited about selling your product, you may have the wrong people.

6. They are enthusiastic. They are always in a positive mood and their enthusiasm is contagious. If your salespeople are consistently negative, don't mistake this for "realism." You may have the wrong people.

7. They take responsibility for their results. They know that their actions alone will determine their results, and they do what is necessary. If they consistently blame external barriers, you may have the wrong people.

8. They work hard. Most people want to be successful, but they aren't prepared to work hard to achieve it. Sales superstars don't wait for business to come to them; they go after it. They usually start earlier and stay later than everyone else. If your salespeople aren't putting in the hours (60-plus weekly) in this economy, you may have the wrong people.

9. They keep in touch with their clients. They send thank-you cards, make phone calls and schedule regular "keep in touch" meetings. They send articles of value to their customers and send an email newsletter. They look for new and creative ways to keep their name in their customers' minds. If your salespeople don't follow-up well, you may have the wrong people.

10. They show value. Successful salespeople recognize that price is a factor in every sale, but it is seldom the reason someone chooses a supplier. They know that a well-informed buyer will usually base decisions on the value presented by the salesperson. They know how to create this value with each customer they encounter.

Think about the people you have selling for you. Do they pass this test?



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Tom Hougnon

“A strong leader is only as good as the people around him or her,” says **Tom Hougnon**, vice president of operations at Reliable Property Services. Hougnon shares with *LM* his thoughts on developing those employees, as well as what roles diversification, sustainability and shrinking margins play in today’s maintenance industry.

TOP TRENDS

› **Sustainability.** While the economy and the difficult commercial real estate market have tempered the environmental movement in the last few years, sustainability is still a major force in our industry. As an industry leader in our regional area, Reliable will stay at the forefront by providing environmentally sound practices and processes, developing and implementing plans for LEED-certified customers and constantly staying on top of the latest trends and developments in sustainable landscape management.

› **Technology and communication tools.** The advent of smart phones, pad technologies, and GPS tracking has greatly enhanced our ability to improve the customer experience and communication, both internally and externally. We are now able to track hours, sub-contractors and job costing through cell phones. We are experimenting with various pad technologies to develop greater efficiencies for the field staff.

We are able to communicate directly from the field to our customers, sending proposals and photos and resolving issues in real-time.

TOP OBSTACLES

› **Shrinking margins.** The commercial real estate market and the overall economy have created a very difficult situation for our industry. We are dealing with vacancies and minimal new construction. Also, there is less money available for site upgrades and enhancements. Our industry must make every effort to maximize its skills and techniques to maintain realistic industry margins.

It is imperative that any work is done efficiently and within budget. Job costing is critical to understanding the true value of the work. Bad work is bad work. It is critical to know the margin of each job and what margin is needed to be a profitable company. If a maintenance job is unprofitable, it may have to be eliminated from the portfolio.

INSIDE INFO

Company: Reliable Property Services

Headquarters: St. Paul, MN, with branches in Crystal, MN; Des Moines, IA; and Milwaukee, WI. Reliable plans to open another branch in St. Cloud, MN this fall.

Employees: 400

2010 revenue: \$13 million

Key to being a maintenance leader: As a company, Reliable strives to empower our team to focus on the customer experience and the profitability of the company. That must be the goal of any strong maintenance company.

Our goal is to hire the most capable people and provide them with internal and external training. Consequently, we can shape our team into a strong, cohesive workforce. That makes Reliable a great place for employees to work and grow. A strong, motivated workforce provides the resources and quality a maintenance leader needs to succeed in today’s difficult economic environment.

TOP OPPORTUNITIES

› **Professionalization of the bidding process.** As I stated, the commercial real estate market and the overall economy have created a very difficult situation for our industry. However, they have created new opportunities for professional companies like Reliable to thrive and grow. Bids are being scrutinized by customers more than ever, and we are dealing with more professional procurement personnel and processes. In many cases, our main contacts are no longer the final decision makers; hopefully they are still asked to recommend their preferred vendor.

The typical customer is becoming more professional in analyzing bids and developing specific requests for proposals. Companies must be prepared to develop professional proposals that differentiate themselves from the competition.

› **Growth in new markets and new products.**

Reliable has developed tools, processes and techniques that provide us with the ability to set up in a new market and develop a new branch. There is a need for professional, quality companies in many areas of the country. Our internal software, processes, resources and strategies have enabled us to grow outside our original market of the Twin Cities in Minnesota.

While we are consistently growing in the Twin Cities, we are able to organically develop a market and put our business model in place in new markets. Reliable has been fortunate to be able to hire excellent leaders in our new markets who have provided the customer experience Reliable strives to replicate in all our locations.

Reliable was a snow removal-only company until 2008, when we introduced year-round outdoor maintenance. While snow removal still is 75% of our total revenue, we now provide landscape maintenance and design services; enhancements; installation; irrigation; and parking lot maintenance. By diversifying, we have been able to generate revenue in the summer months, provide more services to our customers and create additional employment opportunities for Reliable’s team members.

VISA INCENTIVE CARDS

Jim Campanella, owner of Lawn Dawg Inc., spent 27 years in the landscape business before striking out on his own in 1997. He started with one office in New Hampshire, and now serves 17,000 customers from seven locations in the Northeast.

“It’s going well,” he says. “We’ve been very fortunate. We’re surrounded by good people.”

The company uses non-traditional lawn care treatments. All their fertilizers are custom-blended with organic biosolids and synthetic fertilizers to help improve the quality of the lawns over the long term, rather than just feed the grass.

Lawn Dawg is also community-minded. They participate in GreenCare for Troops, which cares for the lawns of service men and women who are deployed overseas — free of charge.

Since the beginning of 2011, Campanella has been experimenting with a non-traditional marketing program.

Non-traditional marketing builds loyalty among customers and employees.

BY JANET AIRD

“We’ve always had a referral program for our customers and an internal recognition program for our long-term employees,” he explains. This year, he’s been rewarding some of his customers for referrals with customized, prepaid Visa incentive cards from Incentive CardLab instead of gift certificates. He’s also giving the Visa cards to employees to reward them for their years of service. Other companies use the cards to build customer loyalty and reward employees for their attendance, sales milestones or other accomplishments, according to Incentive CardLabs.

“We’ve probably given out a few hundred



cards to customers,” Campanella says. The cards for a referral were prepaid with \$50 in the early spring, and \$25 later in the season. Employees receive \$20 cards on their first anniversary and an additional \$20 every year they’re with the company.

Gift certificates for customers have always been redeemable for Lawn Dawg’s landscaping services. But recipients of the prepaid cards can use them to buy anything, anywhere Visa debit cards are accepted — in restaurants, in stores and online.

“This adds more value for the customers,” he says.

For the company, the main advantage of the cards is the marketing opportunity. Lawn Dawg’s colors and logo are on its Visa card, so they’re displayed whenever customers use it. For customers who don’t use their own design, Incentive CardLab has a selection of templates, and the company also custom-designs cards. The cards are available in denominations from \$5 to \$2,500, and arrive in a personalized envelope — another marketing opportunity.

Campanella orders them online, from a few to a few dozen at a time. They take a few weeks to arrive. The recipients activate them.

At \$5.95 plus the prepaid amount, each card costs a little more than a gift certificate, Campanella says, but the value of a referral is much greater. He’ll decide whether the program is a success when he compares the number of referrals the company received in the first six months of this year with the number it received in the first six months of 2010.

“If it’s the lowest cost per sale, it’s still the best value for us,” he says.

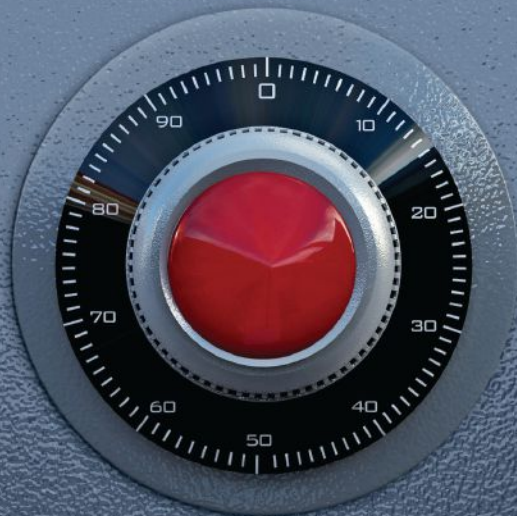
For more information about Incentive CardLab, visit IncentiveCardLab.com.

The author is based in Altadena, CA.

PHOTOS COURTESY: INCENTIVE CARDLAB



Incentives like these gift cards build customer loyalty and create referral opportunities.



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BUSINESS PLANNER 2012



CASE STUDIES FOR GROWTH

Beginning on page 125

RESOURCE PROFILES

Beginning on page 139

Whether your business thrives — or simply survives — over the next year depends on the business strategies you implement in 2012.



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RUNNING A BETTER BUSINESS IN 2012

With so much focus on the recession, business owners sometimes forget what they're working for.

BY **DAN JACOBS** EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I've been writing about business owners a long time. I never cease to be amazed at the ingenuity, resourcefulness and dedication they show when it comes to running their enterprises.

The challenges they face — from the small mundane daily issues to the large, seemingly intractable ones — make those of us content to sit behind a desk and write about it wonder why anybody would attempt to start and run a business. But run them you do, and most of you do it well.

Landscape Management has always touted itself as "the business book" for the Green Industry. Our objective has always been to help you run your businesses more efficiently and more profitably in hopes that you'd have more time to spend with your families and on the things you enjoy outside the office.

That's why we've spent so much time writing recently (and in this issue in particular) about the recession. For most of us, the economic worries have required us to put more focus on work and less on what we're working for.



For that reason (among many others) it might be hard to imagine, but in some ways this economic slowdown has been good for business. Before you start sending hate mail, let me explain. Yes, increased competition from low-bidders driving down prices, increased taxes and regulation, higher fuel costs, a lack of consumer confidence and cash flow worries (among many other factors) have made running your business more difficult. I get that. The publishing business, or for that matter any business, is dealing with a host of challenges.

Knowing that everyone else is going through the same thing isn't my point here. Misery might love company, but even the best company gets old after long. Instead, the point is this: If you've survived this prolonged recession, you are a better businessperson than you were when you went into it. Sure, it's been a trial by fire,

but I suspect your operations are leaner, more efficient and more profitable

(at least on a per project basis). And when the downturn eases, when the housing market rebounds and when customers reopen their wallets, the lessons you've learned — been forced to learn — will serve you better.

So, while you continue to work at what you do best, we'll continue to do

what we do best, which is tell your stories. Our goal is to help you do your jobs better by learning from those who are doing it well.

In this, our annual Business Planner issue, we talk with a number of contractors who've learned strategies to combat the issues bred in these weak economic times.

You'll hear from contractors on a variety of topics, which we've divided into four categories: Leadership, people, finances and social networking. Those areas are key to your continued growth no matter what state the economy is in.

Consider this our collectors' edition. The business planner (and for that matter the entire issue) is full of tips, tricks and strategies to not only help get you through this recession — no matter how long it lasts — but also to continue to grow in the midst of it.

And that, ultimately, will allow us to get back to what we're working for. **LM**



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THE JOURNEY STARTS BY TAKING THAT FIRST STEP

Even successful business owners sometimes need a little push in the right direction. BY **PHIL HARWOOD**

Mike called on a Monday afternoon. He told me he'd been putting off this call for months, hoping he'd be in a better financial situation before calling me. We talked for a while. Actually, it was mostly Mike talking and me listening.

He was frustrated, and he shared with me his concerns about the direction of his company. He felt like he had lost his sense of direction. He also had some things to say about his employees, the industry, and even his marriage.

As it turned out, the day before Mike called me, he'd had a conversation with his father, who told him to get some business advice from an experienced person. His father reminded him of a verse from Proverbs that says: "Listen to advice and accept instruction and in the end you will be wise" (19:20) and another that says: "The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice" (12:15). Mike knew this to be true, but needed his father's counsel to motivate him to action, to overcome his fear.

Many business owners and managers are held back by their fears. They fear that someone will find out that everything isn't perfect. They fear that others won't follow them as a leader if they don't

have all of the answers. They fear the unknown.

Mike was afraid, too. He was afraid of losing all that he had built over the past two decades. He was afraid of who he was becoming.

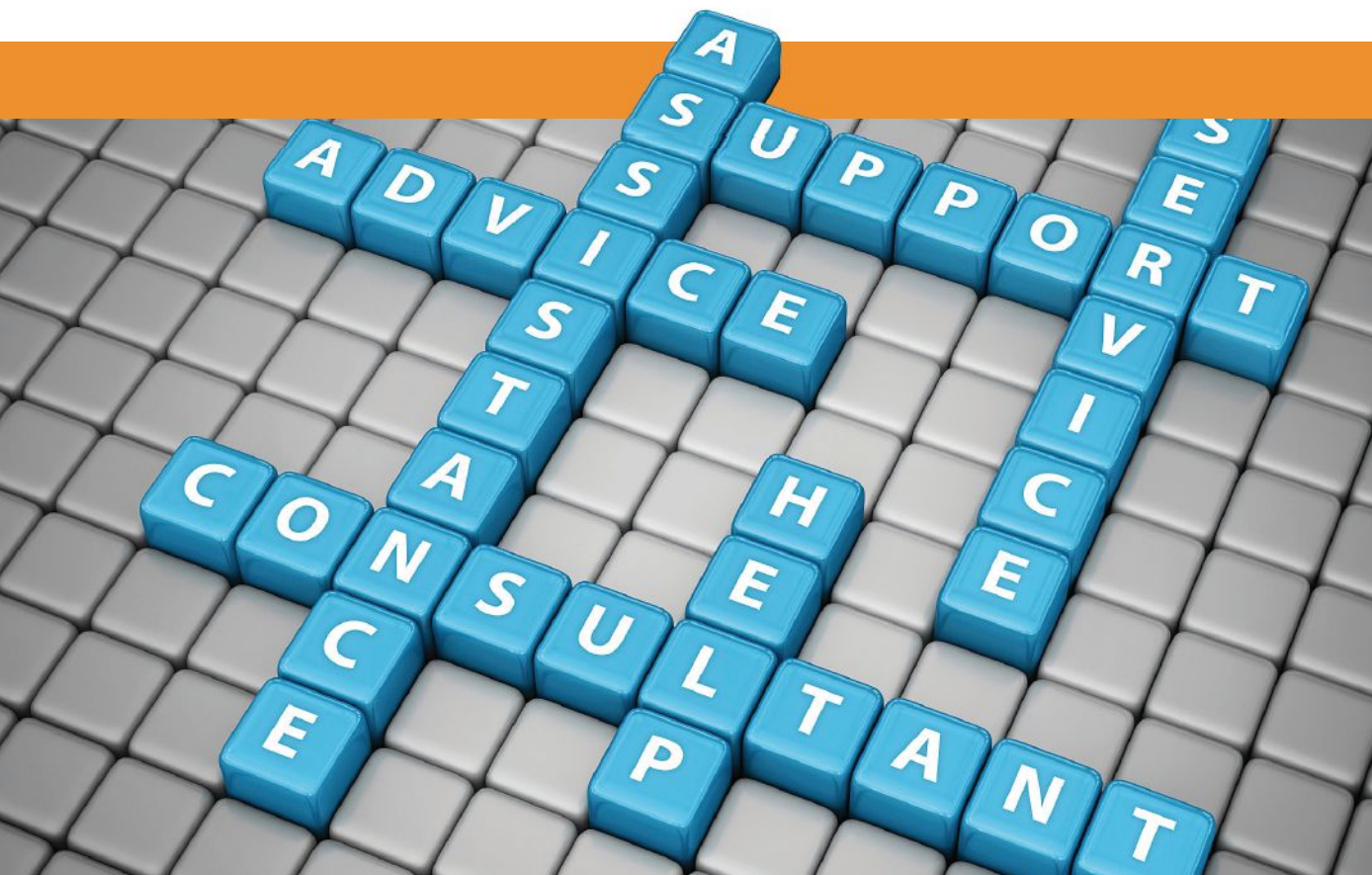
Mike needed help. He had been in business for more than 20 years and had been relatively successful. His landscape company had exceeded \$7 million in annual revenues. He was active in his community and was a well-respected business owner. He and his wife lived in a beautiful home on a golf course with their three children and their dog. To the outside world, Mike was the picture of success.

While Mike was an intelligent, driven and focused person for most of his career, he had lost his way as a leader. He was in a rut. Instead of being decisive, he was second-guessing himself. Instead of leading the charge, he was hiding. He felt out of control and didn't know what to do about it. So he called me.

TURNING THE TIDE

I began working with Mike and his leadership team, meeting on a regular basis, in-person and by email and phone. Over the course of the next few months, we identified a number of business problems and worked together to implement solutions to address these problems. Problems that had long been ignored were addressed head-on and fixed. A sense of teamwork and camaraderie had replaced complacency and self-interest. Employee satisfaction improved, followed by customer retention and increased profitability.

For Mike and his team, this was a life-changing experience. For me, and for my consulting team, this was just what we do. After all, the business



problems Mike was facing were not unique to him, even though I would have never been able to convince him that this was the case. In fact, Mike's problems were very common — textbook, even. The rest of this article discusses Mike's Top 2 business problems, and the solutions we implemented.

You may think this article is simple self-promotion. It is not. Rather, I'm attempting to make a case for seeking out objective, outside advisors. In order to do so, I'm giving you a "behind-the-scenes" look at my world so you may learn from this situation.

Before exposing these problems — and their solutions — I want to warn you that they don't involve the latest fads in business. Instead, they involve basic principles of managing a business. I know this sounds boring. However, in most industries, everyone is looking for the magic bullet. Everyone is chasing the latest gimmick. Nobody wants to discuss the basics, even though the fundamentals are what really matter. The color of the car is meaningless if all four tires are flat.

PROBLEM #1: ACCOUNTABILITY

Somewhere along the way, Mike stopped holding people accountable. It wasn't a conscious decision. However, three factors were working against him. First, it took a lot of effort to follow through and hold his people accountable. Second, he didn't

like to be held accountable himself, and he didn't want to appear hypocritical. Third, he was afraid of losing good people. He was a nice guy and didn't want to come down on his employees.

Mike knew that he had allowed this culture to exist, but he didn't know what to do about it. The reality was that he had actually lost some great people who were frustrated working in this environment. Of course, the mediocre people were more than content, making matters even worse. Once Mike realized this fact, he changed his tune.

Accountability starts at the top. With Mike on board, we implemented a number of tools, including the establishment of team goals and incentives. We built scorecards for each team to monitor results, and we began to document commitments made at team meetings. Once everyone knew what their goals and incentives were, things started to come together. Teams formed. Projects started moving. Sales results increased.

PROBLEM #2: ORGANIZATION

Like most of my clients, Mike's organizational house was not in order when we first met. Lines of reporting were murky at best; the general design was flawed to begin with, and it did not support the company's strategy.

It wasn't Mike's fault. He had a bachelor's of

science degree from a major university in agronomy, not a business degree. His lack of knowledge in this area was immediately evident.

Working through Mike's leadership team, we changed the design of his organizational structure, clarified 100% of the reporting relationships, and established teams at every level. Along the way, we had to make some personnel changes and clarify new roles. Not everyone survived unblemished.

LESSONS LEARNED

With this new organizational design and the clarification of roles in place, morale improved dramatically and productivity soared. Mike commented that he had not seen such energy since the earliest days of his company.

Accountability and good organizational design are two basic building blocks of a healthy company. There are many others equally important as these. Unfortunately, business owners are easily distracted. Focusing on "unexciting" things like accountability is not on the top of their list, even when it should be. This is why an outside advisor is so critical — to bring clarity to what's really important, and to help the company address these issues.

What about you? What are you going to do this year to improve your business? How are you going to step outside of your business and look at it objectively when you're in the trenches every day? I have two pieces of advice:

First, don't be afraid to open up to an outside advisor. Mike overcame his fear and picked up the phone that fateful Monday. This took both guts and a

financial commitment. His business — and his life — will never be the same.

I had the same experience as Mike. The health of my landscape business improved dramatically when we engaged an experienced business advisor. I'm a believer in getting advice from outsiders with an objective perspective. In fact, I have my own business coach.

Second, focus on the basics before chasing the latest fad. Business fundamentals haven't changed in hundreds of years. This requires knowledge, focus and determination. Do you have what it takes on your own? I know I don't. *LM*

Phil Harwood is the founder of Pro-Motion Consulting, a strategic management consulting firm with clients throughout North America. Phil may be reached at 248/756-8035 or at philharwood@pro-motionconsultingllc.com.

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How BOSS LM Software Helped Klausing Group Achieve Their Highest Profits Ever.

The Klausing Group

Located in Lexington, Kentucky, Klausing Group focuses on the commercial market by offering comprehensive ground management services. Roscoe Klausing, President, believes that every office park, property management or industrial client that hires Klausing entrusts that decision to a person who views their responsibility as getting the job done right. This is right in tune with the Klausing Group's promise: We make you and your property look great.

Looking For Solutions

About six years ago, the Klausing management team decided that to better serve their clients, Klausing would implement an enterprise business management software solution.

The Lessons Of Poor Software

"The software was just not user friendly and support was poor and expensive, which made us reluctant to use it," Roscoe said. Worse still, he couldn't trust the information he was relying on to make day-to-day decisions. Roscoe still laments loss of a \$350K account because the job costing information he relied on from his enterprise system led him to submit an unreasonably high renewal bid.

BOSS LM To The Rescue

Still believing in the hope of an enterprise tool, Roscoe found BOSS LM business management software from The Integra Group.

Up & Running Fast

With Klausing Group's enterprise experience, the transition to BOSS LM was swift and the system went live in less than two months. Klausing Group found the methodical fit-gap approach used by Integra Group very appealing.

The Powerful Fit-Gap Process

Roscoe commented that, "...the fit-gap process was extremely valuable because we were able to pinpoint specific operational procedures needing attention before implementing BOSS." The results are real time and the management team now uses information they can trust.

Employee & Other Advantages

The new user friendly system means every employee managing data vital to operational success enters that data themselves. Quarterly account-by-account audits use to take Klausing 1-2 days. With BOSS, data feeds seamlessly to the Accounting System and the CPA is done before lunch on the first day.

Spectacular Support

"...support from The Integra Group has been spectacular. I have no other supplier that has developed such a partnership-oriented relationship."

BOSS LM Produces Profits

A year after implementing BOSS LM, Roscoe says, "...our profits are the best they have ever been and I attribute much of that result to BOSS LM."

Favorite Feature Is In The Cloud

And, Roscoe wouldn't let you go without telling you what he sees as the single biggest BOSS LM feature—Web-based functionality. "I can access the system wherever I am through the web and still be in touch." Straight from his iPhone, Roscoe stays abreast of critical issues with a real-time view into the business. His BOSS system helps him achieve total control of his business.

Roscoe would ask, can your software do that?

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THE CATA LIST FOR TAKING EFFECTIVE ACTION

Powerful actions have the ability to initiate powerful results. BY **JOELLE JAY, PH.D.**

What distinguishes the mediocre leader with so-so results from the effective leader who makes a big impact every time? The answer is the ability to take effective action.

There's a big difference between taking action and taking *effective* action. Most leaders are fairly good at taking action. They make lists and check items off those lists everyday. To be truly effective, you've got to be more strategic about the items that go on that list. Instead of just putting down every small action that will move you to your vision step by step, you've got to choose one or two high-impact actions that launch you forward in leaps and bounds. This approach helps you turn motion to momentum.

To illustrate this, we can think of a concept from chemistry: the catalyst. In the sciences, a catalyst is a substance that increases the rate of a chemical reaction without being consumed in the process. For you, a catalyst is an action that dramatically increases the rate at which you

achieve your vision, without consuming you. The goal for leaders who want to be their most effective and get the best possible results is to look for the catalysts in their action plans – those powerful actions that have the ability to initiate powerful, even transformational results.

You can get the potency of a catalyst by using an action plan appropriately called the CATA List. The CATA List is a chart divided into four categories:

1. Catalysts
2. Achievements
3. Tasks
4. Avoidances

These categories help you sort interminable lists of “To-Dos” to find the ones that pack the biggest punch.

CATALYSTS

To find your catalysts, ask yourself, “What is the one thing you could do that would have the greatest impact on your vision?”

Any item you call a “catalyst” must be an action that drives all the rest, either because it causes the rest of the actions to happen; it frees you to put your time where you want it; or it unlocks a barrier to action. The main criterion for your catalyst is that you know this one piece will do more than any other to advance you in the direction of your vision. If you're writing a speech, a catalyst might be to stand up and practice. If you're leading a company, a catalyst might be to communicate the strategic direction. You can see how easily catalysts get crowded out by more pressing issues. Indeed, even though your catalysts have the most value, if you're not careful they can easily get pushed aside.

To find your catalysts, think about what action you would take if you could find uninterrupted quality time because you know it would make the biggest difference in your ability to attain your vision.



ACHIEVEMENTS

The next category includes actions you classify as important...really important. They may not have the transformational effect of your catalysts, but they are the kinds of achievements that matter on a day-to-day basis. These achievements typically take center stage in your life. They tend to be:

- › daily actions
- › key relationships
- › priority projects
- › deadlines

As a rule, working on achievements makes for a very productive day.

TASKS

You use the “tasks” category for the actions you’d like to take but can’t justify as truly critical. Yes, they are things that may have to get done, but they don’t have nearly the impact as your catalysts

and achievements.

Tasks are big time consumers such as long meetings, some networking, or obsessive perfecting of non-essential details. You might feel a little twinge when you admit these tasks are less-than-important, because you may want to do them. And you may get to. But only after the more valuable things are done.

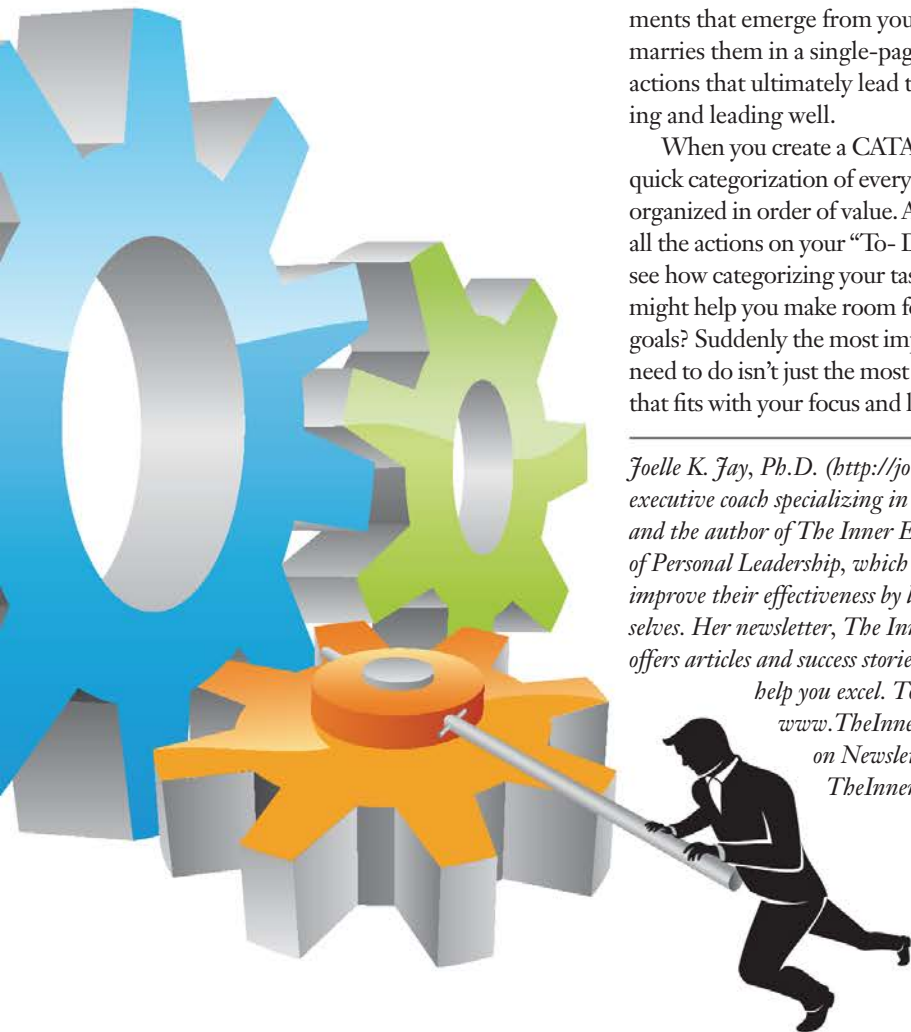
AVOIDANCES

The items in this category take more energy than they deserve. When you’re trying to rid your action plan of excess, cut the fat by forcing yourself to put at least 25 percent of your “To-Dos” onto this list. Look for actions that take a lot of time with little return. The “avoidances” list is a place to throw off extra baggage. Letting some actions go undone allows you to be more available for the things that really matter.

As a whole, the CATA List takes the commitments that emerge from your focus areas and marries them in a single-page, concrete list of actions that ultimately lead to your vision for living and leading well.

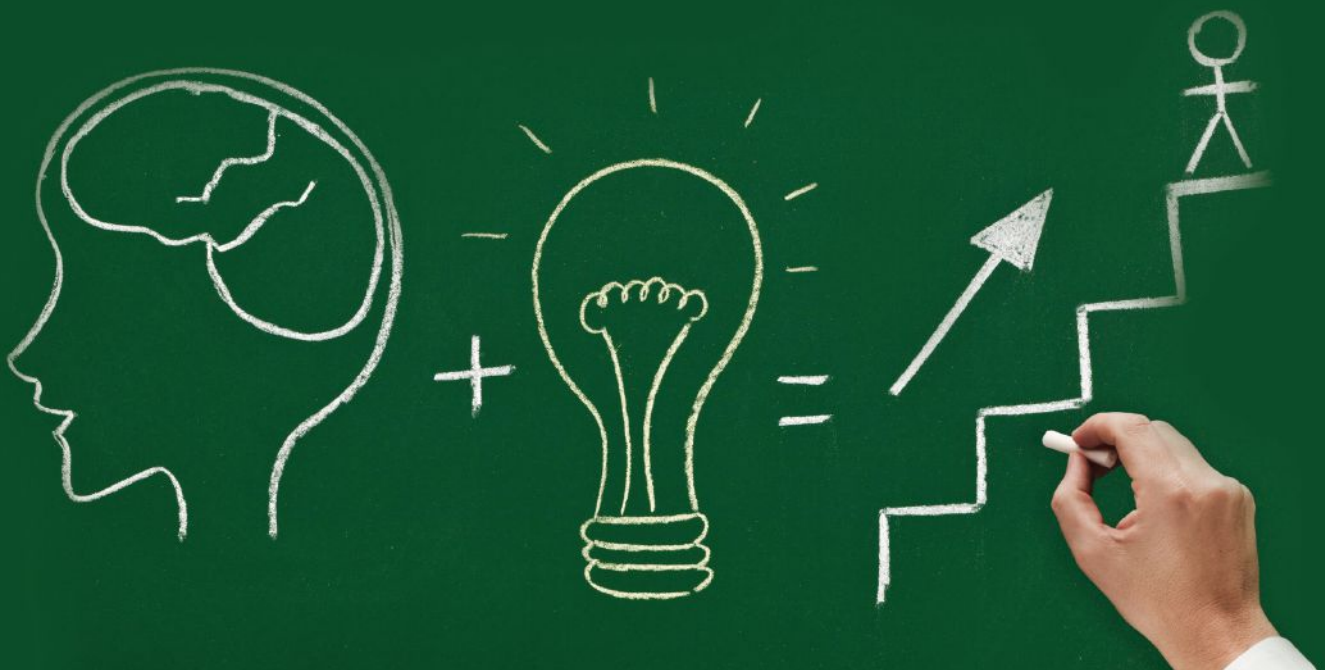
When you create a CATA List, you have a quick categorization of everything you need to do, organized in order of value. As you think about all the actions on your “To-Do” list now, can you see how categorizing your tasks in order of value might help you make room for working on your goals? Suddenly the most important thing you need to do isn’t just the most pressing; it’s the one that fits with your focus and leads to your vision. **LM**

*Joelle K. Jay, Ph.D. (<http://joellekjay.com/>) is an executive coach specializing in leadership development and the author of *The Inner Edge: The 10 Practices of Personal Leadership*, which shows leaders how to improve their effectiveness by learning to lead themselves. Her newsletter, *The Inner Edge Quarterly*, offers articles and success stories from real leaders to help you excel. To register, please visit www.TheInnerEdge.com and click on Newsletter, or email Info@TheInnerEdge.com.*





GIVE EMPLOYEES



How to develop employees to think, act and care as you do. BY JEFFREY SCOTT

Many companies today are leaving money on the table. Profits are falling through the cracks. Your employees are key to solving this issue. The question is: How do you motivate your employees to do their very best, and take the extra steps needed to increase profitability?

Fear doesn't work as a consistent motivator. A bit of it is actually helpful to keep you on your

toes, but extended periods of fear cause stress, burnout and lower peak performance.

The opposite of fear, entitlement, also doesn't work. Entitlement thinking is what has gotten our country into trouble.

But there is a viable third way: Encourage employees to think and act like an owner. Ownership thinking is a proven way to recruit, train, manage and incentivize your employees. (See sidebar, page 94.)

Remember, "Do as I say" only gets you so far. While it is critical to have operational systems and good equipment in place for an employee to succeed, all of your employees already own the most important piece of equipment needed for success: their brains. Your job is to engage employees, so that they engage their brains and bodies in the fight for profits.

OWNERSHIP THINKING

ARM THEM WITH KNOWLEDGE

Nathan Helder, a client of mine, and an owner of Gelderman Landscaping, bought his company a few years back from Hank Gelderman. Gelderman had built a highly successful, multimillion-dollar business by treating his employees well. He did not use fear, but he also did not share much information with them. There was a sense of pride, but also entitlement when it came time to hand out bonuses, for example.

Two things happened that prompted Helder to change the company culture. First, the economy got tight, and second, Helder decided to take his newly acquired business to the next level. He needed to increase productivity to do so.

Helder did many things to prepare for growth. One of his most important decisions was to hire a forward-thinking accountant (senior bookkeeper) who could partner with him in financially educating his staff. He then educated his leadership team on the company's profit and loss statements. He opened up the books.

Once his leadership team was educated and comfortable with the numbers, he started to involve his key foremen. In both his maintenance and construction divisions, he showed them how each crew contributed to the company's profitability, and what they could do to positively influence profitability.

All his key employees in the company now understand how they contribute as individuals and as a team. Subsequently, the company is performing better than ever, even through this recent recession.

But simply handing over more information is not enough. Because knowledge, without power, won't empower your employees.

DELEGATE AUTHORITY

Giving your employees this new knowledge will only take them so far. Without authority to make changes, their ability to have an impact on the business will be limited. From all my years consulting, and running my own landscape company, I have come to realize there is a triple benefit to delegation:

1 Customers get better service. Many years ago, when running my company, I decided to give my managers authority to fire any client they deemed appropriate. This had a big change in how they approached difficult customers. Once they understood how their departments made money, they tended to complain less and manage their customers better. For example, the year I instituted this, one of my managers fired only one customer — though he had originally wanted to fire four or five.

We also authorized the managers to make money decisions (up to a certain dollar level), and the foreman/account executives to make on-the-spot money decisions at another (lower) level. We did this to satisfy customers who had service or warranty issues. In the end, our staff was happier with this authority — and because our clients were getting better service, they were happier, too. We also avoided a “lag” in response time that would happen when upper management got sucked into discussions on small-dollar issues.

2 Owners and managers are freed up to focus on more strategic issues. This is the traditional reason that managers should delegate, so that they free up their time to work on things like key hires, setting up new systems, analyzing data, meeting with key clients, etc. The key to delegation is giving your employees a clear goal; then spend time getting the result clearly

understood between them and yourself.

Try the following technique, called *active listening*: Once you have discussed a responsibility you want to delegate, have the other person describe in his or her own words what the result looks like, and how success will be measured. Once you feel comfortable that the goals are clear, ask the other person to commit them to writing.

3 The staff feels empowered and their morale increases. As an owner, you enjoy having the freedom to make plans and make decisions. You enjoy the independence and the feeling of accomplishment. The concept of ownership thinking means that your key people will want this same freedom. This is the third benefit of delegation, when executed correctly. The key to success is to not micro-manage. A micro manager is a boss who does not have a clear, concrete vision of success, and thus keeps nagging the employee on “how to” get the job done. In this case, neither party is happy.

HIRE THE RIGHT PEOPLE

It is very challenging to find and keep good employees. I continually see landscape companies losing key employees to other industries. A client of mine once lost an educated landscape designer to UPS! Why? UPS offered good benefits, good pay, a stable company — and most importantly, UPS offers a clear career path.

We are no longer competing with other (better) Green Industry companies in our market; we are now competing with better companies, period.

Encouraging employees to think and act like an owner often pays off.



Achievement-minded employees of all generations want the following:

- › a clear career path with opportunity;
- › a set of systems they can follow, to ensure they do their job well and get promoted; and
- › to be included and made to feel part of the team, with regular interactions with the owners.

A good career ladder shows the employee what promotions and pay raises they can expect, based on the tasks and responsibilities they master, and the results they have to deliver. (For more information on career ladders, email me at Jeff@JeffreyScott.biz.)

I remember when my company hired one of its now-top employees. We showed this employee our career ladder, and he flipped through it, looked at the back pages (high up the ladder, where pay and responsibility were high) and he said “yes, this is the company for me.” He was willing to start at a lower level pay, because he saw and embraced the path to success.

REMOVE ‘PARENT-CHILD’ THINKING

Parent-child behavior is emotion-based. It’s not functional in a business environment. We all know it when we see it. For example:

A: “You should have your room tidy by now.”
(Parent to Child)

B: “Will you stop hassling me? I’ll do it eventually!” (Child to Parent).

There is no place for this kind of behavior at a professional company. All businesses need “adult-to-adult” conversations to grow and prosper without stress. The following is an example of where the parent-child emotion has been removed:

A: “Have you been able to write the report?”
(Adult to Adult)

B: “Yes, I’m about to email it to you.”
(Adult to Adult)

The problem is, even if one person (a boss, supervisor or owner) does a good job of communicating like an adult, the other person can respond like a child and pull the conversation back into a child-parent relationship. Therefore, it takes vigilance to keep parent-child behavior out of your company.

Adult-Adult relationships are agreement based: You say what you mean, you mean what you say, and you do what you promise.

(If you want to learn more about “parent-child” thinking, Google “Transactional Analysis” or go to Amazon for books on the subject.)

continued on page 94

An exploded view of a Kohler engine, showing various components like the cylinder head, crankshaft, and intake manifold. The engine is rendered in a dark blue color against a light blue background. The Kohler logo is visible on a black plastic cover in the top left.

TOMORROW ARRIVES

OCTOBER 27

At the 2011 GIE Expo, we're unleashing a new breed of engines that will define the future of landscaping. Among our game changers — the Command PRO® EFI, Command PRO EFI Flex Fuel/E85, Courage® XT and Tier 4 diesel engine.

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GIE EXPO
LOUISVILLE, KY
OCTOBER 27-29, 2011

KOHLER® ENGINES

continued from page 92

GAIN-SHARING MOTIVATES

Finally, when employees think and act like owners, they should be rewarded in a similar way as owners. Incentive plans or profit-sharing plans can be set up to allow employees at any level in the company to participate in the improved financial performance of the organization.

Here are three different kinds of gain-sharing.

1 Piecework. John Dominy, a client of mine, successfully installed this program in his company — though it did come with some ramifications.

The program is simple in concept: Pay your crews a percentage of the revenue, they produce. This works best when the crew is doing repeatable tasks, such as lawn care, lawn mowing, etc.

When Dominy first initiated the program, some of the crew members took to it like a bee to honey, but others did not want to work in such an environment, and quit.

Those who stayed ending up earning a double-digit raise through their increased productivity — and the company simultaneously lowered its costs and increased its revenue per truck.

2 Profit-sharing. The most profitable year I ever had when running my own landscape business was when I put my Top 3 managers on a profit-sharing plan. I told them we are all in this together, and if we can all perform at a high level, and support each other through the process, we will all share in the same profit-sharing bonus. The group became more accountable to each other for their results, but also for being team players — and for being an extra set of eyes for the other departments.

3 Over/under. Construction managers, foremen and crews can also be incentivized by sharing in the gains from their installation jobs. For a company doing relatively small jobs, you can keep score and pay out the incentives on a monthly basis. For companies doing larger jobs, you may want to keep score on a quarterly basis — or simply an annual basis. (Keep in mind, though, that the crews and foremen will probably react better with incentives that pay on a monthly basis.)

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

Start backward, and make a few key decisions.

- › Decide how you will do gain sharing within your company, then design your systems accordingly.

- › Involve your leadership team in your decision, and get their input. If they do not understand how the company makes money, then educate them how to read your profit-and-loss statement (at a minimum, this means direct costs and equipment and supervisory costs).

- › Decide the type of information they will need, to direct and influence their performance.

- › Decide the type of employee that will best work in this environment.

When making big changes like this, it is best to have an advisory board, peer group or mentor you can bounce your plans off before you implement them. The biggest mistake you can make is to begin implementation with half-baked ideas, then change your plans mid-course. Doing this will set you up for failure. Avoid failure by having a group of advisors you trust to bounce off your ideas and help you flesh out your basic plans. **L.M.**

Jeffrey Scott is a landscape-marketing consultant, business coach, and author who specializes in helping the Green Industry. Contact him at Jeff@JeffreyScott.biz or 203/943-3991.

ARE YOU TRACKING THE RIGHT INFORMATION?

Ownership thinking requires that everyone is on the same page in terms of key operational results, but it can backfire if the wrong operational data is being tracked. You need everyone pulling in the right direction.

› What data do your crew and managers need?

Time spent at the yard each morning and afternoon? Total non-chargeable time as a percent of hours paid? Budgeted vs. actual hours? Overtime hours?

› What data do the sales and marketing staff need?

Number of proposals given vs. budget? The win/bid ratio for proposals? Upsales as a percent of total maintenance?

› What information does the office need?

Paperwork turned in (or synced) on time? Billing data complete?

You will greatly empower your staff to think like an owner, when you get them on the same page in terms of key operational goals (measurements) to hit.

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LEAVE NO MAN BEHIND

The only survivor of the helicopter crash that inspired the movie “Black Hawk Down” explains that for a business to excel, all employees must be successful.

BY **DAN JACOBS** EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



The phrase “battle hardened” could have been invented for Michael Durant.

Durant was the lone survivor of the Battle of Mogadishu during which his helicopter crashed and he became a prisoner of Somalis. His story was retold in the 2001 movie “Black Hawk Down”.

Durant was in Somalia during October 1993 as part of Operation Restore Hope, a United Nations effort to restore order to a country ravaged by civil war and famine.

While on a mission in Mogadishu, a helicopter went down, killing the two pilots but sparing the five men in the back of the vehicle. Durant piloted one of the Black Hawk helicopters that responded to the crash. Unfortunately, Durant says, there was no good solution to address that type of problem.

“The commander is forced to do the wrong thing,” Durant says. “He sends another helicopter in.”

Durant and his team were flying in the area while a third hovering helicopter

put on the ground. That helicopter is hit by rocket-propelled grenade, and though damaged it is able to finish delivering its crew and head back to base.

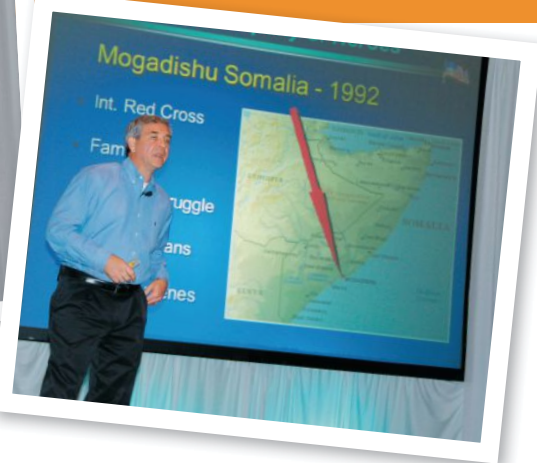
“The commander wants me to orbit the target, fly around it so that I can use our mini-guns, the guns on the side of the aircraft to support the troops on the ground,” Durant says. “We made it around about three times.” At that point Durant’s MH-60L Black Hawk helicopter, dubbed Super Six Four, is hit by its own rocket-propelled grenade and goes down.

“We came down so fast, spinning so violently I couldn’t see anything,” Durant recalls. “I could see brown earth, blue sky, the horizon line. I was doing everything I could to keep the thing upright. We impacted on the wheels. That’s the only reason I’m still with you here, today.”

“We hit so hard that my right femur breaks off on the edge of the seat and my spine is crushed — not the disks — the bones actually crash into each other, and one of them crush 30%.”

Remarkably every one of the crewmembers of his helicopter survived the crash.

“However, we are in a very desperate situation,” Durant recalls. “We’re



Durant addressed an audience of RISE (Responsible Industry for Sound Environment) attendees in September in Sarasota, Florida.

eye socket. They throw dirt in my face, wrap a rag around my head, pick me up and start carrying me through the streets and take me into captivity.”

Durant was released after 11 days of captivity, but not before he was subsequently shot and forced to make a video confession, both of which are against all International protocols for treating prisoners of war.

Durant retold his story at last month’s RISE (Responsible Industry for Sound Environment) annual conference at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Sarasota, FL. It was a long way from his time as a prisoner of rebels in Mogadishu, Somalia.

injured badly, we’re isolated and we’re surrounded. It’s a matter of minutes before we’re overrun.”

Two Delta Force snipers riding in a helicopter circling overhead saw that Durant and possibly the others were alive and radioed operations headquarters asking permission to “go in.”

Durant explains operations initial reaction.

“Back at operations, they look at the situation and they basically reach the conclusion that this is not a survivable situation. We’re not going to allow them in.”

The soldiers repeat the request to go in to attempt a rescue and are again denied. As the two men see Somali forces closing in on the downed helicopter and their comrades, they make a third appeal, and the commander back at the operations center finally gives them permission. They’re dropped off and make their way alongside the helicopter.

“The first time I see them, they’re standing next to me at the crash site,” Durant says. “I think it’s over. There’s a reaction force that’s here, they’re going to load us up on vehicles, get us home, patch us up and we’ll be flying again in a few months. What I didn’t realize was there was only two of them.

“It took the Somalis about 15 minutes to overrun the site, even with the (two Delta Force soldiers, Durant and the surviving crew members) “doing what we could to hold them off.”

The brief battle continues until the Americans run out of ammunition. At that point only Durant is still alive. And the Somalis take over the site.

“I was absolutely convinced I was going to die,” Durant says. “I essentially played possum. Whatever they wanted to do, I let them do. They tried to rip my gear off; they were pulling my boots off. As some point the femur goes outside the back of my leg. They break my cheekbone, my nose, my

LESSONS LEARNED

Durant’s story isn’t just riveting (to watch a video of him telling the story go to: www.landscapemanagement.net/durant). The story is also illustrative of what can go wrong when leadership fails.

“There is only one item I would say is not an A-plus on this mission: strategic resources,” Durant says. “And just that one item causes this thing to unravel.”

The commanders on the ground in Somalia had requested tanks to support the various missions, but had been denied by those focusing more on budgets than battles. They simply were not as familiar with the operation.

“So, when you think about leadership and you think about responsibility, you think about teamwork and you think about the people behind the scenes — the ones who don’t have the glamour jobs, it has to include all of that. Everybody has to be successful for the overall organization to be successful. Everybody’s got to pull his weight. If decisions are made incorrectly at any point within the organization, yeah, you might get by for a while, but sooner or later, you will fail. Hopefully the results won’t be on the scale they were in Somalia.” **LM**

DURANT’S “KEYS TO MISSION SUCCESS”

1. **LEADERSHIP**
2. **RESOURCES**
 - Personal
 - Organizational
 - Strategic
3. **TACTICS**
 - Military
 - Political
4. **TRAINING**
 - Flight
 - Physical
 - Soldier
 - Cultural
5. **PLANNING**
 - Detailed planning at all levels
 - Continuous reassessment



MOST VALUABLE ASSETS

Despite the economy, landscape companies aren't taking their employees for granted. BY **BETH GERACI** SENIOR EDITOR

With landscape companies struggling in recent years, some workers have lost their jobs. But that doesn't mean Green Industry business owners don't value their employees.

They do. In fact, some executives fight just as hard to keep them as they do to recruit them.

The Mickman Brothers landscape division is having a record year, says Mickman Brothers Inc. President and Chief Executive Officer John Mickman. He attributes that success to the fact that the company has garnered many high-end residential projects in 2011, often to the tune of \$40,000. The largest landscape job Mickman workers completed this year was a \$300,000 residential job.

Large-scale jobs like those — as well as smaller jobs — require a dedicated, knowledgeable staff and crew, Mickman says. But motivating and nurturing employees takes work. That's why Mickman Brothers goes to great lengths to train its employees intensively, promote them from within and reward them for jobs well done.

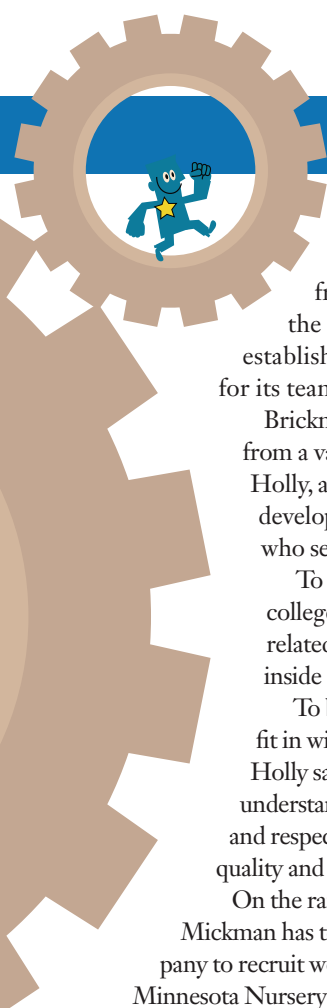
This year, Ham Lake, MN-based Mickman Brothers hired three foremen from outside the company, a rarity. "We always hesitate to hire from the outside for that type of position, but we've been so busy we didn't have anybody to move up through those ranks," Mickman says.

"I try not to hire outside foremen, because I don't know where their training is coming from," Mickman says. At his company, foremen are trained for at least two years. If they are hired from outside the company, he requires them to have five years of experience.

Over at Gaithersburg, MD-based Brickman Group, company managers work hard to promote from within. "Promoting from within is a cornerstone of our employment strategy," says Brickman Communications Manager Margie Holly.

Brickman is home to 10,590 employees, 8,055 of which are hourly and 2,535 of which are full-time staff. The company has a formal process to enable employees to take advantage of advancement opportunities, Holly says.

"The team member and manager together identify the employee's goals for professional growth, and what training they need to prepare for advancement," she says. The company offers training in both operational techniques and standard professional skills, such as communication and leadership.



Covering everything from sales to management, the training at Brickman establishes a strong foundation for its team members, Holly says.

Brickman also “recruits talent from a variety of sources,” says Holly, and has a staff of employee development and recruiting pros who seek talent nationwide.

To recruit, Brickman looks to colleges offering horticultural-related degrees and seeks both inside and outside talent.

To be hired, a candidate must fit in with the company culture, Holly says. That means they should understand the value of teamwork and respect and be passionate about quality and service.

On the rare occasions when John Mickman has to venture outside the company to recruit workers, he advertises on the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association Web site. In fact, Mickman found most of his outside workers from that Web site, he says.

To retain employees, Mickman strives to treat his employees well. That means paying them at or above market rate, hosting seasonal company parties at his home, and acknowledging his employees at awards banquets. To communicate openly with its workers, Mickman Brothers also shares its financials with its team at year’s end.

“As important as a paycheck is for everybody, I really feel that anybody’s employees need to feel like they’re a necessary part of the company, and we try to acknowledge their importance.”

He acknowledges their importance by reminding himself that Mickman Brothers is “not these buildings. Our company is our people, and every single one of them is important.” Apparently, Mickman employees appreciate that philosophy, because they stick around a while. Although there is regular turnover in landscape laborers, Mickman’s key personnel often stay on for 10 years or more.

It’s the same at Brickman, where the company has a nearly 90% retention rate for full-time employees and the team is “among the most tenured in the industry,” Holly says. Branch managers stay on for an average of nine years, regional managers 13 years and senior division

leadership for 16 years, she says. Holly attributes that longevity to Brickman’s family-like culture and tendency to foster its employees’ goals.

Brickman also openly praises its team members, both formally and informally, Holly says. “So whether it’s including them in a strategy session, a public pat on the back, or a private thank you for going above and beyond, part of our managers’ job, as leaders of their business, is to understand their team, and to motivate and appreciate them appropriately,” says Holly.

As Brickman does, Mickman Brothers motivates its employees by reviewing each one annually and helping each establish goals. “If you don’t know what’s expected of you, you may think you’re doing a good job, but you really might not be living up to the expectations of your supervisor,” Mickman says.

By setting goals for its workers, Mickman inspires them to meet deadlines and work efficiently. For example, the company has a job sheet for its construction division that sets daily goals for workers based on the number of hours they’re working that day.

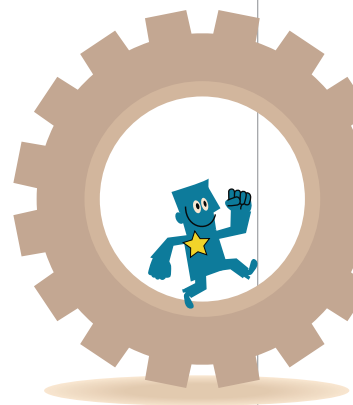
If they go over the amount of time they estimated the job would take, the company discusses with them why it happened.

“Every single job these foremen do, they want to know how they did. They’re highly motivated to be successful,” Mickman says.

Every year at Christmastime, the entire

Mickman team closes up shop and gets busy manufacturing balsam wreaths — more than half a million of them. The wreaths are sold to non-profit groups throughout the country as fundraising tools. Throughout the process, the company goes through 1,500 tons of balsam boughs. Mickman says the wreath making is valuable for many reasons, not the least of which is it inspires his team to work together toward a common goal.

Holly says she doesn’t know if there is one best way to retain employees today. But she is sure of one thing: “People stay where they feel valued, where they have opportunity to grow and challenge themselves, and where they know they are making a difference.” **LM**



John Mickman (right) with brother, business partner and company cofounder, Chris.



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

To stay ahead of the curve, companies are making a stronger push to build on their customer foundation.

BY **BETH GERACI** SENIOR EDITOR

When consumers are struggling to pay the bills, convincing them to pony up for services they view as extra is not easy. So instead of striving to attract new clients, landscape companies are working harder to solidify their current client base, relying on customer satisfaction to keep their cash flowing. Some companies, like these, have retained as much as 76% to 100% of their clients over the last year. Here's why.

FACE TIME

"It's easier to keep a customer than to go out and find another one," says Russell Simpler, managing partner at Smith Lawn and Tree, Fort Worth, TX. Simpler says he's made a larger effort in 2011 to visit job sites weekly or monthly.

"The more you show your face and the more you have a relationship with someone, the less likely it is they're going to switch, even if someone offers a better price," he explains.

John Newman, president of Classic Landscapes Inc., Hampton, GA, also puts in monthly face time with clients. "You can't manage a property if you don't visit it," he says. "We all realize the economy's tight. Let's make sure we don't



take our existing clients for granted.” Newman’s efforts are paying off, so much so that he expects his revenue to double this year.

Curtis Depner, president and chief executive officer of Landscape Services and Management (LSM), Richmond, IL, says he stays ahead of the competition by being aggressive.

If you can retain customers, Depner says, “It’s a lot less work going forward.” Communicating with his customers and ensuring their satisfaction is most important of all to him, he says. “You don’t want to give anybody any reason to have something bad to say about the company. Because then it’s hard to gain that new customer.”

DETAIL-ORIENTED

That’s why Newman has paid more attention to details in the last year. “In our market there aren’t other businesses that approach residential the way we do — with such detail,” he says. “Others don’t have a staff with as much training. It’s because of the relationships that we’ve been able to make with our clients that they’ve stuck with us.”

At Newman’s Classic, where 75% of the client base is residential, about 70% of the company’s focus is on design/build projects. And customers care just as much about value as they do detail, even if that means paying more.

“Are we the cheapest? No,” says Newman, but “as far as the people in our market, we’re the best value. We provide a little more detail on the front end as far as the designs are concerned.”

That may mean something as simple as installing plants that require less pruning than those provided by other companies, he says.

For Simpler at Smith Lawn and Tree, being on time and delivering on his promises are most important. Relationship building is always at the fore of his mind, he says.

Simpler also puts a premium on consistency, putting the same workers on the same properties week in and week out. It helps his business, he says, “because you just know the ins and outs of everything about it. And it shows.”

VERSATILITY HELPS

Grandville, MI-based Summit Landscape Management President Michael Verhulst is very optimistic about business this year, expecting his company’s 2011 revenue to be between \$2.5 mil-

lion and \$4.9 million. Large-scale commercial clients such as hospitals, universities and automotive companies constitute about 70% of the business.

Clients’ demands for innovation, sustainable design and professionalism — and Summit’s ability to meet them — enable Summit to remain competitive, Verhulst says.

“Whether it’s low-impact development, sustainable designs, native plants, energy conservation, or fuel alternatives, we want to be the company that can always be that one phone call,” he says.

“There is not one service that our clients require that I do not have an expert on my staff in place to handle,” he continues. “I can’t be the expert on everything, but I can be through my staff, and our clients love that.”

Because many of Summit’s clients are striving to become more sustainable, Summit is “growing greener every day,” Verhulst says. By installing LED lighting and water-conserving features, the company provides clients with services that have long-term benefits, maximizing their return on investment.

“We’re so diverse with our services, there are very few services we don’t provide,” Verhulst says.

Given the poor state of the economy and the rise of lowball bidders, retaining customers is more challenging than ever, Verhulst asserts. He has met that challenge head on by becoming more creative. That may mean anything from reducing fertilizer treatments so customers can save money, to using more affordable products. His company, for instance, saves people money by using fertilizers that last up to 28 weeks with one application.

WORDS OF WISDOM

For companies who didn’t have a high customer retention rate this year, Simpler advises, “Do what you say you’re going to do and follow through with that. Every customer I know does not like surprises at the end.”

Newman has some advice of his own: “Personally champion taking care of the customers.” And if you can’t do it, he says, find someone who can.

Newman’s company is having the best year it’s ever had, he says. “I think people are becoming more cautiously optimistic overall. I guess if everybody would quit listening to the news, we’d all be in better shape. Just get out and live life and move forward.” **LM**



THE CHANGING FACE OF H-2B

Rapidly changing rules and regulations make it difficult for landscape contractors using temporary workers to plan for the future work force. BY JANET AIRD

Landscape contractors who hire workers with H-2B visas need to be aware of changes being made to the H-2B visa program. The program provides American employers in non-agricultural fields, such as the landscape industry, the seafood industry and forestry product manufacturers, a source of legal, low-skilled, seasonal foreign labor when they can't find local labor, says Craig J. Regelbrugge, vice president of government relations with the American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA).

"This program exists as one of only two options for employers to access legal labor," he says. "The reality is that even in times of high unemployment, it's difficult to attract American workers to seasonal jobs. Most Americans are seeking full-time, year-round jobs."

Employers want to expand the program because these industries will need additional workers when the economy improves, and it's a way to standardize and control the flow of labor

across the border.

Instead, changes that have already been made, and changes that might be made in the next few months, could contract the program.

"This administration has dramatically changed the rules," Regelbrugge says. "They're so extreme and hostile to employers attempting to hire legal workers."

Until Sept. 30 of this year, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) based H-2B prevailing wages on the federal Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) database. This database produces employment and wage estimates for more than 800 occupations and wage data in four levels, based on workers' experience. Most H-2B workers were assigned prevailing wages in the lower levels, Levels I and II, he says.

On Sept. 30, the DOL was to have begun requiring employers to pay their H-2B employees the higher of the OES Level III wage, or the Davis-Bacon Act or Service Contract Act wage, if applicable. (The DOL has since pushed the implementation date to Nov. 30, and in a related case, Judge M. Casey Rodgers of the U.S. District Court Northern District of Florida Pensacola Division had issued a temporary restraining order for 14 days against both the Wage Rule and Expediting Rule. A hearing on a permanent injunction was set for October 3, 2011). These acts require contractors and subcontractors working on federal, District of Columbia and federally assisted construction contracts in excess of \$2,000 to pay their laborers at least the prevailing wages and fringe benefits as corresponding classes of laborers working on similar projects in the area (DOL.gov/compliance/guide/dbra.htm). The intended effect of the new rule was to increase the wages of H-2B workers by between 30% and 70%.

"The DOL is arbitrarily saying that the Level III wage is what applies at a minimum," Regelbrugge says. "It essentially elevated wages to those typically paid to much more highly skilled or unionized workers."

According to the DOL, the goal is to improve the standard of living of H-2B workers. That could happen, he says — as long as their employers stay in business.

"A lot of landscape work is done under contract, and there's no mechanism to adjust it," he says, so landscapers have to absorb the increase. Landscapers who are able to increase their prices also find themselves in a bind. Because a large amount of

landscape installation and service work is a discretionary investment, a dramatic increase could price the average customer out of the market altogether.

At press time, one federal lawsuit already has been filed by an alliance of Louisiana industries against the DOL and Homeland Security to postpone or permanently halt the changes. A second lawsuit, being handled by the law firms Greenberg Traurig and CJ-Lake, applies more to the landscape industry. At press time, ANLA is supporting the lawsuit but is not a plaintiff.

Regelbrugge says he believes that DOL lacks the authority to proceed as it is. "There was careful researching of H-2B history," he says. "There were a number of times that the labor department could have changed the program structure, but they didn't. That's tantamount to Congress not authorizing the DOL changes. The DOL is acting in direct conflict with Congressional intent."

ON THE HORIZON

The next few months might hold more bad news.

While the H-2B program applies to non-agricultural workers, the H-2A program applies to agricultural workers only. Until March 2010, H-2A wages also were based on the OES database, which tended to require the prevailing wages of foreign workers not undercut those of American workers, he says.

In March 2010, the DOL returned to a rule it had used previously to determine H-2A wages for agricultural workers. According to the Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Association (GFVGA.org/2010/02/gfpga-statement-on-new-h2a-regulations), this rule increased wages to an average of about \$2 above the federal minimum wage in most states. The DOL also required H-2A employers to pay their American workers who perform the same agricultural work as the employers' H-2A workers at least the H-2A wages and benefits for that work, which the DOL defines as "corresponding employment."



“At this point, it appears that the DOL will do (to the H-2B visa program) what it did with the H-2A program,” Regelbrugge says. “All of a sudden, everyone will have to be paid at the corresponding rate.”

The Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Association reports the new rule also increased the difficulty in job advertising and record keeping, the potential for litigation, and the program’s costs.

Regelbrugge expects that at the end of this year, the DOL could make the

THE E-VERIFY ISSUE



The E-Verify system, which checks authorization documents electronically, is yet another troublesome issue for landscapers.

It’s currently voluntary for most businesses, but if the “Legal Workforce Act” bill proposed by House Judiciary Committee Chairman Lamar Smith (R-TX) passes, most employers across the country will be required to use it within three years. According to the American Nursery & Landscape Association, this could lead to a severe shortage of seasonal workers.

On Sept. 21, the House Judiciary Committee approved the bill by a 22 to 13 vote. At press time, the bill was being sent to the full House.

“If it passes and works, it will have the practical effect of making seasonal workers less employable — and at the same time make H-2B impossible to use,” says Craig J. Regelbrugge, ANLA’s vice president of government relations. “If the program gets trashed, more people will be left with the choice to either downsize or hire workers whose documents might be questionable off the open labor market.”

same changes to the H-2B program. He speculates that the DOL is bowing to union pressure. If they’re trying to protect workers or increase the employment of Americans in temporary, seasonal work in the landscape industry, the changes could well have the opposite effect, he says.

“Landscape operators around the country maintain good, year-round jobs, but must be able to get the seasonal work done,” he says. “American workers will not take all the seasonal jobs and stick with them. We’ve seen in the past that if the wage floor is raised too much, the reaction is the decision not to expand or hire more people. LM

The author is based in Altadena, CA.

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A guy goes to see his doctor and is given some very bad news: he has six months to live.

“Doctor, what should I do?” | “Go to work for a family business” is the reply.

“Will that cure me?” | “No, but it will be the longest six months of your life.”

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Words of wisdom
on how to run a
family business

BY **BILL BEMUS**

For the myriad benefits provided by a family business, as the above anecdote brings to light, it can also be challenging at times. On the plus side of the ledger, family members are generally more trustworthy, take a long-term view, are more focused on quality and have more care and concern for their non-family coworkers. On the negative side, conflict, which is inevitable, can become magnified and more difficult to resolve when it involves a family member.

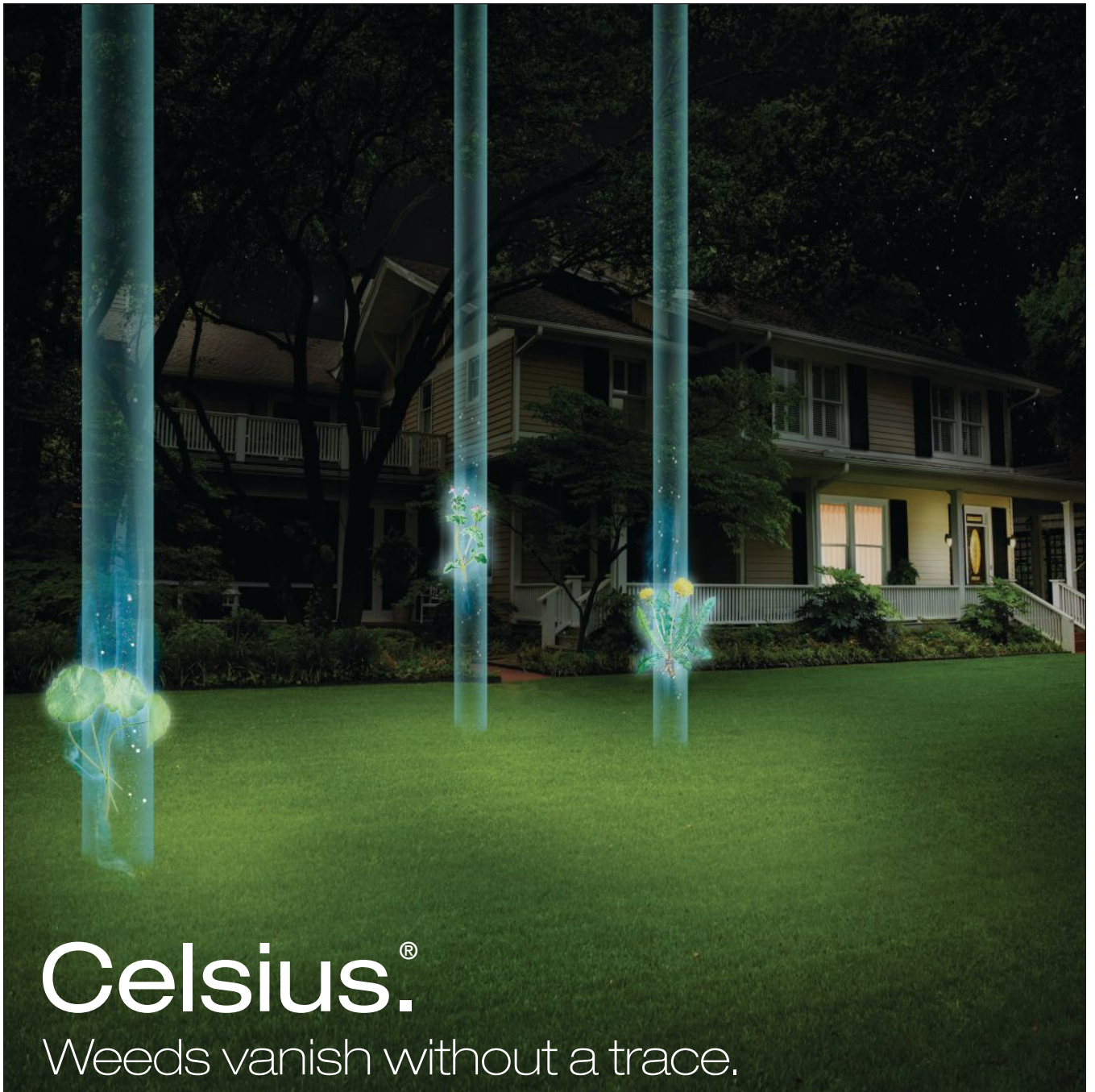
I founded our company in 1973, armed with zero experience, zero business training, a college botany course (I did get an A.), and \$750 in savings. I had a partner, and the plan was to do landscaping over the summer between college semesters. And oh yeah, I got married that same summer. I was 20, and my wife, Martine was 19. The business partner lasted about a month (he was the smart one), and I was left to go it alone, providing lawn and gardening services in southern Orange County, CA.

SURVIVING AND THRIVING

Somehow, the business survived and thrived, transitioning into a full-service landscape construction and maintenance company, riding the boom and bust cycles of the southern California real estate market. As the company grew, so did our family and its involvement in the company.

How time flies! Fast forward to the present. Bemus Landscape Inc. has four branch locations and 370 full-time employees producing revenues of \$20 million in 2010. Four family members play a significant role in the company today: brother-in-law Jon Parry serves as general manager; son Colin Bemus runs the field operations; son Corin is in charge of business development; and son Spencer runs the San Marcos branch.

Daughter Claire worked in accounting and IT
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BECAUSE GREEN MATTERS.

A national non-profit service organization, Project EverGreen works to help spread the good word to consumers about well-maintained lawns and landscapes, sports fields, parks—anywhere that green exists. The more people believe in the environmental, economic and lifestyle benefits of green spaces, the better off we'll all be.



WORKING TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.

Together with key industry partners, Project EverGreen has established the following programs to help make a greater impact, sooner:

GreenCare for Troops SnowCare for Troops



- Project EverGreen connects military families with lawn and landscape companies, as well as snow removal companies to receive free services while their loved one is serving overseas.
- More than 3,500 contractor volunteers and 11,000 military families have signed up for GCFT, while 800 contractor volunteers and 700 military families signed up for SCFT.
- These popular programs have garnered attention on TV and in newspapers across the nation including Mike Rowe's *Dirty Jobs* and NBC's *Nightly News*.

GreenCare for Communities



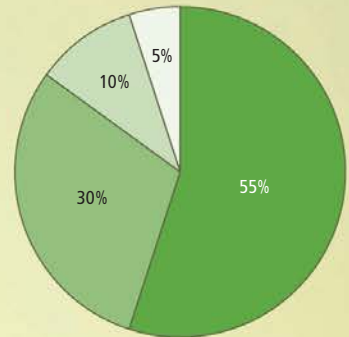
- Creating a focused effort on select communities across the United States, this program brings industry professionals, consumers and anyone who's passionate about healthy green spaces together to improve their city and surrounding areas.
- Over the last four years, our message has made a positive impact in: Akron, Ohio; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and from the corridor spanning from Greensboro to Raleigh, North Carolina.
- In 2011, Project EverGreen will bring our message to Ft. Myers, Florida.

GreenCare for Youth

- By reaching out to children of all ages, we can create a greener tomorrow.
- The Art of Green Spaces Competition, sponsored by Birds and Blooms, encourages students to use all forms of art to share how they feel about the green spaces in their lives.
- Golf bag tags, featuring messages on the benefits of green spaces, are given to participants of the GCBA Sticks for Kids program.
- Youth sports field renovations make playing surfaces better and safer.

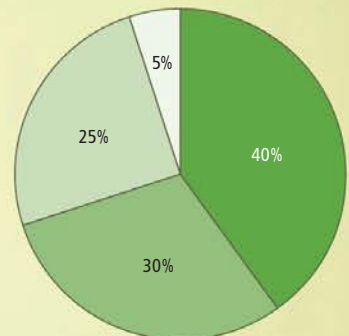
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www.ProjectEverGreen.com

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before moving on to become a CPA. Today she is employed by one of the Big Four financial firms, but she still helps out after hours when called upon.

Reflecting on the fact that Bemus Landscape Inc. is now fully engaged with and being driven by the second generation of the Bemus family, I am proud of several things. First, the family members work harder and are more productive than their peers. (Our sons are particularly wary of being labeled as “the boss’s kid,” with all of that term’s connotations.)

Secondly, the positive feedback I receive from clients who are now dealing with my children is gratifying. Finally, and this is not so much something I’m proud of, but rather something I’m grateful for: Our family really enjoys hanging out together.

All of us live in San Clemente. We have ample opportunity to spend time together, and we take advantage of it: beach days, birthdays, holidays, golf days, industry events and fundraisers. You name it, we have fun doing it together. And now we have the third generation coming on line. (Grandchildren are your reward for not murdering your kids when they are teenagers.)

KEYS TO BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY BUSINESS

Set an employment policy that applies to all family members and determines guidelines and qualifications for employment. Think in terms of

more than one generation. Life happens fast. One day you are taking your boy to work during his summer vacation, the next thing you know, he’s a grown man and knows more about running the company than you do.

A family business starts out as Mom-and-Pop but quickly morphs into a business run by siblings in the second generation, then cousins in the third. Obtaining a position in the family business should not be by default or a fait accompli transaction. Make your company hard to get into and easy to get out of. Things to consider and incorporate in this policy: performance vs. peers, spouses working together, education, prior work experience, and the differences between part-time (e.g. after school) and full-time employment.

Every family business can be diagrammed by three overlapping circles representing the business itself, the family, and the ownership structure. Each of these subsystems may have different priorities and a different agenda. Individuals can find themselves members of one (an employee or a family member), two (an employee who is a family member), or all three of these groups (an owner/operator who is a family member).

Know which circle you are standing in when you communicate and which circle you are addressing. Is it “Dad” talking to “Son” or “President” talking to “Vice President”? When at work, keep it professional. If not, it can be extremely uncomfortable for non-family members.

I recommend hiring a family business consultant. An objective professional can help in many ways, such as setting up an advisory board and family business council; assisting in transition, succession, and estate planning; and most importantly, facilitating communication between family members, employees and owners around the sometimes delicate and emotionally charged issues faced by every family business.

We have been fortunate to work with Dana Telford of the Family Business Consulting Group (www.efamilybusiness.com), and I highly recommend his services. Whatever I know about running a family business was either learned by making mistakes, or learned from Dana. (It’s less painful learning from Dana.)

The most important thing of all? Marry the right person. I sure did. **LMI**

Bemus is the founder of Bemus Landscape Inc. Contact him at bill.bemus@bemus.com.

The Bemus family has faced the challenges posed by running a family business, and overcome them.



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PLANNING FOR RETIREMENT

The sooner you plan for the future, the better off you'll be when it gets here.

BY CASEY PAYTON

Preparing for retirement is no quick deal. It's something that needs to be planned for from the early days of business. While retirement may be tough to even consider for young companies, the earlier you start planning, the better.

LM recently spoke with several industry veterans about the key factors of planning for retirement.

GET YOUR FINANCIALS IN ORDER

Whether you plan to sell your business or have someone take it over, you always need to have your pulse on what the business is worth, says Michael McShane, president of Plantique Inc., Allentown, PA. He says he's planned for his retirement, but he doesn't believe it will be anytime soon.

"I believe that an evaluation should be done annually," he advises. "You have book value, future earnings and many other ways to value a business — but the evaluation is key. You want to stay on top of what your business is worth as you plan ahead for retirement."

Setting up a retirement plan within the company is also something to consider early on. Tom

Heaviland, president of Heaviland Enterprises Inc. in Southern California, says when the company was smaller, he had a simple IRA program — but eventually rolled that into a 401(k) as the company grew.

"No matter what it is, you need to get in the habit of putting those pre-tax dollars into a retirement fund," he suggests. "The younger you are and the earlier you start, the better. Compounding interest is one of the great scientific principles."

But before retirement even becomes a possibility, it means getting cash in the bank now. Chris Senske, president of Senske Lawn & Tree Care in Kennewick, WA, says that making sure you have sufficient income or assets to weather future storms is a crucial part of planning ahead.

"I have a brother who sold his professional services business for a tidy sum about 10 years ago," he says. "At almost 70, he feels the pressure of maybe not having enough cash in the bank to live in the style with which he has become accustomed."

NEW MANAGEMENT

One of the biggest changes to come with retirement is a transition of management. Senske says he's been preparing for a transition over the past five years by seeking quality individuals for leadership who can develop into long-term leaders.

"The most important characteristics I'm looking for in the leadership role are individuals who have creative ideas and a willingness to adapt to a new market as it changes," says Senske, who adds that though he's planning ahead for a transition, he has no immediate plans of leaving the industry he loves. "I am seeking out team-building players who have an understanding of how to coach and hold leadership at all levels accountable to constant improvement, continual personal educational development and individual drive to be successful."

Heaviland agrees with the strategy. "It may sound cliché, but surrounding yourself with strong people is an important factor," he says. "You should hire with the end game in mind, making sure you have a strong leader on the financial side, the sales side, the operations side — and, if you're big enough, maybe also the human resources side. Having the right people will ensure the business will always run fine, even when the owner is not there. But it definitely comes down to finding people who are committed to your vision."

For Dale Stell, founder and CEO of Lakeview



Lawn and Landscape, near Finger Lakes, NY, planning for the transition in leadership has been taking place for years.

“I have had the young fellow who is taking over the business working with us for 10 years,” says Stell. “Though his title right now is vice president, he’s been doing the day-to-day operations — and is more like the chief operating officer right now. We developed a plan where he is buying me out over a period of time, but I still work here. At the end of the day, he’ll own all the shares of the business. It’s been a great arrangement for both of us.”

Planning ahead helped set Stell up for a smooth transition. But in this economy, many landscape business owners are becoming desperate and looking for an “out.”

“It’s definitely not the easiest business to get out of, and I do really feel for those owners who are having a hard time trying to figure out their next steps,” Stell admits. “Think about these things early on so that you don’t wind up having to just sell your equipment and retire. That’s never a good deal, after all your hard work over the years. Try to plan ahead and think about the transition now.”

Advanced preparation for this eventual transition also means financially planning for it.

“Compensation programs for key personnel must be developed to adequately reward those who will be managing the business as my role lessens,” says Senske. “These decisions are predicted on the decision I have made not to sell the business, but to have it continue as long as possible. There are two children, neither currently interested in participating today, but I want to leave that option open as long as possible.”

While all of these industry veterans have combined experience of more than a century, none of them say they’re ready to retire yet. They’ve just all learned the value in planning ahead.

Heaviland says he believes it’s never too early to plan for the future.

“Don’t carry a lot of debt, pay yourself a fair salary, and save as much as you can early on,” he advises. “The earlier you start, the better off you’ll be — and I can’t stress that enough. That’s really the takeaway point to this. Start now, and you’ll find it paid off in your future.” **LM**

Payton is a freelance writer with six years of experience covering landscape-related topics.



SUCCESSFUL SELLING

Simple steps you can take to make your business more attractive to a potential buyer **BY CASEY PAYTON**

No matter what your reason for selling a business, the state of the economy has certainly made this task more challenging. Even if it's something you think may be in your future, planning ahead can really pay off when it comes to making your business more attractive to buyers.

Mark Lawrence recommends that the No. 1 thing you can do to make your business more attractive is to get debt paid off. He recently bought Simply Yards, Anacortes, WA, from the previous owner, who was looking to retire.

"It's very difficult to deal with banking if there's debt in the business," Lawrence says. "Whether you're trying to acquire a business or sell one, banking can be brutal. The more you can do to make that process go smoothly, the better."

It also helps to maintain a strong reputation. "If you give out 15 references, make sure all 15 of those references are going to make you look like the King of England," says Lawrence. "Everybody



WHAT KIND OF BUYER DO YOU SEEK?

Ken Thomas, former business owner and Green Industry business mentor, says it's important to understand the types of buyers on the market nowadays. He believes there are three kinds:

1 THE INDUSTRY BUYER. These are larger landscape companies that are looking to grow by acquisition, according to Thomas. They know the market, and are savvy in terms of what they want out of an acquired landscape business. The big industry players today include Brickman and ValleyCrest.

2 THE VENTURE CAPITAL BUYER. "These are private investors who are looking to invest in large companies in order to grow them and ultimately sell them," he explains. "They are looking for efficiency, but they don't know the landscape industry the same way that the industry players do. They know a lot about business — not landscaping — and the way they'll look at your business is quite different."

3 THE PRIVATE INVESTOR. This buyer typically uses "private money, usually from an individual or partnership, to get into the landscape business," says Thomas.

Thomas says that knowing the type of buyer who is looking at your company is important because it not only changes the selling process, but the post-acquisition phase. In some cases, the former business owner and his or her team may be more valuable than others.

"Green Industry professionals who are acquiring companies may be interested in building upon existing market shares, and looking at a company as a tuck-in," says Thomas. "They are not as depending on the existing top management staying around for the long run."

has ghosts in their closet, but when you're selling a business, those ghosts are going to try to find a way to come out. It's important to tie up as many loose ends as you can *before* people start looking into your company's history."

Ken Thomas, former business owner and Green Industry business mentor, says that while every buyer is a little different, they are going to be interested in how secure the business will be in paying off the purchase price and making a return on investment.

"Most buyers are more interested and will pay more for long-term maintenance contracts that will return a predictable revenue over time," he says. "The bottom line is that commercial maintenance contracts are more appealing to buyers."

George Morrell, who owned the landscape business Morrell Group and sold it to an investment group that bought four other Green Industry companies, agrees. The fact that 92% of his revenue was coming from recurring business made it very attractive to buyers, he says.

"It's a hard truth, but landscape companies aren't worth much today," Morrell says. "What buyers want is that recurring sales contract, and that comes from the maintenance side of the business. At the time, I had been diagnosed with cancer and needed to get out of the business quickly. Having a strong maintenance company made the business easier to sell."

To make sure you're making the right moves, it's important to consult with a number of professionals, adds Thomas, who has gone through selling several companies over the years. He says the most important expert is a qualified business broker who understands the landscape acquisition market.

"It's also important at some point to discuss the specifics of the deal with your accountant to understand the tax implications," he says. "I would also advise reaching out to someone else who has sold their business to get their advice."

While there are some ways you can prepare yourself to sell, the bottom line is that you have to be realistic, says Lawrence, who says he's witnessed other selling companies asking way too much in this marketplace.

"The biggest problem is that people still have an old vision of what their company is worth, but you have to be willing to throw out the old

methods of calculating a business' worth," he says. "Many landscape business owners think their company is worth more than it is — and with that mindset, you're never going to be able to sell your business. To be successful at selling, you have to have a good game plan, make sure you do the planning with the right professionals, and accept a realistic view of what your company is really worth in today's market." **LM**

Payton is a freelance writer with six years of experience covering landscape-related topics.



HOW TO WIN THE MARKETING WAR

In the battle for customers, winners and losers are determined by market share, growth and profitability. Are you prepared for combat?

BY HARVEY F. GOLDGLANTZ

Marketing and war: A strange juxtaposition of concepts in one sentence? I think not.

In Jay Levinson and Seth Godin's bestseller, *The Guerilla Marketing Handbook*, the authors clearly imply that using "guerilla warfare" as a tactic to conquer adversaries (competitors) will lead to overwhelming victory.

Each year, landscape contractors prepare to go

to war against competitive forces in the marketplace. The winners and losers are determined by market share, growth and profitability. One thing is for certain: A battle plan is imperative for success.

THE BIG PICTURE

Some companies grow; others do not. Many companies remain stagnant, year after year, and lament the reasons why.

The fact is that the big picture matters. The macro always precedes the micro.

If you don't plan for, prepare for and finance your war, you are doomed to defeat before the first salvo is fired. On the marketplace battlefield, preparation is the key to predictable success.

Planning: The military defines planning as a continuous process of preparation for future assigned or assumed tasks. The business world defines planning as identifying the goals to be achieved and determining the appropriate means to meet those goals.

Leadership & Vision: Both military and business planning — and success — demand effective leadership, which at its core requires vision. Vision is the sense of the future. Its power gives leaders a basis for positive actions, growth and transformation.

Converting Vision to Action: To achieve that vision, leaders must possess certain characteristics: ethics, professional skills, processes and organization. All effective leaders use these basic characteristics to implement and sustain their vision. The implementation of the leader's vision requires the use of these characteristics to develop the strategies to plan, and guide the direction of an operational plan.

DEFINING & UNDERSTANDING STRATEGY

Strategy is used during the planning phase. It is not a learned process of planning and acting, but a combination of planning, interaction, evaluation and adjustment. Strategy is continually reshaped as market conditions change. This requires making decisions and taking action to anticipate and respond to customer needs.

One essential part of strategy is the speed of reaction. An organization must be able to understand customer needs, and must also be able to move quickly while maintaining strength and

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stability. Strategy lays out the goals that need to be accomplished, and the ideas for achieving those goals. Strategy can be complex, multi-layered plans for accomplishing objectives, and may give consideration to tactics, which refer specifically to action.

In the strategy phase of a plan, the thinkers decide how to achieve their goals. In other words, they think about how people will act (tactics). They decide which tactics will be employed to fulfill the strategy. The tactics themselves are the things that get the job done.

Strategies can comprise numerous tactics, with many people involved in attempting to reach an overall goal. While strategy tends to involve the leaders of an organization, tactics tend to involve all members of the organization.

PREPARING TO GO TO WAR

Now that I have outlined the fundamentals of what it takes to prepare for our marketing war — leadership, vision, strategy, tactics, action, flexibility and speed — let's proceed by taking a historical look backward at what worked, what didn't, where we came from and where we want to go.

The last few years has been challenging, to say the least, for most businesses. Yet, a funny thing happened on the way back from the Great Recession; companies became leaner and meaner. Revenues may have sagged, but profitability soared in many sectors. Progressive companies demanded accountability in all departments, including marketing and advertising; they trimmed excesses in favor of fatter bottom lines. The "troops" had to regroup, so to speak. But it appears we are heading out of the recessionary abyss and into recovery. Are you prepared to go to war?

THE FIRST BATTLE: THE COST OF WAR

War is not inexpensive. If you are to go to battle, you must be prepared to finance marketing and advertising costs. Many less intuitive companies have cut back on marketing budgets during the past few years. More progressive companies actually maintained or ramped up budgets. Those that were more aggressive are now in a position to reap the rewards of a proactive sales and marketing thrust. Those that took conservative positions will have to wait until new opportunities and

market timing presents itself.

Who won this first battle, you or your competitor? Coming out of this recession, I suggest that most small to mid-sized companies' marketing/advertising budget be in the 7.5% to 9% of projected revenue range for 2010.

THE SECOND BATTLE: THE MARKETING PLAN

Those who shoot from the hip almost always miss their target. Make certain that your marketing plan is well thought out in advance. Setting up goals and methodologies to meet those objectives should be plotted by date, media and projected budget cost.

THE THIRD BATTLE: LOOK BEHIND YOU BEFORE YOU PROCEED

History is the great predictor of future successes. Look back at what marketing programs were successful and those that failed. Make certain that you were fastidious about tracking both successes and failures. Don't repeat costly mistakes by placing precious dollars into programs that didn't produce at least a 2:1 return on investment (ROI). To win the war, you must keep accurate records of which battles you won (produced desired results) and those you lost (cost you money).

THE FOURTH BATTLE: DEFEND THE HOMELAND AT ALL COSTS

Your current customer base is your most precious asset. You must do everything possible to keep this revenue source contained. Customer cancellations and skips must be within acceptable industry standards.

Because most companies are now providing quarterly perimeter service, personal customer contact has become more challenging. It is therefore imperative to implement and maintain contact systems that encourage and sustain ongoing company-to-customer contact between visits. Examples include quality control calls, personal thank you notes, broadcast emails and e-newsletters.

THE FIFTH BATTLE: PROTECT YOUR TROOPS

The past few years have presented the industry with the opportunity of taking a good hard look

at staff. The cream has generally risen, and the slackers have, for the most part, been eliminated.

Because there is a direct relationship between employee turnover and customer turnover, it is critical to limit turnover in both. Competitive salaries, generous benefit packages, regular praise, training programs and opportunity for advancement will help to sustain and invigorate the troops.

THE SIXTH BATTLE: PICK YOUR BATTLES WISELY

An effective marketing plan is a well balanced one. Once your budget is completed, make certain that your distribution of funds includes internal (current) and external (prospective) customers. Internally, this can include newsletters, flyers, quality control surveys, calls, etc.

Externally, you should distribute your funds into previously effective vehicles, as well as a smattering of new media. That said, while most companies are wisely investing in efforts such as



search engine optimization, pay-per-click, social networking sites, Internet Yellow Page sites, blogs, e-zines and broadcast emails, it is important not to place all of your eggs in one basket.

Going into war — even in marketing — requires a well-executed strategy.

READY TO GO TO WAR

Once your strategy is in place and your battle plans are in order, it is time for action. A well prepared and executed marketing plan will lead to victory. And to the victor go the spoils! **LMM**

Goldglantz is a small business marketing advisor. You can contact him at bhpceminc@aol.com.

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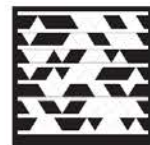


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GROWTH THROUGH ACQUISITION

Finding the right business is more than just crunching numbers; it also involves blending cultures.

BY CASEY PAYTON

Growing your landscape business through acquisition can be one of the fastest and most cost-effective ways to expand. But it's certainly not a simple process. Finding the right companies to merge with — and blending two cultures — takes diligence and care. The experts say it's much more than a numbers game.

For Chris Senske, president of Senske Lawn & Tree Care in Kennewick, WA, acquisition has always been a key part of the company's growth. Senske typically makes one or two acquisitions per year.

"It's a fun process to work with an owner who has worked hard to build a business and for various reasons need to step away," he says.

Senske admits that the first conversation is more like a "counseling session" than a business transaction. It's the time to establish the company's wants, needs and expectations, to help work out a realistic evaluation.

"Lots of times after starting the conversation, the business owners feel they should not sell the business," says Senske. "But once parties agree to an acquisition, I have found that the agreement, due diligence and closing process can happen very quickly — in a matter of days, for most smaller transactions. The chess game of how to settle on a price is the fun part, but also the part that takes the most time."



THE SEARCH

In trying to successfully blend two companies, it's important to seek out those that are like-minded. This is not always a simple task. Larry Ryan, president, Ryan Lawn & Tree, Overland Park, KS, says that the strong value he places on his employees means seeking out a company that also highly values its own.

"It's really important to find a company that has the same attitude," he says. "We can't be selfish when it comes to mergers if we're being true to our mission. We have to think about our people and continue to make decisions that are best for them, too. That means finding companies that put the emphasis on their employees like we do."

Ryan says that looking for companies with matching cultures is not something that can be forced. They either share your values or they don't.

"We don't try to make two cultures fit if they don't match," he continues. "The statistics on incompatibility of mergers is really high. To put the odds more in our favor, we spend quite a bit of time looking at people and making sure their culture matches ours."

David DuBois, president and CEO of Mission Landscape Cos., Irvine, CA, says that culture is by far the No. 1 factor when it comes to acquisitions.

"Even if the dollars line up and the finances look right, if the cultures are wrong, it's going to fail," he warns. "You're better off to pass. Culture is such a huge thing. Making sure the similarities line up in terms of company culture and values is a priority — then move on to look at the numbers."

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

DuBois also recommends staying with your core competency — and not getting involved with a merger that will pull you away from it. He speaks from experience: Through a merger, DuBois pulled away from his maintenance core to focus on a landscape architecture firm he acquired. He says that hurt him when development and renovations came to a halt. Today, he's returned to

focusing more on his maintenance roots.

"I know everyone is looking to diversify more in this economy, but you have to be careful that it's not going to hurt the business that you built everything around," says DuBois. "To owners and managers, I'd say to look at the company and the services you already offer, and see what has helped you and what hasn't. If you're turning your time and attention away from the core to try to grow a different segment, you may find that's a mistake if your core business starts to suffer because of it."

Senske says it's important to realize that the acquisition process takes time — and sometimes it's not always time that pays off. In some cases, commercial contracts may not be transferable, and may become null and void following a merger.

"There are also a lot of details to consider, such as existing contracts, phone books, telephone numbers, cell contracts, and leases of real estate and vehicles, which need to be discussed and resolved," he adds. "You also need to be aware, or make sure your advisors are aware, of all the laws and taxes related to an acquisition. For smaller acquisitions, we have created — with the help of an attorney — a standard asset purchase agreement. It saves a lot of time if that part of the process doesn't have to be replicated each time a prospect knocks on the door."

While there's certainly a lot to plan for, Senske says that growth through acquisition can also be very successful.

"One of the nice parts about an acquisition is that you get a great boost in customer counts immediately, without the long slog of selling new customers one at a time," he says.

But in the end, Ryan says, the most important factor is being willing to accept when a potential merger won't fit.

"We expect a lot out of our employees," he says. "We have a 'No Smoking' culture and are tough about using bad language, so we want to blend with employees who have those same values. That's not always easy. We've learned that you can't force it, so there have been many instances where we've had to walk away."

"The trick is being willing to walk away from it without looking back," he concludes. "You have to protect your company culture and values above all else." **LMM**

Payton is a freelance writer with six years of experience covering landscape-related topics.



FACEBOOK MARKETING

Ease of use has made Facebook the simplest way to engage in social media marketing, but like many other tools, it can fall prey to the same issues that dog most small business marketing efforts.

BY JOE SHOONER

When future generations look back on our times, they may call our current decade the “Facebook Era.” There are more than 700 million Facebook users, and the number keeps growing. The average user spends more than 15 hours a month on Facebook, so it’s no surprise that businesses are scrambling for a way to make use of this marketing channel.

Marketing is a process of communicating a specific message to a targeted group, and with any marketing effort you need to understand the scope of your audience. The United States has approximately 347 million residents; at press time, 168 million are registered Facebook users. This works out to an astounding 48% penetration rate! Admittedly, a large portion of these users are too young to buy your services, but Facebook reports that 35% of U.S. users are in the key 35- to 65-year-old age range, so there are plenty of

viable prospects to go around.

Additionally, the next generation of consumers is deeply entrenched in the digital world. Forward-thinking companies are wise to plan ahead for a time when those 15- to 25-year-olds are starting families and buying houses.

Many Green Industry companies have turned to Facebook as a marketing venue, and across all industries its ease of use has made Facebook the simplest way to engage in social media marketing. With that said, Facebook marketing falls prey to the same issues that dog most small business marketing efforts — namely, that operational concerns take priority over marketing efforts, and any marketing project without a hard deadline gets pushed to the back burner.

The time when you can get the most mileage out of marketing channels like Facebook is in the spring, when your prospects are most interested in your services. However, without a plan in place, you likely won’t make the time to properly exploit this venue. The solution: Create a simple plan this fall that you can — and will — stick with in 2012. If you make a plan and stick with it, new ideas will come to you throughout the process, and your Facebook presence will grow organically. The three criteria I suggest you consider when marketing with Facebook, or with any social media platform, are tone, content and frequency.

tone

Deciding on the tone you want to take is incredibly important when embarking on a Facebook marketing effort. Remember that people do not check their Facebook pages because they want to be sold to; they log on to socialize. If the tone of your Facebook presence runs counter to the overriding social aspect of the platform, you’re going to have difficulty engaging anyone — and you’ll run the risk of turning people off altogether.

My suggestion: Pretend you’ve been invited to a cocktail party with a lot of prospects in attendance. How would you act? You wouldn’t hang up a billboard and start shouting a sales pitch through a bullhorn; it’s simply the wrong tone to strike for the venue. When figuring out your tone, try to picture how you would deal with your audience in person. In my personal experience, whenever I read a company posting on Facebook, I still assume it’s a person. Talk like you normally do, because that’s what people want.

ington

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CONTENT

Choosing content for a Facebook presence is a stumbling block for many businesses, and depending on the services you offer, it can be tough to figure out what you want to say. The simplest advice is this: Pretend a friend asks you what's happening with your business. What do you say? Do you talk about the major construction project you just finished? Do you talk about the community service in which your staff is engaged? Or, maybe you talk about the terrible weather and how that's wreaking havoc on your properties. These are prime subjects to cover on Facebook.

If you have a landscape construction division, here's an easy solution for populating your Facebook page. For every project, take "before" and "after" project photos. Then, create a new photo album for each project, caption the photos, and tag the client so that the client's friends can easily see the work you've just completed. Facebook gives you a simple way to consistently feed images of your work to friends of your clients. This approach also works if you're a residential landscape maintenance company that upsells construction work. Posting photos of landscape

enhancements that you've done for your regular maintenance clients is a great way to foster interest in additional projects.

Choosing content is more of a challenge if you only do lawn care or commercial landscaping. After all, you're hired so that your clients don't have to spend as much energy thinking about the services you provide.

For lawn care, you have the option to report regularly on weather conditions; the presence of weeds, insects and disease; and beneficial cultural practices. It doesn't take much effort to plan a weekly post about these items, but it's a good idea to have an actual friend on board who can give you honest feedback about whether you're overloading your page with technical details.

If you have a commercial landscaping company, you can make more headway by talking about who you are as a company. Think of Facebook as a way to promote your company culture, showcase your employees' achievements, publicize your charitable work, and pass on any other news that reflects well on your company as a whole.

My suggestion: This fall, develop a list of possible topics to cover. Think through the variations

Social networking now means much more than finding old high school chums.

SOURCE PHOTO BY: ISTOCK INTERNATIONAL INC.

in your services throughout the year, and make a list of what you would talk to your clients about each month if you met with them in person. Take stock of completed projects and newsworthy stories from your staff, and compile any available photos now.

FREQUENCY

The key to marketing with Facebook, as with any marketing venue, is consistency. So, don't do it if you can't stick to it. In a recent issue of USA Today, Emily White, Facebook's "director of local," suggests that businesses that want to succeed with Facebook should post three times per week. This may be more than you can handle, but even if you aren't highly active with your Facebook page, pick a schedule and keep at it (with the understanding that you probably won't get instant results). Managing your expectations ahead of time is important to maintaining consistent activity.

My suggestion: Put it on the calendar, either yours or that of someone in your organization

whom you can depend on to actually follow through. The easiest way to put it all together is to create a spreadsheet this fall that will serve as your master schedule and editorial calendar for 2012. Designate a cell for each date you want to post, and fill in as many topics as possible now. Assume that you will have to come up with some topics as you move through next season, but give yourself a leg up by plotting out as many ideas as you can this fall.

Facebook marketing, like most marketing, is not terribly complicated — nor does it require any advanced technical know-how. If you want to engage in the vast and growing community of potential clients on Facebook, create a simple, manageable plan this fall, then commit to following through with it in 2012. **LM**

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MEASURING SOCIAL MEDIA ROI

The route from time to money is not as direct and easily measurable as people would like. **BY CHRIS HEILER**

A participant in a recent webinar asked me the following question: “How is updating my status on Facebook going to get me new clients?”

This wasn’t the first time I had heard this question, and it’s a fair one.

I’ve received many others in the same vein that all come down to this:

“How will investing time with social media make my business money?”

I aim to show you. But it won’t be easy.

First, let’s talk about “easy” marketing.

Easy marketing is handing a check to a phone directory advertising rep. Easy marketing is sending a pretty postcard to 5,000 people you don’t know. Easy marketing is blanketing a neighborhood with generic flyers and door hangers. Hand

over your money to an ad rep or printer and hope for the best. Your responsibility usually ends there, until you have to pick up the telephone to take a call from an unqualified responder.

This is the style of marketing to which the Green Industry is accustomed, and it has worked for some.

Let’s not confuse this easy marketing with social media marketing.

MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

I think this confusion is holding back many Green Industry companies from adopting social media into their company culture.

Go back to the original question: “How will investing my time with social media make my

business money?”

A single word in that question should jump out at you. It changes the entire game: time.

When you place an advertisement or send a direct mail piece, you are investing money — not time.

How do you measure the success of a direct mail piece? Typically, by response rate, number of leads, sales and profit per sale. In other words, money. These are all metrics that can easily and accurately measure the campaign's impact.

To simplify: Invest money --> Get money.

Most companies have the same expectation when it comes to social media: Invest time --> Get money

Too bad it doesn't work that way.

The route from time to money is not as direct and easily measurable as some expect — thus the confusion, frustration and ambivalence toward social media in the Green Industry.



THE MISSING LINK BETWEEN TIME AND MONEY

The return on investment of your time cannot be measured in dollars and cents.

On the Web, we deal in a different currency: attention and reputation.

These non-monetary markets are often referred to as the “reputation economy” and “attention economy.” In his book, “Free,” Chris Anderson writes: “No longer is money the most important signal in the marketplace.”

Talk about a shift in mindset! Here is how we need to think about social media as it relates to ROI:

Time --> (Attention + Reputation) --> Money

It's an indirect route, which makes measuring the effectiveness of your social media efforts much more difficult. However, concrete measurables are what everyone seems to want. The problem, of course, is that you can't measure attention and reputation as easily as dollars and cents.

MEASURING ROI IN A NON-MONETARY ECONOMY

Success with social media means: capturing attention and building your reputation. Oversimplified? You bet. But it's a step down the right path. If you do this — trust me — the money will follow, and it's a lot more than what a directory ad or door hanger will deliver.

A terrific case study to illustrate this is Andrew Keys, a landscape designer from Massachusetts.

The following excerpt is from Victoria Harres Akers for PRNewswire:

“@OakLeafGreen, a.k.a. Andrew Keys, is a landscape designer, blogger, and since the spring of 2009, a devoted tweeter. After a bit of coercion from a good friend, Keys decided to give Twitter a try for promoting his organic landscape design firm, and subsequently his investment of time resulted in an invitation to contribute to a national gardening magazine (Fine Gardening). Three articles later, Keys now adds “freelance writer” to his résumé.” Keys captured the attention of “Fine Gardening” Associate Editor Michelle Gervais. As a result, his writing for the prominent consumer publication is building his reputation as a landscape designer.

How did Keys appear on “Fine Gardening's” radar? Did he post a bunch of self-promoting tweets and get lucky? Of course not. First of all, he was savvy enough to follow editors of gardening magazines. Second — but just as important — Keys gave his attention to others before getting attention in return.

Isn't this how life works? Givers gain! It is the same with social media.

Keys' rising reputation and influence will no doubt lead to more business (money) for his company (higher-level clientele, as well, would be my guess). But can he measure exactly how much? Can Keys trace his future clientele back to a single tweet or Facebook update? Of course not.

Go back to the question I was asked during the webinar: “How is updating my status on Facebook going to get me new clients?”

The answer is: It won't!

You don't tweet an update and a dollar bill falls from the sky. Success doesn't come from a single tweet or status update. It's the cumulative impact that matters. Understanding this is the first step toward getting the real results you are after with social media marketing. **LMI**

Chris Heiler is a social media strategist and consultant for Green Industry companies. He shares his social media expertise with thousands of landscape professionals in his weekly Get Social! e-newsletter and exclusive Social Media Club at www.LandscapeLeadership.com.

GROWTH PROFILES

Listening to the mainstream media, it would be easy to think the entire nation is wallowing in an economic malaise, struggling just to survive. That's simply not the case. *Landscape Management* talked with the top executives at 12 companies that are not only surviving, but thriving. Read on to learn how they're doing it.

PROFILES BY **CASEY PAYTON**

EARTHWORKS INC.

Chris Lee, president of Alvarado, TX-based EarthWorks Inc., says it was some foresight in mid- to late 2008 that set his company up to be the fastest growing landscape company on Landscape Management's list.

"It was around that time that it became apparent to us that new construction was drying up, and that we wanted to move on to something different," he recalls. "The writing was on the wall that things were slowing down. There were 12 guys bidding a job, making it difficult to even make any money."

Lee says it became obvious at that point: Commercial maintenance was not going away, so he began to shift more focus there.

"City ordinances won't let you grow your grass to 12 in. tall, plus commercial buildings were still invested in keeping up their appearances," he says. "So we shut down the construction department, kept everyone employed, and just started pushing maintenance."

Of course, there's a lot of price pressure in the maintenance market, so Lee says he had to be

willing to keep prices competitive.

"What we realized was that even if we couldn't make a lot of money on a maintenance job, it was our best way to get future work from the client — things like installation, tree trimming and irrigation," he says. "We were willing to accept the lower-paying maintenance jobs, with the hopes of building a long-term relationship with the client."

Building that relationship also meant adopting an attitude of "we're all in this together," says Lee. "We gave clients some leniency and took some short jobs on maintenance without a lot of profit, just to keep our clients happy in these tougher times," he says. "Our idea was that things would eventually turn around — and when they did, we'd be the maintenance contractor already working with the client and get the first shot at any bigger jobs."

That's precisely how things have played out. With the company operating lean and helping clients through difficult situations as best they could in 2009, they were in the perfect position to take off in 2010.

"We kept our maintenance base strong, and did a lot of good will for our clients," says Lee. "So in 2010, people started coming to us and saying 'you worked with our sister property through tough times — I have some work I need done at my own property.' That's exactly what we'd hoped would happen."

Lee says that the company's good customer service has been the best way to build and maintain those relationships. He makes sure clients always get a call back on the day they called — even if it's just to say "I don't have an answer, but I'm working on it," says Lee. "If you consistently do what you say you're going to do, you'll win people over — even the most difficult ones!" **LM**

GROWTH WISDOM

"Don't be scared to make a decision. You're better off making a poor decision quickly than doing nothing at all. If we had sat back and waited for the construction market to dry up, we'd be in serious trouble today. It's better to keep moving than to stand still. If you make the wrong decision, at least you have things in motion and can work on fixing it. But sitting around will get you nowhere."



RCI

Clockwise from top left: Keith Rotolo; Michael Rotolo; Rod Rotolo; and Joe Rotolo

Joe Rotolo, president of Rotolo Consultants Inc. (RCI) in Slidell, LA, which saw 30.1% growth in 2010, says that while a lot of companies throw around slogans, it's three "characteristics" that his employees strive to maintain: good work ethic, good character and a good sense of team.

"If you don't have all three of those, you won't stick around here very long," he says. "Our success can be attributed to having employees who meet all three."

Rotolo says there have been many situations where his employees have made him proud. "The most proud I am is when I find out something great an employee did after the fact — meaning they didn't do it to get recognized or attention. They did it because it was the right thing to do."

Louisiana has certainly seen its share of hard times in recent years, but Rotolo says his team didn't miss a beat in stepping up to help.

"When the oil spill and hurricane hit, everyone jumped in immediately," he says. "They just knew what they had to do. When you find out two weeks later that one of your employees was on the road at 2 a.m. on a Sunday, responding to a problem, you know you have good people."

Even six years after Hurricane Katrina, Rotolo says the effects are still being felt. They've been

both positive and negative for business — as has the more recent oil spill. On the down side, there have been more out-of-town and even out-of-state contractors in Louisiana than ever before. But there have also been opportunities.

"We've been in business since 1978, and for the majority of our careers, we've focused on landscape construction and maintenance," says Rotolo, who is in business with his three brothers, Kerry, Rod and Keith. "But we've also been entrepreneurial. Katrina opened up our eyes as to what we could do. We had to choose new scopes of service to survive. Nobody was looking at landscaping when their house or jobs were gone."

That's when RCI transitioned into doing more environmental work — remediation and demolition — which put them in a prime position when the BP oil spill occurred. In February 2011, the company also bought Midwest Environmental Resources (now known as Midwest Environmental Resources International or MERI), a 35-year-old environmental company.

"Instead of developing a new division, we felt it was better to do an acquisition," says Rotolo. "We knew we needed to diversify."

The company has also expanded into the cell tower industry.

"What that has done is afforded key people in our company to have a larger opportunity than they traditionally would have with RCI," he says. "Our managers are now moving into upper management, and having voice and direction in the company. It's allowed for organic growth." **LM**

GROWTH WISDOM

"Look around. Landscape contractors deal with a lot of business issues that are transferrable to other industries. We realized we were capable of much more than we thought. I think our industry suffers from low self-esteem because we're always told 'anyone can push a lawn mower.' But we are capable of much more than that. Remember that adversity creates opportunity."

GOTHIC GROUNDS MANAGEMENT

Growth tends to start with a clear vision of where you want to be. So says Ron Georgio, president of Gothic Grounds Management (GGM), headquartered in Valencia, CA. That original vision started more than 10 years ago, when Georgio's brother, Jon Georgio, president of Gothic Landscape Inc., had the foresight to know a bad economy was ahead. To survive, he knew a maintenance division was needed — and GGM was born.

Today, Ron Georgio says, GGM continues to always try and look to the future, the way his brother has.

"It comes down to what the end game looks like," he says. "We try to think as big as possible — and we're already talking about what we want our business to look like at the end of 2015."

Knowing those long-term goals helps workers also know their responsibilities, Georgio says.

"Sales are given very specific goals; branch managers are given specific retention goals; account managers are given specific expectations on enhancement sales; and my executive management team understands what they need to do to make our vision happen," he explains. "Everybody knows exactly where we're going and how we're going to get there. We've developed a formula — and if we all hit our goals, it's basically mathematically impossible that our company would not become what we envisioned it to be."

Besides this internal focus, the company is also



always looking to understand exactly what the customers' needs are, so that they can respond to them, says Georgio.

"We hired a team of master students from UCLA to contact our customers and drill down deeply on how we can better meet their needs," he says. "We got some very surprising, but helpful information from that. We also do regular monthly and annual customer surveys to find out what's important to them. One thing they've told us is that they want more in-house services, so we responded to that by adding arbor care and chemical treatments — two services we'd previously outsourced."

The company has continually seen growth over the years, and grew 14.4% in 2010. But Georgio says that this rapid pace of growth has meant extra effort on his part to keep that family culture with which the business started.

"We've grown from a couple million in 2000 to \$24 million in 2010, and are now projecting \$28 million for 2011," he says.

"We're a family company, and want to maintain that family culture," he concludes. "I block out time on my calendar regularly to make sure I'm visiting every team at every location. We currently have nine branches, and I try to get to each of them every single month." **LMM**

WHAT'S AHEAD

"We're in the process of growing our arbor care division, and already see that expanding rapidly. While most people close their checkbooks in a down economy, we didn't do that in sales. We brought on a really talented sales director who strengthened our sales team across the board. They're gaining a lot of traction for 2011, and will continue to help push us forward."

LUCAS TREE EXPERTS

Lucas Tree Experts in Portland, ME, has always focused on organic growth. This year, it saw 23.9% growth.

“We focus on growing internally because we feel there are less culture pains than through acquisition,” says CFO

Arthur Batson III.

“Strong management has been the key to our success,” he continues. “We’ve developed a manager-trainee program that begins near the corporate office so the manager understands our culture, work ethic and business practices, so

Lucas Tree Experts CEO Arthur Batson, Jr. (right) with his son, Lucas CFO Arthur Batson III



they can be successful when they are moved to a new location.”

Lucas Tree Experts was founded in 1926 to help the local power company complete the electrification of rural Maine. Today, it focuses on tree work, integrated pest management (IPM), lawn care, mosquito and tick spray, lighting and utility line clearance.

Since its beginning, Lucas has hurdled many obstacles. The company’s most recent challenges include the training of the labor force. It’s something that Batson says the company has worked to overcome by relying on its strong management team.

“We have developed management systems and business practices to streamline the training and focus on an identification of skill sets, so we can put the proper people in the correct locations to succeed,” he says.

With the right management in place, Batson says the company is projecting growth again this year.

“Our growth has come and will continue to come because of the leadership of our management team,” he says.

He adds that Lucas works hard to empower top managers “to be the face of the organization, so that employees recognize that a successful company is about the team, and not just the owners.” LM

GROWTH WISDOM

“Growth is only good if it is profitable growth. I see a lot of companies that just want to get bigger, but we would rather give up growth to increase profitability — and more importantly, predictable profitability.”

MAINSCAPE

Mark Forsythe says his company's success in 2010 comes down to good old business practices. "I wouldn't say it was anything particularly special or unique that we did to have a successful year," admits the president and CEO of Fishers, IN-based Mainscape. "There are a lot of basic business principles that you read about in magazines like *Landscape Management* that seem simple enough, but many people don't actually apply them. We just try to be diligent about actually applying those best practices for our business."

Clearly, the company succeeded at that goal: It saw 22.4% growth. But Forsythe points out that its annual average growth rate has always been around 20%.

In addition to applying smart business practices, Forsythe says it's the people and the culture that have made a difference in the company's success.

"I know that's something that everyone says, but it's definitely true," he emphasizes. "Having really good people makes a huge difference."

Because the company places so much value on



Mark Forsythe

employees, Forsythe says there's a constant effort to foster a positive working environment.

"We make sure to provide employees with the framework and infrastructure to succeed," he says. "Plus, we just try to create an atmosphere that's fun to work in."

"I believe that our people enjoy working here. We've created an atmosphere where they don't just come in to get paid, they actually enjoy getting up and coming to work."

"There are enough difficulties in life," he adds. "If we can make everyone's job a little easier, it pays off. We want to have a positive impact on peoples' lives — both within our company and with those we work with."

Of course, it's also important to foster a great relationship with clients, he says.

"We view our work as a partnership with our customers, and we have a great team that is committed to our customers' success," he concludes. "That has enabled us to expand our existing relationships, and develop exciting new relationships, as well." **LM**

WHAT'S AHEAD

"We are projecting 20%-plus growth for 2011 and targeting 20% growth in 2012. It comes back to the company culture and motivation that we've developed. Our people have the opportunity to grow, develop and take on new challenges. It's really our people who continue to drive our growth."



In 2010, PROscape Inc. grew by 21.9%. Larry O'Dell, president of the Orlando, FL-based company, says a combination of products, services and people contributed to its success.

PROscape President Larry O'Dell with Michele O'Dell and Keith O'Dell (from left)

"Growth has as much to do about the quality of the product and the level of the customer service being delivered as it is about any other facet," he says. "Of course, in this economy, you need to market the business. But true growth comes from having the right team in place, delivering a quality product and great customer service."

To deal with the pressures of the economy, and an increasingly competitive market, O'Dell says the company really focused on getting more referral business. He says referrals are always great business in that they're less expensive, less time-consuming and have a greater closing rate.

"As the economy suffered and continues to suffer, a major component of our growth over the years — new community development — suffered with it, and continues to suffer to this day," he explains. "So with shrinking revenue in 2008, we decided to diversify our portfolio, entering two additional client markets: Hotel/Resort and Apartment Community."

In the latter part of 2009 and throughout 2010, PROscape began to see a payoff, with several area hotels and apartments giving the company new opportunities. Today, the hotel and apartment markets represent slightly more than 5% of PROscape's business.

"In addition to the two new client markets, we also implemented a new branch location in South Florida and saw earlier branch locations,

PROSCAPE INC.

started in 2006 and 2007, mature and develop into formidable branch operations," O'Dell says. "Having a larger audience through expanding our client market and opening branch operations certainly afforded us additional opportunities that we wouldn't have otherwise had. Considering the downturn in the economy, we were thankful to have opened the additional branches at a time when we did."

But O'Dell says PROscape's relationship with its employees has shown the most dividends. All of the company's people are striving toward a common goal, and that unification has strengthened the business, O'Dell says. In 2008, as the economy really began to decline and budgets were constricted more than ever, PROscape allowed the managers to take on a greater role in the budgeting process.

"Obviously, for some time the managers had budgets from which they operated, but by 2009, we had really expanded their involvement to include every aspect of the day-to-day operations — including both direct and indirect cost," he says. "As a result, we feel the team became more and more like a true team, focusing on common goals, sharing in victories and agonizing over losses. With renewed perspective, managers started thinking outside the box and becoming much more creative, with a greater level of accountability.

"People often equate growth with a better sales staff or better marketing," he continues. "Both of these are important, but the reality for our business over the past year has been a team more focused on quality results and better customer service." LM

GROWTH
WISDOM

"It's easy to take one step forward and two steps back in the business, so anyone focused strictly on sales or driven by sales will ultimately fail — or at least come to the realization they're heading for a cliff. Sales and marketing can help you take one step forward, but a good team can keep you from taking two steps back."

HOFFMAN LANDSCAPES INC.

Ten years ago, an important goal was set at Wilton, CT-based Hoffman Landscapes, Inc.: The company would grow its snow business to the point where, despite the fact that it basically closed down normal operations for three months, it wouldn't come out of the off-season at a loss (due to fixed expenses and employees).

Despite the rough economy, the company has reached that point. It actually saw 21.8% growth this year.

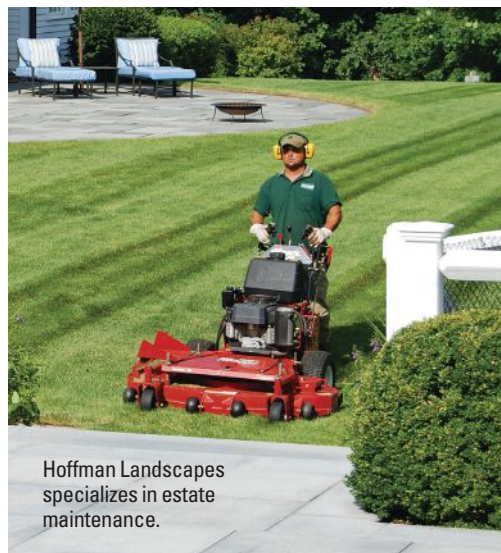
President Michael Hoffman reports that several factors came into play. The first was continuing with marketing efforts. When many cut costs in this area, Hoffman pushed forward. Referrals remain the No. 1 source of new customers, he says, followed by the Internet and then direct mail.

Customer service was another contributing factor to the company's successful year. "It's the reason why referrals still work for us," says Hoffman. "The overarching rule is that you do what you say you're going to do. And, if you make a mistake, fix it."

One way that Hoffman offers exceptional customer service is by being sure customers can always reach someone. He has actually left his cell phone and home phone numbers on the company answering machine. "I've had a lot of people say they can't believe I give that out to customers, but the truth is, customers don't call that often — they're respectful," he says. "If they do call, it's typically because they really need us and I don't want to miss that call."

THE ECONOMY'S
BIGGEST
CHALLENGE

"I think the customers are changing. They're becoming more demanding. They want more for the same dollar. I believe you have to deliver that, because it's a competitive marketplace. If you don't, someone else will."



Hoffman Landscapes specializes in estate maintenance.

Hoffman says it's also becoming "irreplaceable" that helps retain customers and gain new ones. He says the perfect example would be a customer calling at 3:30 p.m. on a Friday afternoon saying they're having friends over for the weekend and would love the patio blown off.

"A lot of companies might just think it's a pain in the neck, but I view it as an opportunity," he says. "In fact, it's probably the best opportunity you've had all week to become irreplaceable. And once you gain a customer's trust like that, you've easily built a long-term relationship."

Finally, Hoffman says that the company's success can be attributed to the fact that it has always been growth-focused and didn't lose that perspective when times got tough. In fact, out of 25 years in operation, there was only one where the company didn't grow. He believes growth is closely intertwined with employee retention.

"High retention is not possible without growth, and vice versa," he concludes. "You can't keep your employees if you're not growing. You've got to keep them interested." **LM**

GRANT & POWER LANDSCAPING

Jan-Gerrit Bouwman, partner, Grant & Power Landscaping Inc., in West Chicago, IL, says many factors went into the company's 20.3% growth in 2010. But the key combination was making good decisions and pushing customer service and loyalty more than ever.

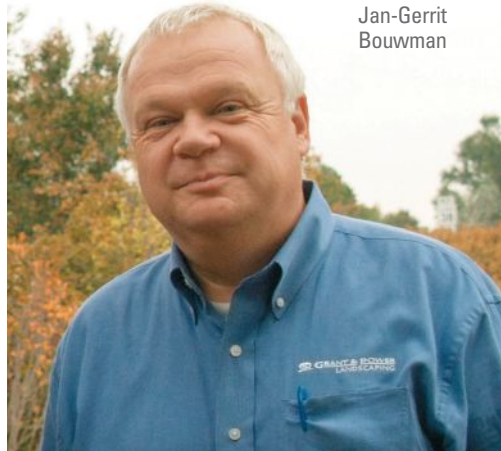
Expanding the residential maintenance side of the business was one of those good decisions. Residential design/build had been flat, and it was obvious that maintenance would become the driver behind their continued success.

"Our staff is doing a really good job maintaining these properties and keeping our customers happy," says Bouwman. "But it's also our lifetime warranty that is helping boost these sales. If we install it, and the client signs up for year-round maintenance, they will get a lifetime warranty on whatever we install. That's been really successful. Of course, it's because our people continue to do a quality job maintaining these properties and fulfilling the warranty when needed that the program has been so successful."

While 2011 has been a tough year for the company — Bouwman says he believes that lost confidence in the stock market is likely playing a role — they've continued to hold pretty steady.

"Last year we grew, and this year we haven't, but we feel fortunate to even be doing well when times are so tough," he says. "I think everybody is seeing some harder times again this year, and we'll get through them like we always have. It's tough when clients start postponing jobs because they've lost confidence and are a little more nervous about the stock market than they might have been previously. But we're managing to push forward."

Bouwman says that pushing ahead has meant a strong focus on customer service,



Jan-Gerrit
Bouwman

which will hopefully put Grant in position for a better year ahead.

"Service, quality and value for the dollar continue to be the most important factors," he says. "More people are looking to get the most bang for their buck. That's putting pressure on the price, so we've had to remain competitive. But that's what we'll continue to do. We want to go out of our way to keep our customers happy." **LM**

WHAT'S
AHEAD

"We will continue to do what we can to keep customers happy. We will also continue with an investment in marketing and getting our name out there. We have managed to get in the news a lot, and that helps with recognition. People see us. We've gotten awards, and that's landed us in some magazines and helped build upon our good reputation."

JAMES RIVER GROUNDS MANAGEMENT

A phenomenal snow year catapulted Glen Allen, VA-based James River Grounds Management Inc. to 20% growth last year. But President Maria Candler says that snow is never something that can be counted on or budgeted for, so the company always plans ahead for ways it can be strategically prepared to take care of as many customers as possible, should it wind up being a season of heavy snowfall. Last year, that planning paid off.

“Utilizing subcontractors and beefing up our snow removal possibilities were great ways to grow in 2010,” says Candler. “Snow can really give a nice padding to the bottom line, so it’s important to be ready.”

Because Candler wants her management team to really get an idea of how things are running, she often takes snow out of the P&L. This helps produce a steadier idea of the year’s performance.

“Even when we took that number away, we were still able to grow our business by 6% in 2010,” says Candler. “We’re excited about that number, since most businesses struggled to grow this year. We feel proud that we were able to achieve growth — even without Mother Nature’s help.”

Candler attributes the ability to grow to the company’s culture, noting that the entire structure of the organization has been built around

creating career ladders for employees.

“We look for people who have the desire to move up, and that puts positive pressure on our team to deliver,” she explains. “We make sure our people know we’re invested in them, and in return, they invest in the company. We’re a company that’s always poised to grow.”

While the company continues to push forward, Candler says it hasn’t been without some challenges. She says that sales are never the problem; even in this down economy, James River Grounds Management has been able to retain clients. Her biggest obstacle is in finding people who are willing to take on tough labor jobs — and she says she believes the government hasn’t made it any easier.

“That’s my biggest frustration right now,” she says. “The government is taking away a great resource for legal labor, and that’s hurting business.”

But Candler says that the company will weather these changes. “Innovation happens when things get tough, so we continue to persevere,” she says. “You get better when thrown into challenging situations — and at the end of the day, I don’t let negative influences stand in the way of where business is headed. Some great things have come out of this year, even though it hasn’t been the easiest business environment we’ve had.” LM

WHAT'S
AHEAD

“I don’t predict any drastic changes with the economy, so I think business will be a repeat of what we had last year: slow and steady. It’s not hitting it out of the ballpark like we used to, but in this economy, I’ll take 5% or 6% growth without snow padding the bottom line. That’s something to celebrate.”

RYAN LAWN & TREE INC.

Larry Ryan, president of Ryan Lawn & Tree Inc., Overland Park, KS, says one of the company's goals has always been that every person be committed to growth. That goal is made easier by the fact that the company is 70% employee-owned.

"The employees get an ownership letter each year that shows how many dollars of the company value they own," Ryan explains. "We almost doubled in value last year, so some of the people made as much money off the stock increase as they did off their salary. That really opens their eyes — and they become invested in selling the company to our customers."

Certainly all of that is paying off, as Ryan Lawn & Tree saw 18.5% growth last year. Ryan says that part of that growth has come from well-thought-out mergers with other companies.

"We really care about our customers and our employees, so in order to make a merger work, we have to find a company that has the same attitude as us," he says. "We want to merge with companies whose leadership still wants to work. We don't want anyone sitting around. That's not just our philosophy; we feel it's a principle of life. The American dream is working hard to get ahead, and that's something we believe in. In a great company, the owner never quits."

Ryan also says the company has a focus on continuous improvement.

"When you have growth-oriented people working for you, they're always looking to solve problems and find ways to move the company forward," he explains. "With the employees so invested in the company, it's not just me solving problems. It gives tremendous empowerment when you allow the company as a whole to be involved in problem-solving. They literally take control of their jobs. We're not just telling



everyone what to do. They're making their own decisions. I feel that our commitment as a group is what helps us to get ahead."

But Ryan says it wasn't always this way. There was a time, several years back, where there was some inter-department rivalry. However, he says that all it took was a bad ice and wind storm where the departments had to work together for them to realize each other's strengths. He says he now believes that departments working side-by-side is the solution to animosity.

"Having our departments really feel like a team and being willing to work together has been a great asset," he says. "We definitely have some wonderful people here.

"If you'd told me 25 years ago that I'd be privileged to work with 175 great people, I wouldn't have believed it," he concludes. "It humbles me to look at where we are today, and I give my people all the credit." **LRT**

GROWTH
WISDOM

"Don't play to be second-best. We're an organization that plays to be a company that the competition admires."

HIGHGROVE PARTNERS, LLC

What did it take to grow Jim McCutcheon's landscape business this year? Not thinking like a landscape business, says the CEO of HighGrove Partners, LLC in Atlanta, who saw 18.3% growth this past year.

"I think a lot of folks are really focused on the horticulture aspect of the business, which is indeed important — but at the end of the day, that doesn't speak well to the difficulties our customers are facing," he says. "We have really developed our operations, services and products around the idea of trying to make our customers' lives easier, and that's paid dividends for us."

There's no question that the customers in this market are feeling the impact of tough times. Atlanta had the largest number of bank failures of any city in the nation, and that's largely because so many were invested in real estate. McCutcheon says that when he moved to Atlanta as a kid, he can still remember the day in 1959 that the population sign turned to 1 million people. Today, the city has approximately 4.2 million residents — and the Atlanta metropolitan area adds at least another million more.

"The crash of the housing market has really hurt us as a city," he says. "We were definitely hard hit, and that's scarred people."

McCutcheon says there are approximately 3,000 landscape companies in metro Atlanta, so competition has always been fierce: "I think those that really focused on differentiating themselves and positioning themselves in the new market are the ones that are still doing well."

One of the things that HighGrove Partners has done differently this year was to develop a



Jim McCutcheon

division called Land Services, which capitalized on opportunities the economic situation has created. To head up the division, the company brought back Craig Morris, a former senior member who had left to become a developer.

"This division enables us to become the adjunct staff for a lot of the developers we work for, because so many don't have staff available anymore," he says. "So instead of just being involved in the very beginning of a project, we are now able to bridge the middle and do a lot of the development services for them that we previously wouldn't have handled."

Of all the factors that came into play for a successful year, though, McCutcheon says he credits the leadership team the most. "Even through these difficult times, they never lost sight of the importance of our culture," he says. "We've continued to promote the same work culture we always have, and that's helped us get through this." **LMI**

GROWTH WISDOM

"Never stop learning. There's always something you could be doing better or differently to grow the business."

SCHULTZ INDUSTRIES INC.

Schultz Industries' motto is "Come Grow with Us." It's obviously a pun for its customers, but it's also fitting for the company, which saw 16.7% growth this year.

Eric Schultz, president of the Golden, CO, company, says that what it took to grow in this tough economy was focusing on overhead recovery.

"We focused incredibly hard on making sure we captured enough work to maintain our overhead recovery, while still putting a few points on the bottom line," he explains. "As a result, we got pretty competitive and pretty lean. Our capture rate has gone up tremendously."

Schultz points to adaptability as one key to his company's success. While other companies are still waiting around for things to return to where they once were, Schultz says he's continued pushing forward, accepting that this may just be "the new norm."

"The only way to survive and ultimately grow is to figure out how to operate in this new environment," he says. "While we used to make maybe 10% or 12% on a job, we've decided we can live with 2% or 3%. We're still putting dollars in the bank and paying the bills. It's the people who are still trying to make what they used to who just can't adapt and survive."

One of the hardest decisions Schultz says he had to make was downsizing his management team. While it was a painful move, it helped the company weather some of the tougher economic times. And now that the company is seeing some growth, he's bringing some of his people back on board to help manage that growth.

Overall, Schultz Industries' construction division saw the most growth this year, and maintenance continues to go strong, becoming a "staple



Eric and Pamela Schultz, partners in Schultz Industries Inc.

service," Schultz says. He adds that continuing to invest in a marketing program has also paid off in

keeping these divisions thriving. And as another year approaches, Schultz says he'll continue to push these two services to drive continued growth in the future. **LM**

GROWTH WISDOM

"I've been through four or five of these downturns, but none has ever been so severe. It was because we fought back by becoming lean and more competitive that we pushed growth in this current downturn. We figured out how to survive in the 'new norm.'"

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P R O V E N S O L U T I O N S

RESOURCE PROFILES

A look at what some of the top companies in the Green Industry have to offer.



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Scott Welge
Head of Green Marketing

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Our focus on innovation is the key to maintaining or gaining a leading position in every market in which we operate. It is also the foundation for improving the lives of many millions of people:

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Product focus:
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Herbicides, Armada Fungicide and TopChoice Insecticide

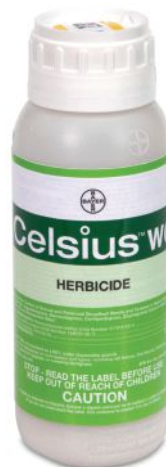
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Innovation plays an important role in overcoming global challenges and is a key driver of future growth at Bayer.

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Web site: www.belgard.biz

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Support:

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- ▶ Pavers, walls and curbs
- ▶ Custom and modular applications for backyard kitchen designs



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Rich Goldsbury
President,
Bobcat Americas

Bobcat



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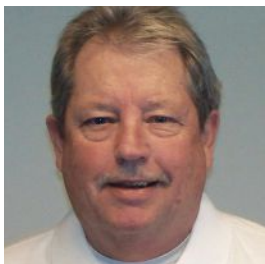
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Find yours with a niche product: Nine years ago Boulder Designs® began to research and develop a new, custom, made-to-order, specially enhanced concrete boulder product that could be used for commercial business signage, farm and estate markers, parks, schools, municipalities, just about anywhere signage is needed or could be utilized.

Boulder Designs®, based in Rantoul, IL, is the only franchised company in the United States that specializes in this type of boulder signage that can be used for commercial business signage. The main appeal of this product is its ability to compliment existing landscaping while offering an eye-appealing alternative to typical business signage. Boulder Designs® also greatly reduces costly



maintenance issues and is often allowed by zoning regulations where other types of signage are not. At present, our products are offered by 38 franchises in more than a dozen states. They have a considerable presence in the Midwest.

Eldean Bergman, owner and founder, shares the opportunity that exists with Boulder Designs and his outlook for 2011.

"Today's business owners are looking for unique products and services that attract the

general public's interest and Boulder Designs® does just that," says Bergman. "We have developed a simple system with a unique team atmosphere. Be productive, regardless of the weather at your facility. Become part of a group that shares product ideas and new developments. "The flexibility of the Boulder Designs system allows you to integrate it easily into your business. Imagine the potential that exists around you. Businesses, churches, schools, parks, associations, municipalities, even memorials. "Because of this we see continued growth and opportunity. Last year was our best year so far, exceeding 30% growth system wide, and we have set the ground work into place for 2011 to exceed that mark," says Bergman.





Mark Tipton
Managing Partner

Mission Statement

Our goal is to help you achieve total control of your business by providing you with the tools to build a better future for you and your company.

See us at GIE booth 8062



Achieve Total Control of Your Business

BOSS® LM—
The Integra Group, Inc.
714 Spirit 40 Park Drive
Suite 150
Chesterfield, MO 63005

Phone: 1-866-596-5971

Fax: 636-449-3900

Web site:

www.bosslm.com

E-mail: info@bosslm.com

BOSS® LM — The Integra Group, Inc.

Product focus:

The Integra Group was founded in 1999 as a custom software development firm. More than 100 software systems have been designed, developed and successfully deployed. One of these systems was developed for a large landscape company with offices in multiple cities. We captured their vision and delivered BOSS® LM, a powerful, easy-to-use business management software system—a single integrated solution that spans all core business operations from sales through invoicing and accounting.

BOSS® LM is enabling companies of all sizes to better understand and manage their businesses by providing greater visibility and control over what is happening on a day-to-day basis. BOSS® LM presents the information you need for strategic planning to improve and expand your business.

One of BOSS® LM's unique features is that it is designed for use by employees throughout the organization from sales to production, not just accountants and administrators. BOSS® LM provides simple graphical screens with intuitive drill downs that give users the information they need quickly and easily. They will throw out their spreadsheets and charts—and actually use it.

That's why clients are telling us that sales is able to sell more and production is able to produce more since they implemented BOSS® LM.

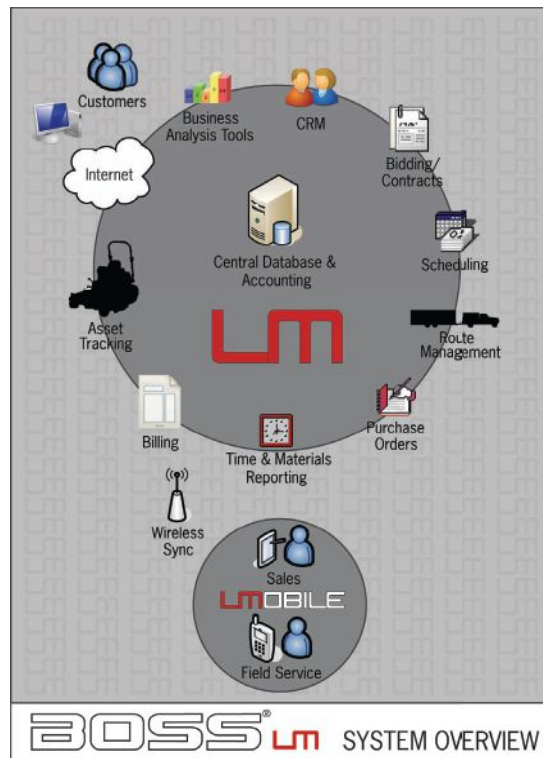
Our first customer told us: "My return on investment for BOSS® LM is higher than any piece of equipment I've purchased."

Calculating the ROI doesn't just apply to equipment, but to any asset that requires an

investment, including software. One of the steps in our process with each client before he or she purchases BOSS® LM is to create a value analysis to identify the ROI.

Technical support:

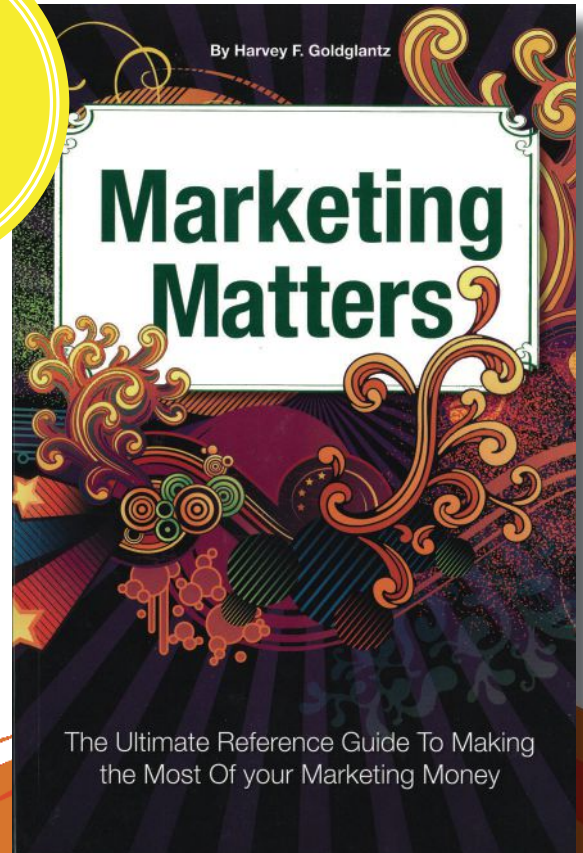
Unlike many software purchases that typically don't have a plan until after you purchase the software, ours begins long before you have made any commitments. After some initial discussions, we put together a mutually agreed upon evaluation plan, which outlines the steps that we will go through together to determine whether BOSS® LM is a good fit for your business. After implementation, we provide complete support including product upgrades.



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Order
your copy
at the
LM
bookstore,
today.

*The only
marketing guide
you'll ever need*



MARKETING MATTERS

The Ultimate Reference Guide To Making the Most of Your Marketing Money

Marketing Matters isn't just good – it's phenomenal. It's going to revolutionize the way you think about marketing, and will help you realize you can create a great marketing plan and not break the bank doing it. Harvey Goldglantz walks you through the marketing process step by step – from creating a marketing budget to crafting an effective message to deciding where to place your advertising to maximizing your success from your marketing investment. This easy-to-understand, useful reference book should be on every service industry professional's desk.

Author: Harvey Goldglantz

shop.landscapemanagement.net/shop.php

Landscape
Management

Corona Clipper



Product focus:

Corona is the leading manufacturer of superior quality forged pruning and long-handled tools for both the professional and consumer markets. Corona's legendary reputation is built on classic design, handcrafted forged workmanship and superior customer service. This reputation has made Corona America's first choice in hand tools, season after season.

Born in the orange groves of southern California in the early 1920s, Corona has a long history of designing tools that provide lasting performance for professionals and gardeners who take pride in a job well done.

Corona's customer base includes landscape, irrigation, horticultural, agricultural, forestry, construction, maintenance and public works markets, served by

professionals and home gardeners.

Manufacturing facilities:

Headquartered in Corona, CA, approximately 60 miles south of Los Angeles, Corona has three manufacturing and warehouse facilities in the United States and Mexico, employing approximately 250 people.

Technical support:

Top distributors and dealers rely on Corona's unparalleled expertise to manage the entire hand tool category. Corona offers comprehensive dealer/distributor support from its factory and home office. Corona field

representatives provide a first line of assistance, there to answer questions or offer valuable advice.

Major product lines:

The company's product line includes hand pruners, shears, loppers, saws, garden tools, shovels, rakes and wheelbarrows.

In 2010, Corona introduced its new brand image and innovative line of cutting tools, the Dual Cut Series of pruners,

lopers and hedge shears. Based on its heritage, Corona's new mark and tool design innovations continue to assert leadership and expertise in manufacturing the best garden and landscape tools. Check out the full line of Corona tools and accessories at coronatoolsusa.com.



CORONA
SEASON AFTER SEASON

Corona Clipper, Inc.
22440 Temescal
Canyon Road
Corona, CA 92883

Phone: 800-847-7863
Fax: 951-737-8657

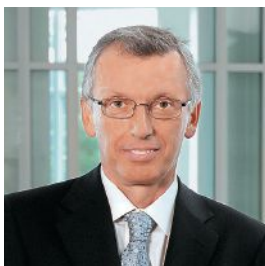
Online with Corona:
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twitter.com/coronatools
[linkedin.com/company/corona-clipper-inc](https://www.linkedin.com/company/corona-clipper-inc)

E-mail:
sales@corona.bellota.com

"More than 80 years ago, Corona began forging a reputation for quality. Our constant search for innovative techniques to build increasingly superior tools has earned the respect of landscape and agricultural professionals, as well as home gardeners.

"Both our professional and passionate consumers demand the best; and at Corona, we believe we make the best gardening and landscaping tools in the world. To be the best, Corona's tools must always be unique in the marketplace, relevant to professional and consumer lifestyles, and authentic to our company's values and heritage. For decades we've applied our advanced principles of tool design while researching those who use our tools and understanding how they use them. We apply our research into making tools that help professionals work faster, smarter and more efficiently, season after season."

—Steve Erickson, President



Antonio Galindez
President and CEO

Mission Statement

As part of The Dow Chemical Company, we share a common mission of constantly improving what is essential to human progress by mastering science and technology. This mission is embodied in what we call the “Human Element”—our commitment to drive and apply science to solve the world’s most challenging human problems. This focus empowers our thinking, encourages teamwork and gives our employees the freedom to develop creative approaches. Together with The Dow Chemical Company, we strive to make the biggest impact while leaving the smallest footprint.

Dow AgroSciences
9330 Zionsville Road
Indianapolis, IN 46268

Phone: 800-255-3726
Fax: 800-905-7326
Web site:
www.dowprovesit.com
E-mail: info@dow.com

Dow AgroSciences

Product focus:

Dow AgroSciences delivers innovative technology that exceeds market needs and improves the quality of life of the world’s growing population. Every day, our employees—our Human Element—combine their different perspectives to constantly improve our organization and the products and services we deliver. This is evident in the Turf & Ornamental products we have recently introduced, and the several new products and technologies in our pipeline. That’s our commitment to the industries we serve and, most important, that’s our commitment to you.

Major product lines:

➤ **Dimension®** specialty herbicide provides premium season-long pre-emergence control of crabgrass, spurge, oxalis and other grassy weeds, along with early postemergence control of crabgrass. With multiple formulations, including water-based Dimension 2EW specialty herbicide, Dimension can be used over the top of field- and container-grown nursery and landscape ornamentals, and on established lawns, golf courses and commercial sod farms without staining surroundings.



➤ **Gallery®** specialty herbicide is the most effective pre-emergence herbicide for broadleaf weeds labeled for cool- and warm-season turf. It can be applied in spring or fall; helps minimize costly callbacks due to weed breakthrough; and provides control for up to eight months.

➤ **LockUp®** specialty herbicide is available through distributors as a formulated product for superior control of dollarweed in the South and dandelion in the North. It offers postemergence weed control to lawn care professionals, golf course superintendents and sports turf managers. It provides activity at extremely low use rates (0.02 to 0.06 lb. a.i./A) and

can be applied to moist cool- or warm-season turf.

➤ **Eagle® 20EW** specialty fungicide is a liquid systemic fungicide for preventive and curative control of roughly 20 turf-destroying diseases, including dollar spot and brown patch. Available in convenient, easy-to-use containers ideal for use on home lawns and backyard fruit trees. It won’t harm popular turfgrass and ornamental species.

Support: We have dedicated individuals serving as sales representatives, technical account managers, sales managers and field scientists providing training, stewardship and solutions to formulators, distributors, university researchers and end users nationwide. Labels and MSDS are available at www.dowprovesit.com.

Our Power of MORE™ earning program allows companies to earn cash rebates on Dow AgroSciences product purchases. Visit www.powerofmore.com.

© TM Trademark of Dow AgroSciences LLC. State restrictions on the sale and use of Dimension specialty herbicide products, LockUp specialty herbicide and Eagle 20EW specialty fungicide apply. Consult the label before purchase or use for full details. Always read and follow label directions.



Mike McDermott
Global Business Leader
for DuPont Professional
Products

DuPont Professional Products

Product focus:

DuPont Professional Products brings the company's tradition of science, innovation and safety to the pest and green industries. DuPont Professional Products' global portfolio includes DuPont™ Imprelis™, DuPont™ Acelepryn® insecticide, DuPont™ Advion® fire ant bait, DuPont™ Advion® insect granule and

DuPont™ Provaunt® insecticide. Our R&D efforts focus on creating high-performing turf and landscape ornamental products with the best environmental attributes possible.

Major product lines:

› **DuPont™ Imprelis™ herbicide** is the most scientifically advanced turf herbicide in more than 40 years. Its innovative new technology is effective on even the toughest broadleaf weeds—like ground ivy and wild violets—with more application freedom than ever before. That's because there are no restrictions to when it can be applied. Even during reseeding or rainy days, it provides long-lasting residual control on a wide range of

broadleaf weeds. Plus, it can be used with granular fertilizer or on post-emergent weeds with unprecedented results. Although Imprelis™ is tough on weeds, it has one of the lowest application rates in lawn care. In addition, it has low toxicity to mammals.

› **DuPont™ Acelepryn® insecticide** provides season-long control of every turf-damaging white grub species plus key surface-feeding insects with just one application when applied according to label use directions. Acelepryn® is also gentle on the environment, a key feature as more homeowners are requesting environmentally-smart choices. Classified as reduced-risk by the EPA for applications to turfgrass, Acelepryn® has a mode of action different from other turf insecticides. It is available in a liquid formulation, a granular ready-to-use formulation and a ready-to-use fertilizer formulation.

Acelepryn® is designed and approved for use on residential and commercial turf as well as landscape ornamentals.

› **DuPont™ Provaunt® insecticide** offers a mode of action that controls a wide range of caterpillars and other key insect pests as listed on the approved label. Applications of Provaunt causes target insect pests to stop their feeding in hours or less—and that activity helps to stop damage to your customers' turf and landscape

ornamental plants. Provaunt® is effective at the low label application rates. And this effectiveness can be attributed to the class of chemistry and mode of action of the active ingredient in Provaunt®.

› **DuPont™ Advion® fire ant bait** has been tested in the field and through professional use to show that fire ant colony control can be achieved in 24 to 72 hours. Just one or two applications of the bait formulation has been shown capable of achieving year-long control in a fire ant-infested area that has been treated—at an annual cost per acre that's more affordable than many other fire ant control products currently on the market. This product features the DuPont active ingredient indoxacarb, which was recognized by the U.S. EPA in its Reduced Risk Program for fire ant control.

› **DuPont™ Advion® insect granule** is a non-repellent bait that is attractive to ants, cockroaches, silverfish, house and field crickets, and earwigs. It provides lawn and pest management professionals with desirable insect control in a ready-to-use, dry bait formulation. This formulation is easy to apply in a wide range of approved application use sites including broadcast lawn treatments, attics, crawl spaces, basements and perimeter applications.



The miracles of science™

DuPont Professional Products

4417 Lancaster Pike
CRP Building 705
Wilmington, DE 19880

Phone: 888-638-7668

Fax: 302-355-3218

Web site: www2.dupont.com

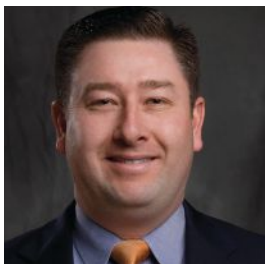
E-mail:

proproducts@dupont.com



Scan this tag to visit Firestone Specialty Products on your phone.

Need the mobile app? Get it free at <http://www.mobiletag.com>



John Goers
General Manager

Mission Statement

With a highly knowledgeable network of distributors, agents and staff supporting us, we aim to be the global leader in the protection, conservation and reutilization of water.

More Information

Headquartered in Indianapolis, Ind., Firestone Specialty Products is a leading manufacturer and distributor of quality liners for the decorative water feature market, as well geomembranes and water management solutions for the civil, commercial, industrial and environmental markets. Each of our product lines is backed by a full line of accessories.

Firestone Specialty Products

250 W. 96th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46260
Phone: 1-800-428-4442
Web site:
www.firestonesp.com/lm
E-mail: info@firestonesp.com

Firestone Specialty Products

Major product lines:

Water Management Solutions, PondGard™ Rubber Liners, Firestone EPDM Geomembranes, Firestone fPP-R Geomembranes, TPO Geomembranes, plus a full line of accessories.

Product Focus

Water Management Solutions:

Recently introduced to the marketplace, Firestone Water Management Solutions is an innovative and customizable line of products to maximize your water resources. Featuring the Firestone EPIC System, this onsite water management and reuse system is designed to collect, filter, retain and distribute water below ground at its source. The system can be integrated with Firestone turf reinforcement products and/or permeable pavers to provide additional drainage and water collection. When used in combination, these products will increase the durability and functionality of your green space, while improving your project's hydrologic responsibility.

By integrating a custom-designed Water Management Solution, multiple aspects of water collection, natural treatment, retention and reuse can be addressed, including:

- ▶ Managing stormwater discharge from hardscapes like



roads, parking lots and roofs;

- ▶ Transforming impervious parking areas to functional drainage areas;
- ▶ Converting parks and fields to functional, multi-purpose green spaces;
- ▶ Reducing or eliminating the need for additional water source irrigation on golf courses and other green spaces;
- ▶ Creating rain gardens that treat stormwater run-off and reuse the water for irrigation; and
- ▶ Recycling greywater for onsite subsurface irrigation.

Manufacturing Facilities:

We have 3 manufacturing facilities located throughout the United States.

Technical Support, Sales, Training and/or Customer Service:

You can locate your nearest sales representative, distributor or applicator at www.firestonesp.com/lm. You can also access our website to find product and technical information, view installation detail videos, order literature and samples, or to learn about our contractor training program.

Fisher Engineering

Product focus:

Dedication to quality and service has been a FISHER® tradition from the start. Fisher Engineering has been manufacturing snowplows for over 60 years in the coastal city of Rockland, ME. Through the years, its plows have earned a solid reputation for reliability and strength—especially among commercial snowplowers. Major product lines include:



Fisher Engineering
50 Gordon Drive
Rockland, ME 04841

Web site:
www.fisherplows.com
Contact:
fe2000@fisherplows.com

› **XtremeV™:** FISHER has taken the best features of the rugged XBLADE™ and the popular EZ-V® snowplows and combined them to build an industry-best V-plow.

› **XBLADE™:** You won't find a commercial- or municipal-use snowplow built any tougher than this. It combines FISHER's exclusive X-Bracing with premium, corrosion-resistant stainless steel or poly moldboard.

› **XLS™ (Expandable Length Snowplow):** From an 8-ft. retracted straight-blade width to the 10-ft. expanded width,

to a scoop width of more than 9 ft., and a more effective windrowing configuration, the XLS delivers a new level of profitable performance in every plowing situation.

› **HD Series:** The rugged FISHER HD Series plows will withstand the rigors of all commercial applications.

› **MC Series:** For vehicles in the 17,000 to 27,500 gross vehicle weight range, these plows are designed for serious snowplowing.

› **HT Series™:** Targeted specifically for today's half-ton 4WD pickup trucks, the FISHER HT Series snowplow is a full-size, full-featured snowplow with the strength to handle institutional and extended-use homeowner applications.

› **SD Series:** Designed for homeowners and non-commercial plowing applications.

› **Spreaders:** FISHER builds a variety of PRO-CASTER™ and POLY-CASTER™ hopper spreaders and SPEED-CASTER™ tailgate spreaders to match your ice control needs.

Manufacturing facilities: FISHER's recently expanded 200,000-sq.-ft. manufacturing facility is in Rockland, ME. As a division of Douglas Dynamics, LLC, the country's leading manufacturer of snow and ice removal equipment, FISHER products and components are also manufactured in Douglas Dynamics' Milwaukee, WI facility.

Technical support: FISHER distributors and dealers are factory trained to provide exceptional product and service support before, during and after the sale.

What does your future hold?

Take a peek inside *The Professional Landcare Network's Crystal Ball Reports* to uncover your potential business future. Whether it's the economics of the Green Industry or the future of sustainability, you can find what you need to know in these pages. These publications are available for sale in the *LM* bookstore — <http://shop.landscapemanagement.net>.

From our bookshelf to yours.



Landscape
Management

Landscape Management e-news



◀ i-news

Find compelling and in-depth coverage of landscape irrigation, which is critical to the health of turfgrass and ornamentals and to the continued growth of our professional Green Industry.



▲ Get Growing-Livescapes

Published every other month, this e-newsletter helps contractors become more profitable when it comes to their bedding plant, ornamental and tree installation services.

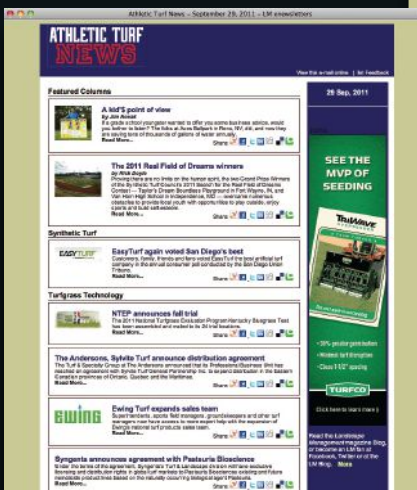
▶ LM Direct!

LMdirect! rounds up all the industry's news and hot links in one quick read.



◀ Athletic Turf

Each month, Athletic Turf News rounds up all the latest news and information to help athletic field managers in schools, universities, public parks and professional sports leagues do their jobs.



▲ LDB Solutions

A monthly e-mail newsletter for professionals who design and install landscapes, hardscapes, decks and patios.

Subscribe today at www.landscapemanagement.net/e-newsletters



Amy O'Shea
Director, FMC Professional Solutions

Mission Statement

Feeding the world, protecting health and providing the conveniences of life. With our superior technology and strong partnerships with customers, FMC Corporation is finding solutions that help to change people's lives for the better.

FMC Corporation
1735 Market St.
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Phone: 800-321-1362
Fax: 215-299-6100
Web site:
www.fmcprosolutions.com
E-mail:
fmc.prosolutions@fmc.com

FMC Corporation

Product focus:

FMC is a global, diversified chemical company that has been providing innovative solutions, applications and quality products for more than a century to agricultural, industrial and consumer markets.

FMC products are formulated in the United States. Our corporate headquarters and customer support center is located in Philadelphia, and our extensive team of research, sales representatives and technical support are scattered throughout the United States.

Major product lines:

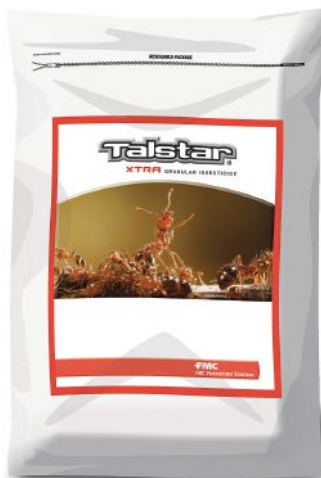
FMC provides a full line of proven liquid, granular and aerosol insecticides for pest and termite control, pre- and post-emergence herbicides, fungicides, and more.

Talstar. Our Talstar® products are the #1 trusted brand in general pest control, giving lawn care operators cost effective, proven solutions for long-lasting, broad-spectrum control of over 75 of the toughest lawn and ornamental pests, including ants (including fire ants), billbugs, chinch bugs, fleas, ticks, and more.

This includes the new **Talstar® EZ featuring Verge™ Technology**, a granular insecticide formulated exclusively for FMC on an

odorless, low-dust granule that spreads uniformly; **Talstar® Professional**, a water-based, liquid formulation; **Talstar® PL** granular insecticide, which uses a sand carrier for more invisible control of perimeter pests; and **Talstar® XTRA**, a non-restricted-use granular insecticide that eliminates fire ants and other outdoor pests in as little as minutes, while not sacrificing long-lasting residual.

- › **Herbicides.** Our new and expanding list of herbicides give lawn care operators control of weeds without the wait. This includes:
 - › **Solitare®** herbicide, the only all-in-one postemergence weed control solution against crabgrass, sedges, and tough broadleaf weeds;
 - › **Dismiss®** herbicide, the industry's fastest control of sedges with visible results in 24-48 hours.



- › **Echelon®**, a pre-emergent crabgrass and sedge control that is both root and shoot absorbed for over 100 days of control that is available in a sprayable formulation and on fertilizer;
- › **QuickSilver®** herbicide, a common tank mix partner with typical 3-way broadleaf products for fast and broader spectrum control of common broadleaf weeds.
- › **SquareOne™** herbicide for increased application flexibility on newly seeded turf; and
- › **NEW Blindside™** herbicide for challenging postemergent weeds that can be applied to virtually all types of warm-season turfgrass, including St. Augustinegrass.

Additional products for lawn care are listed on our web site.

(FMC, Talstar, Solitare, Dismiss, Echelon, QuickSilver, SquareOne and Blindside are trademarks of FMC Corporation. © FMC Corporation. All rights reserved. Verge is a trademark of Oil-Dri Corporation of America.)



Joe Shooner
Vice President of Sales

Mission Statement

Our mission is to make it easy for landscape and lawn care professionals to grow their businesses. Our marketing solutions improve our clients' image and results.

Focal Point Communications

Product focus:

Focal Point is a marketing company serving landscape and lawn care professionals exclusively. We focus on getting results for our clients

by generating more leads, helping to close more sales, retaining more clients and utilizing new media to improve credibility and success. We've been serving the green industry since 1987, providing effective marketing solutions with our dedicated and talented team of professionals.

Support, sales and service:

We pride ourselves on exceptional customer service, and when you work with us, you can expect a smooth, trouble-free and friendly experience. Our website at www.growpro.com enables our customers to learn about our products, send inquiries and shop for marketing materials at any time.

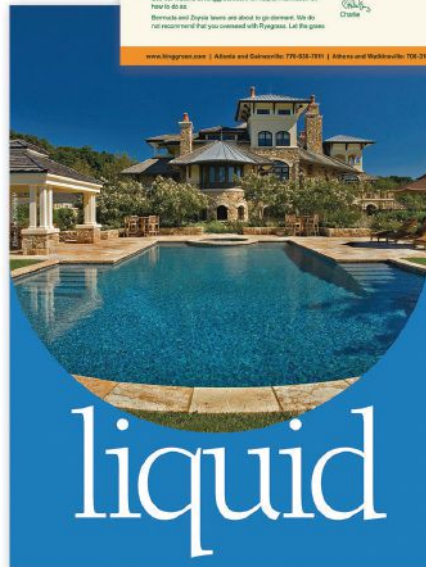
Product lines:

Focal Point creates and manages newsletter, e-newsletter and direct mail programs. We provide website design and custom graphic design, in addition to our catalog of postcards, presentation folders, educational materials and client communication tools. We develop marketing plans for our clients and offer full rebranding services.



Focal Point Communications
61 Circle Freeway Drive
Cincinnati, OH 45246
800-525-6999

Web site:
www.growpro.com
E-mail:
joeshooner@growpro.com





Mike Rorie
CEO

Go iLawn

Product focus:

Go iLawn, www.goilawn.com, delivers an online measuring service for the green industry. Go iLawn combines high-resolution aerial photos, measuring tools and proposal-building logic in one easy-to-use application.

This Web-based program can be used to estimate services for commercial and residential properties. The process is simple: Enter an address, street intersection or business name. View and measure any outdoor surface. Export measurements to Excel and photos as jpegs.

Users can take as many property measurements as needed to complete an estimate. Measurements can be color-coded, copied, edited and saved for future viewing. Printable site maps can be easily created for clients and crews.

Go iLawn recently



added a line of proposal-building products. Proposal Builders converts property measurements into proposal numbers for lawn and landscape, and snow removal services. Users assign equipment, production rates, materials, site photos and more to generate accurate numbers and professional proposal documents in minutes.

Go iLawn is available 24 hours a day and does not require any software installation.

Technical support, sales and training:

The Go iLawn team is dedicated

to educating its customers with training and live support. Online training materials, including how-to videos and a recorded webinar, are free and accessible 24/7/365. A free customer support line is provided for users as well as a full knowledge base of online articles. The Go iLawn team is based out of Cincinnati, OH, USA.

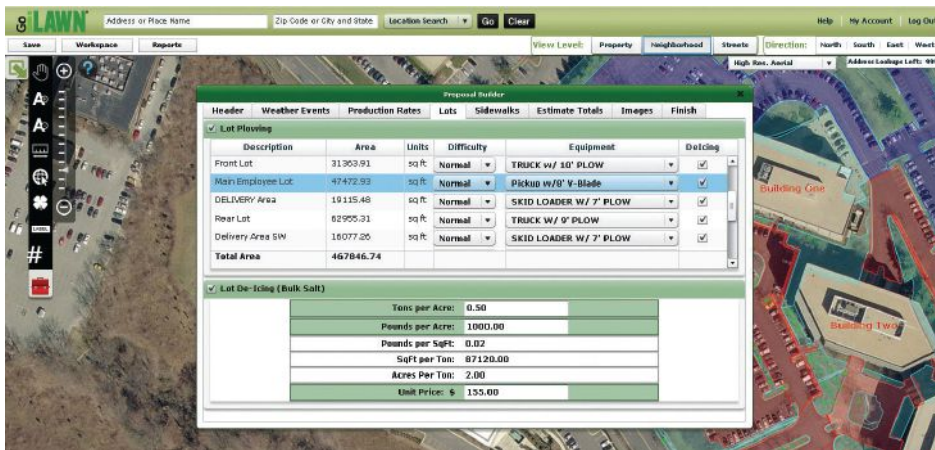
Major product lines:

- www.GoiLawn.com
- www.Go-iSnow.com
- www.GoiPave.com



Go iLawn
7157 East Kemper Road
Cincinnati, OH 45249

Phone: 800-270-6782
Web site: www.GoiLawn.com
E-mail: goisales@gisdynamics.com





Ron Madera
President

Mission Statement

To exceed our customers' expectations by providing exceptional front-line service with well-trained employees who thrive because of our positive culture.

The Grounds Guys



Product Focus:

At The Grounds Guys, we believe that your business should provide five things for you and your family: a good annual income, a better lifestyle, a healthy bottom line to create wealth, equity so you can pass the business on to your children or sell for a profit, and sufficient cash flow to reduce or eliminate debt. The Grounds Guys franchise could be the key to help you achieve your personal and financial goals.

As a Grounds Guys franchise owner, you will benefit from comprehensive training and ongoing franchise support when you need it. Your Franchise Coach is there to help when you need it most. The Grounds Guys will provide you with marketing support on a local and national

level. Regional and national training meetings will give you a chance to sharpen your business and technical skills.

You've worked hard to get where you are today and you deserve to have a business that provides for you and your family the income, lifestyle, wealth, equity and cash flow that you have always dreamed about.

The Grounds Guys is a new name, but comes with more than 20 years of landscaping franchise experience. The Grounds Guys has all the systems, training, support and tools you need to create a profitable service franchise business.

Visit us today

www.groundsguysfranchise.com

The Grounds Guys
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Waco, TX 76707
Phone: 800-638-9851
Fax: (262) 677-8186
Web site:
www.groundsguysfranchise.com



Tetsuo Iwamura
President & CEO,
American Honda

Mission Statement

Honda Power Equipment, a division of American Honda Motor Co., Inc., markets a complete range of outdoor power equipment, including general purpose engines, generators, lawnmowers, pumps, snowblowers, tillers and trimmers for commercial, rental and residential applications. Its comprehensive product line is powered exclusively by four-stroke engines.

Honda Power Equipment

Honda has long been recognized as a global leader in reducing the environmental impact of internal combustion engines through improved fuel efficiency and reduced emissions.

Honda recognizes that the preservation of natural resources is not only a corporate responsibility but also an important company fundamental. Reducing the burden on the environment at every stage in a product's life cycle – from development through manufacture, sale, usage, and disposal – is at the core of Honda's corporate culture and philosophy.

Major Product Lines:

Walk-behind lawnmowers, tillers, pumps, generators, trimmers, snowblowers and general-purpose engines



Product Focus:

Commercial lawnmowers

Manufacturing Facility:

Honda Power Equipment Manufacturing, Swepsonville, NC

Technical Support, Sales, Training and/or Customer Service:

Honda Power Equipment, Alpharetta, GA

Honda Power Equipment
4900 Marconi Drive
Alpharetta, GA 30005
United States
Phone: (678) 339-2600
Web site:
www.hondapowerequipment.com





Mona Haberer
President and CEO

Mission Statement

To guide and provide the green industry with superior, cost-effective insurance solutions.



Hortica Insurance & Employee Benefits
1 Horticultural Lane
P.O. Box 428
Edwardsville, IL 62025

Phone: 800-851-7740
Fax: 800-233-3642
Web site: www.hortica-insurance.com
E-mail: sales@hortica-insurance.com

Hortica Insurance & Employee Benefits

Product focus:

Founded in 1887, Hortica is the only U.S. insurance company solely dedicated to landscape professionals, nurseries, greenhouse growers, garden centers, interior plantscapers, retail florists and wholesale floral distributors—the entire green industry. We realize the industry is unpredictable and ever-changing. Rest assured our focus is, and will remain, dedicated to protecting you.

Hortica will guide you in designing an insurance plan to provide protection for equipment at job sites, on-the-job employee injuries, chemical application, landscape design/architecture errors and omissions, your employees and other risks unique to your business. With the right coverages at competitive prices, Hortica can help your business improve its bottom line.

Hortica actively participates and supports many national and state industry associations including Professional Landcare Network, Association of Professional Landscape Designers, American Nursery & Landscape Association, OFA—an Association of Horticultural Professionals, Master Nursery Garden Centers and Society of American Florists.



Facilities:

Hortica is a national company with its corporate office located in the St. Louis metropolitan area in Edwardsville, IL. The company has branch offices in California, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Hortica has approximately 80 account executives throughout the country.

Support:

When you call Hortica's toll-free number, a real person will answer your call. Our knowledgeable insurance experts will help you stay abreast of your insurance program. Hortica provides cost-saving services to our clients such as loss control training programs, safety resource materials and proactive claims handling. We will even help you

avoid unreasonable liability by reviewing legal contracts. In the event of a loss, a professional on-staff adjuster will guide you through every detail and provide a prompt, fair and hassle-free claim settlement.

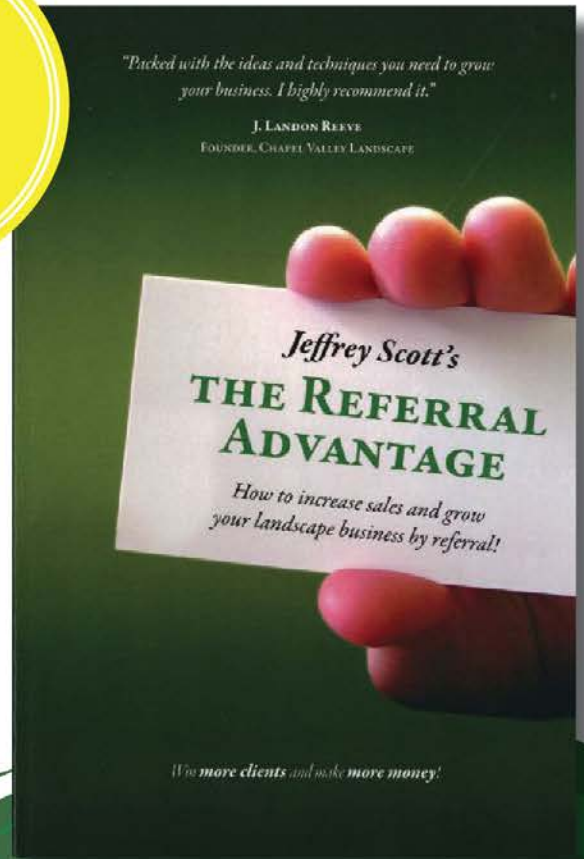
Major product lines:

Hortica is the green industry advocate that is a trusted partner for all business insurance, employee benefits and personal insurance. We provide a full range of products and services including business package policies, business automobile, workers compensation, bonds, errors and omissions, umbrella, employment practices liability, flood and earthquake, health insurance, long-term care, disability and a variety of personal lines coverage.

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THE REFERRAL ADVANTAGE

How to increase and grow your landscape business by referral!

Veteran Green Industry business owner Jeffrey Scott doubled the size of his design/build/maintain business to over \$10 million, by raising client retention in one division to 98%, and by increasing professional referrals from \$50,000 to \$2 million. Referrals are one of the cheapest and most effective ways to grow your business. In *The Referral Advantage* Scott teaches you how to ask for a referral, get your employees to create them, and even benchmark and track your referrals.

Author: Jeffrey Scott

shop.landscapemanagement.net/shop.php

Landscape
Management

Husqvarna®

Husqvarna®, the global leader in outdoor powered products, is the total source outdoor power equipment supplier to the landscape industry. From the new PZ Series zero-turn mowers, to a professional lineup of hand-held equipment from chain saws to trimmers, today's commercial landscaper can turn to one source for all their power equipment needs.

Innovative technology and

the new PZ Series mowers to address the unique needs of the commercial landscaper, and then asked landscape companies from coast to coast to put the mowers to rigorous in-the-field tests, with outstanding results.

Destined to set the industry standard in zero-turn mowers, the new **PZ Series** incorporates a high level of productivity through a balance of optimized ground speed, cut quality, clipping dispersal and maneuverability. The new cutting deck optimizes flow patterns, provides high cut quality, even clipping dispersal and reduced blowout—even at high ground speeds.

All components of the



New PZ Series mowers

of hand-held equipment as well. For example, Husqvarna's patented X-Torq® engine technology, found on select chain saws, trimmers and blowers, reduces fuel consumption up to 20% and emissions up to 60%—giving landscapers more power while using less fuel and lessening the impact on the environment.

These are just a few of the many ways that Husqvarna can help maximize uptime and productivity backed by a strong heritage of global leadership in outdoor power equipment.

For a dealer locator, visit www.husqvarna.com.

Major product lines:

Chain saws, trimmers, brushcutters, blowers, zero-turn and walk-behind mowers, tractors, generators, snow throwers, power cutters and accessories, and specialty turf.

180BT backpack blower with X Torq® engine



327LS Trimmer

advanced ergonomic solutions make Husqvarna a world leader in outdoor power equipment. Working closely with end-users ensures that the equipment offers high power and performance, durability and is comfortable for the operator—to increase overall productivity.

For example, Husqvarna designers and engineers created

new PZ Series were carefully designed to stand up to the day-to-day rugged use of commercial landscapers and stay in the field longer overall due to its durability.

Outstanding engineering capabilities extend to Husqvarna's extensive lineup



Husqvarna
9335 Harris Corners Parkway,
Suite 500
Charlotte, NC 28269

Web site:
www.husqvarna.com

Samuel R. Allen
Chairman & CEO

John Deere



Product focus:

The John Deere organization is noted for more than 170 years of innovation, the highest quality products and product operator safety initiatives.

John Deere manufactures and distributes a full range of products and services designed for the commercial customer.

From commercial riding mowers and compact tractors

to skid steers and utility vehicles, John Deere offers an extensive equipment line to address landscaping needs, from design to daily maintenance.

Creating a total solution for the commercial customer, John Deere also offers a wide range of soft goods and landscaping materials from John Deere Landscapes, competitive

finance options and seasonal payment plans to optimize cash flow through John Deere Credit, superior parts and service, and the support of a strong national dealer network.

Manufacturing facilities:

John Deere manufactures commercial products in Fuquay-Varina, NC; Horicon, WI; Augusta, GA; Alpharetta, GA; and Dubuque, IA.

Technical support and training:

At www.JohnDeere.com, customers can find information on a variety of support functions, including online product operator manuals and training modules, warranty information and product selector tools.



John Deere
1 John Deere Place
Moline, IL 61265

Phone: 800-537-8233
Web site:
www.JohnDeere.com



Tom Cromwell
President

Mission Statement

Kohler Engines, along with Italy-based Lombardini, represent a global engine concern in business since the 1920s. Together, Kohler Engines and Lombardini manufacture a wide range of gasoline and diesel engines, from 4 to 64.4 hp, which are supplied to equipment manufacturers worldwide in the lawn and garden, commercial and industrial, agricultural and construction markets.

Kohler® Engines

Since its beginning in 1920, Kohler® Engines has had a reputation for manufacturing quality engines with superior performance. Today, that legacy is very much alive as more than 90 years of innovation continues to drive Kohler Engines to grow its product lines and world market presence.

Kohler's newest industry innovation – a closed-loop electronic fuel injection (EFI) engine with the flexibility to use all ethanol fuel blends, from E0 to E85. The new KOHLER Command PRO® EFI FlexFuel E85 Engine offers end users an unmatched array of fueling options, which translates to significant savings at the pump. But, the savings don't end there because Kohler's exclusive closed-loop EFI technology also provides reliable starting, unequalled performance in the field while delivering the lowest overall operating cost to green

industry professionals.

Producing engines from 4 to 64.4 horsepower for consumers and professionals, some of Kohler's engine series include:

Command PRO® – Typically found in tillers, pressure washers, compressors and generators, these are Kohler's single-cylinder workhorse engines featuring integrated oil coolers for extended oil changes, heavy-duty air filters protecting the engine from debris and extra-large sleeve bearings to support heavy loads.

Command PRO® EFI – As the industry's only closed-loop system, the Kohler EFI (electronic fuel injection) engine delivers the precise fuel-air mixture to optimize power, performance and efficiency. The result is superior reliability, less downtime and fuel savings.

Courage® – Kohler's first engine series designed specifically for consumer applications, these engines

can be found in walk behind and riding lawn mowers and generators. Users enjoy the benefits of using a premium engine, including the most powerful output of any single-cylinder engine on the market, with easy operation and maintenance features.

Courage PRO® – Professional-grade engine for the landscape-care expert. The Courage PRO delivers better performance and longer life with large-capacity air, oil and fuel filters.

Kohler® Diesel – Behind every air- and liquid-cooled Kohler Diesel engine are the engineered performance standards you've come to expect from Kohler. Top-notch fuel injection technology delivers power and saves on fuel.

To experience all of the engines that KOHLER has to offer, visit KohlerEngines.com or facebook.com/kohlerengines.



Kohler® Engines
444 Highland Drive
Kohler, Wisconsin 53044
United States
Phone: 800-544-2444
Web site:
KohlerEngines.com



Tom Rich
President

L.T. Rich Products

Product focus:

L.T. Rich Products is a manufacturer of stand-on fertilizer/spray systems, aerators and turf renovators for the commercial lawn care industry. All units are zero-turn and feature a pump/wheel motor transmission. We use only state-of-the-art laser-cutting equipment and CNC fabrication machinery.

Sprayers feature all stainless steel construction with large

fertilizer and liquid spraying capacity. Sizes range from 100 to 300 pounds for fertilizer and eight to 50 gallons of liquid.

Aerators feature 36-in. or 46-in. tine width and 95,000-sq.-ft.-per-hour productivity.

Several attachments are available for the aerators, including a spray system, fertilizer spreader, de-thatch rake, slit seeder and even a snow plow. Custom and purpose-built units are also

available. All products are sold direct or through a dealer base depending on location.

Manufacturing facility:

22,000-sq.-ft. facility in Lebanon, IN.

Major product lines:

- Z-SPRAY
- Z-PLUG



L.T. Rich Products
920 Hendricks Drive
Lebanon, IN 46052

Phone: 877-482-2040

Fax: 765-482-2050

Web site:

www.z-spray.com

E-mail: sales@z-spray.com



Joe Khayyat
Executive Director

Mission Statement

The Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show (Mid Am) is the Midwest's one-stop marketplace for the needs of green industry professionals. Scheduled for Jan. 18-20, 2012 at Chicago's Navy Pier, Mid Am is the original green industry social network, helping these professionals connect with your peers, build your knowledge levels and facilitate business for nearly 40 years.

Mid Am is the only event in the Midwest that allows you to view the entire green industry in one place.

Mid-America Horticultural Trace Show
401 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 2200
Chicago, IL 60611
Phone: 800-300-6103
Fax: 312-673-6882
Web site: www.midam.org
E-mail: mail@midam.org

Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show

Three Days of Education

Mid Am has multiple education tracks covering a wide range of topics, both in the hands-on work of landscaping and how to run the business better. Tracks include Growers & Arborists, Irrigation, Sales & Marketing, Retail Business & Management, Sustainable Landscape and Maintenance & Operations. In addition, our exclusive Latino Track allows Spanish-speaking and bilingual attendees to experience what Mid Am has to offer entirely in Spanish, including educational sessions, networking and a guided tour of exhibitor booths.

Special exhibits and networking opportunities

New for 2012, Mid Am exhibitors will join together to build a community garden right on the show floor! You'll be able to see it go up before your eyes, with the final reveal on Friday, Jan. 20, 2012. At the end of Mid Am, the garden will be donated to a



deserving neighborhood.

On Thursday, Jan. 19, the Mid Am mixer will be held right on the trade show floor. The mixer is a great place for industry professionals to make new connections and reinforce existing relationships, whether you're looking to nurture and cultivate your business, your career or both. Connect with people who love what they do and are looking for ways to learn and grow. In addition, the Think Green Bar will be open throughout the show hours, providing you with additional opportunities to

connect with industry thought-leaders, dignitaries and featured speakers.

New lodging accommodations

You asked and we listened! Over the past few years, hotel rates have continued to rise, causing our attendees to look outside the headquarters hotel for an affordable rate. Because we value your support of Mid Am, we set a goal of mitigating the cost of attending our conference by researching other venues. As a result, we have been able to secure hotel rates at our lowest cost ever! Not only that, but we have supplied you with several hotel options to accommodate everyone's budget parameters.

For all the latest information, to register or make your hotel reservations, visit www.midam.org.



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180 SAFETY TALKS FOR SUPERVISORS

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CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION**

6880 S. Yosemite Ct., #200
P.O. Box 3489
Englewood, CO 80155

(303) 290-6611 Fax #: (303) 290-9141

180 SAFETY TALKS FOR SUPERVISORS

Reinforce safety daily and protect your employees and your company with information on preventing accidents, on-the-job safety equipment and tools, safe driving techniques, first aid, and off-the-job safety.

Jim Jackson
President

Mission Statement

MistAway® Systems is the leading manufacturer of outdoor misting systems that control mosquitoes, spiders, no-see-ums and other annoying insects. We are committed to providing our dealers with the best business opportunity in misting.

MistAway Systems



Product focus:

MistAway manufactures a system that sprays a very fine mist of a dilute botanical insecticide through a nozzle circuit that is installed around the perimeter of a backyard or other area where people want to spend time outdoors. The mist settles on the grass and landscaping and as mosquitoes and other pests come into contact with the insecticide, they are killed. The systems are both very effective and safe.

While the margins from installation of the systems are attractive, our units make an ideal platform for our dealers to operate a highly profitable recurring service business.

Technology, support and training:

MistAway is committed to innovation, and our products are the most advanced and reliable in the industry. Our design and engineering is primarily driven by the ideas, experiences and feedback of our dealers, who have installed more than 15,000 of our systems in the U.S. and abroad.

We offer unmatched technical and sales support and reliable, quick, friendly service.

We also offer comprehensive, practical training at MistAway University, conducted monthly in our offices in Houston.

Dealer opportunities:

We are very excited about the opportunity to introduce this new application of misting technology to every market where property owners seek relief from mosquitoes, no-see-ums and other outdoor pests; and we are actively seeking entrepreneurs to act as dealers for our products.

We offer a chance to “get in on the ground floor” of a great business opportunity and build a lasting relationship with a leader in the industry. If you would like to learn more, please don’t hesitate to call us at 866-485-7255 or e-mail info@mistaway.com and we’ll contact you.



MistAway Systems
2121 Brittmoores, #5200
Houston, TX 77043

Phone: 866-485-7255
Fax: 713-255-5055

Web site:
www.mistaway.com
E-mail: info@mistaway.com



Loren Olson
President

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide proven cost-reducing software tools to the service industry and to partner with our clients to integrate these tools into the way they currently do business.

Modeco provides our customers with the ability to automate their business process of tracking field time and production data to produce additional profit on the bottom line. To be ahead of the competition, to become lean, streamlined and more efficient, TimeScape™ from Modeco is a perfect solution.

Our goal is to obtain that confidence that we are committed to the improvement in this business critical process through a dedicated partnership between our customer and Modeco Systems.

Modeco Systems, LLC
W208 N16975 N. Center St.
Jackson, WI 53037
Phone: 866-677-8184
Fax: (262) 677-8186
Web site:
www.modecosystems.com
E-mail:
sales@modecosystems.com

Modeco Systems, LLC

TimeScape™ is a mobile production tracking system that streamlines the collection and flow of field information. With the use of barcodes and pocket-sized scanners, each crew tracks properties served, tasks performed and materials consumed as it occurs in real time. The information is then uploaded into TimeScape™ via a PC or Smart Phone, which makes it easy for branch offices, field offices, direct-reports and subcontractors. No more manual data entry! Better yet, no more illegible log sheets or time cards. TimeScape™ has dozens of reports instantly showing what is happening in the field and has the capability of passing this information into your accounting/billing/payroll systems.

Imagine, for snow and ice-management work, how



great it would be to have every piece of information you need for invoicing and payroll after a snow event by the time the last truck gets back to the shop. TimeScape™ can do that and much more.

In addition to TimeScape™ mobile time tracking Software Solutions from Modeco cover asset management and inventory management.

Modeco offers the perfect solution for the green industry to increase profits while striving



to become more lean and streamlined. TimeScape™ is an excellent business tool, just as important as the proper truck or the best mower.

Why not put TimeScape™ to work for you today? Contact us at 866-677-8184 for further information, plus check out our website at www.modecosystems.com for a new video narrated by Terry Bradshaw describing TimeScape™, filmed on location at one of our largest clients.

Modeco works hard to make your job easier.

Major product lines:
TimeScape™

Product focus:
Time-tracking software for mobile employees

Send your paper timesheets
Send your paper timesheets



PACKING!



Richard Martin
President & CEO

Mission Statement

PBI/Gordon Corporation, a 100% employee-owned company, is a national leader in specialty pest management products and those related products and services that keep our environment beautiful and bountiful.

Our mission is to continually improve our products and services to meet the needs of the many specialty markets that make up the professional turf and ornamental, home, lawn and garden, agricultural and industrial vegetation management industries.



PBI/Gordon Corporation
1217 W. 12th St.
Kansas City, MO
64101-04090

Phone: 800-821-7925
Fax: 816-474-0462
Web site:
www.pbigordon.com
E-mail:
webmaster@pbigordon.com

PBI/Gordon Corporation

Nobody knows your turf like we do

Zylam 20SG Systemic Turf Insecticide is a 20% soluble granule formulation of dinotefuran, the latest generation of neonicotinoid insecticides. It is the product of choice when you need "muscle in your tank" for outstanding control of turfgrass' toughest pests, including chinch bug, cutworms, mole crickets, European crane flies, billbugs and annual bluegrass weevils.

Trimec® 1000 Low Odor Broadleaf Herbicide is a proprietary mixed-amine formulation. It contains MCPP and dicamba with two forms of 2,4-D – DEA (diethanolamine) and DMA (dimethylamine) for a total of four ingredients. The formulation resists crystallization, allowing more thorough absorption into the plant, resulting in more active material translocating down to the root of even the most deep-rooted perennials. This mixed-amine 2,4-D provides an incredibly broad spectrum of weed control.

Product focus:

At PBI/Gordon, innovative product development for the turf and ornamental industry is our primary focus. We were the first to formulate products specifically for this industry. We continually search for and evaluate products or product combinations that fill the needs of the professional end-use market we service. Our professional field sales team keeps us constantly alerted to these needs.

Technical support:

Technical support is available from dedicated support personnel at 800-821-7925 (answered by real people!) or at www.pbigordon.com or www.weedalert.com.

Gordon's Professional Turf and Ornamental Products:

- › ProForm® Herbicides
- › Trimec® Herbicides
- › Embark® and Atrimmec® Plant Growth Regulators
- › Azatrol® EC Insecticide
- › Ferrmec® Liquid Iron
- › Launch® and Focus® Plant Nutrient Supplements



Pennington Seed, Inc.



Product focus:

Pennington Seed, known primarily as one of the largest producers and distributors of grass seed, also offers a complete line of products for athletic fields, roadside construction and landscaping projects.

Founded in 1945, Pennington Seed is a leading marketer, manufacturer and distributor of lawn, residential and professional turf products, forage grasses, wildlife seed and wild bird feed products. Pennington continues to expand its operations and develop new and innovative products with state of the art manufacturing facilities, observation nurseries and quality control labs located across the country. For more information, visit www.penningtonseed.com.

Manufacturing &

Distribution facilities:

Cullman, AL; Madison, GA; Columbia, SC; Kenbridge, VA; Greenfield, MO; Lebanon, OR; Laurel, MD; Grand Prairie, TX; Cincinnati, OH

Technical Support:

The professional turf division of Pennington Seed consists of a seasoned team with industry knowledge and expertise. Available to assist you with specification and project recommendations, the pro turf team delivers solid customer support. For more information on our products and ways we can help, please email proturfsolutions@penningtonseed.com.

Major product lines:

While seed is the main passion, Pennington also has

expertise in a variety of product areas. The Pro Turf division of Pennington Seed is a leader in the innovation, production and distribution of:

- Grass Seed
- Custom Seed Blends
- Fertilizer
- Lawn & Garden Chemicals
- Soil Amendments
- Erosion Control Products
- Hydroseeding Supplies



Pennington Seed, Inc.
1280 Atlanta Hwy.
Madison, GA 30650

Phone: 706-752-4301
Web site:
www.penningtonseed.com/proturf
E-mail:
proturfsolutions@penningtonseed.com



Tom Jessen
Founder

PermaGreen Supreme



Company focus:

PermaGreen Supreme, Inc. was founded in 1980 as a lawn care company, making its way by pulling hoses on lawns. It was not long before founder Tom Jessen developed innovative turf application technologies such as Low Volume (1 gallon/ thousand) spraying; the first commercially available Injection Gun System; and the first Ride-On Spreader Sprayer, which vastly increased production numbers and reduced operator fatigue. Ten-thousand spreader sprayers later, the concept has remained the same: a powerful mechanized rider, fast enough to treat 1 million square feet per day, yet small enough to fit through 36-in. gates and treat tiny lawns.

The PermaGreen™ philosophy is: "One machine that you'll use every day on almost

every lawn." It virtually eliminates walking and pushing, generates huge profits through increased production and gives employees very favorable working conditions. In today's market you can't compete using your feet.

PermaGreen™ is more than a great machine.

› Knowledgeable and

professional customer service:

Our Tech Support team includes former lawn care owners and technicians, in addition to former assembly line people, who know every nut and bolt of every machine we have ever built. Getting parts is fast and simple, thanks to our extremely knowledgeable technical staff and \$2 million parts inventory.

› We stand behind you

all the way:

We are certain you'll love your

PermaGreen™. To prove it, we offer a 30-day buyback guarantee and a 1-year warranty. PermaGreen™ also offers the largest dealer and repair center network in the industry.

› Ideas to help you thrive not just survive:

PermaGreen™ offers a free, comprehensive consultation to help you accomplish your business goals. Our Tactical Handbook (written by lawn care pros with more than 100 years of experience) offers a wealth of business tips for maximizing the output and effectiveness of your operation.

Call 800-346-2001 or visit permagreen.com for a free handbook and dealer locations.

PermaGreen Supreme
5609 Murvihill Road
Valparaiso, IN 46383

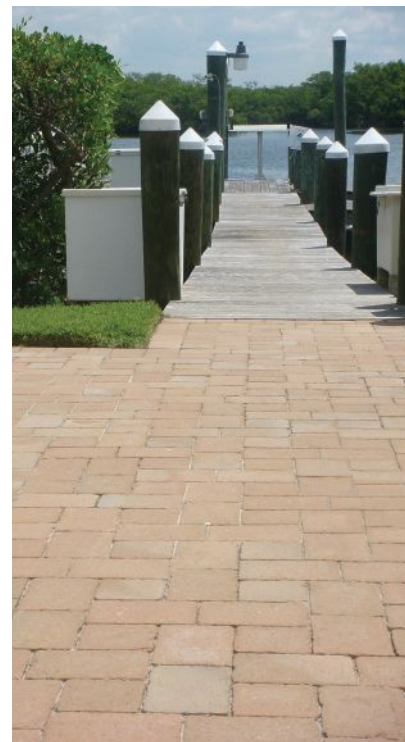
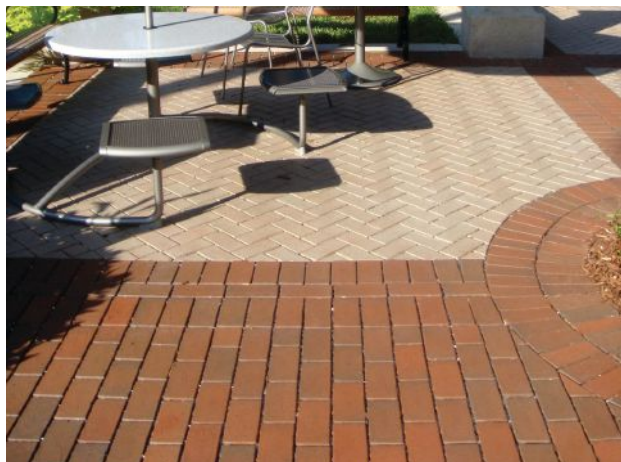
Phone: 800-346-2001
Fax: 219-476-7113

Web site:
www.permagreen.com

Mission Statement

We are a team dedicated to helping our customers fulfill their dreams by providing quality brick products and unmatched service to make it easy for them to build beautiful homes and buildings.

Pine Hall Brick Company



Product focus:

Pine Hall Brick enjoys a long history of commitment to our employees, the communities where we operate, our customers and the environment. Since 1922, our policies, products and actions have been coordinated to harmonize with our natural surroundings including earth, water and air.

Our products can also help qualify for LEED certification in these categories:

- › Sustainable Sites: Credit 6 Stormwater Design
- › Sustainable Sites: Credit 7 Heat Island Effect-Non Roof
- › Energy & Atmosphere: Credit 1 Optimize Energy Performance
- › Materials & Resources: Credit 2 Construction Waste Management
- › Materials & Resources: Credit 3 Materials Reuse
- › Materials & Resources: Credit 4 Recycled Content

› Materials & Resources:

Credit 5 Regional Materials

› Innovation & Design:

Credit 1.2 Life Cycle Cost & Durability

Major product lines:

StormPave and **RainPave**

permeable clay pavers allow rainwater to filter down through a specially constructed paving system and dissipate into the soil, rather than carry excess pollutants into storm drains. **StormPave** permeable clay pavers are perfect for institutional and commercial projects where impervious surface restrictions apply and joint openings need to meet ADA restrictions (<1/2-in.).

RainPave Rumbled permeable clay pavers are also available.

Our rose color pavers contain 53% pre-consumer recycled content and also qualify for the Solar Reflectance Index (SRI>29).

City Cobble pavers offer a cobblestone look, which is the most popular look in segmental paving today. This 2¼-in. product includes two sizes, a 5½-in. square and a 5½-in. x 8-in. rectangle, and when they are installed in an “i” or modified herringbone pattern, they give a random cobble look reminiscent of ancient walkways laid in stone. **City Cobble** is easier to install because it’s 10% smaller size allows the rectangles to be easily handled without special clamps or grippers. The Siesta color contains 54% pre-consumer recycled content and also qualifies for the Solar Reflectance Index (SRI>29).



Pine Hall Brick Co.
2701 Shorefair Drive
Winston-Salem, NC 27105

Phone: 800-334-8689
Fax: 336-721-7517
Web sites:
www.americaspriemier
paver.com
www.pinehallbrick.com
E-mail:
info@pinehallbrick.com

Pete Lord
President

Mission Statement

Our mission is to always provide the landscape professional with the most innovative, feature-rich and easy-to-use landscape design software in the marketplace.

Drafix Software
114A W. 3rd St., Suite #301
Kansas City, MO 64105

Phone: 800-231-8574
Fax: 816-842-5554
Web site:
www.prolandscape.com
E-mail:
sales@prolandscape.com

PRO Landscape by Drafix Software

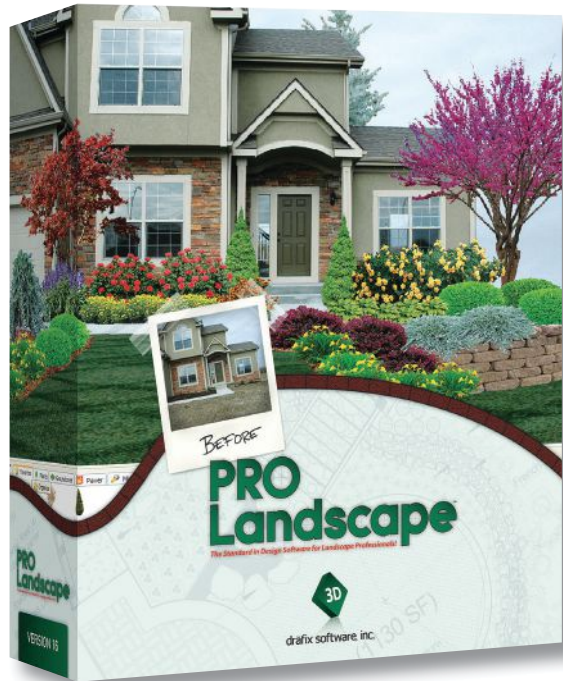
Product focus:

Take your business to the next level using PRO Landscape design software.

PRO Landscape is the most complete, easiest-to-learn and easiest-to-use professional landscape design software package you can buy. The software creates breathtaking visual landscape designs, 2D site plans, 3D walk-throughs and accurate estimates. PRO Landscape makes it fast and easy to sell, plan and bid your landscape designs.

➤ **Photo Imaging:** Do your customers have difficulty understanding exactly what you are proposing for their property? Use PRO Landscape’s photo imaging to create a realistic visual representation of what your proposed landscape design will look like. Simply start with a digital photograph of your customer’s house and then you can easily drag and drop your landscape items right onto the photograph. PRO Landscape’s library contains 8,500 of the industry’s highest quality images of plants, trees, shrubs, grass, mulch, hardscapes, water features, night and holiday lighting and much, much more. Easily create visual designs that your customers can understand.

➤ **Easy-to-Use CAD:** Tired of drawing by hand and spending hours labeling and doing take-offs? PRO Landscape allows



you to quickly create scaled 2D-site plans that accurately represent your proposed design elements including plantings, hardscapes and irrigation systems. PRO Landscape Planner keeps track of all materials, calculates hardscape areas and material volume of items such as mulch. With a single click you can create a title block, callouts or a plant legend.

➤ **True 3D:** Our 3D is exactly what the name says it is—three dimensional. It’s as easy as pushing a single button from either your photo imaging or CAD file and automatically converting it to a stunning 3D representation of your design. You can then view the design from any angle as well

as perform fly-overs or walk-throughs.

➤ **Customer proposals:** Would you like to improve the professionalism of your estimates? PRO Landscape generates an accurate bid directly from your photo imaging or CAD files using your prices and tax rate. Once you create your estimate, put together a professional-looking customer presentation including the cover sheet, estimate, material list and plant information in just seconds.

Technical support:

PRO Landscape comes with a 60-day money-back guarantee, tutorial/training CD and free technical support.

Paul Jackson
 Founder

Mission Statement

Alocet Incorporated is built on the belief that solid business processes create solid companies. It is our mission to be the leader in accounting software add-ons by challenging our customers to adopt software and online systems that free up time from administrative tasks in order to focus on what makes them profitable.



QXpress Scheduling Software

57 Spadina Ave., Suite 210
 Toronto, Ontario
 M5V 2J2 Canada

Phone: 888-QXpress

Fax: 416-640-6027

Web site:

www.qxpress.com

E-mail: info@alocet.com

QXpress Scheduling Software

Product focus:

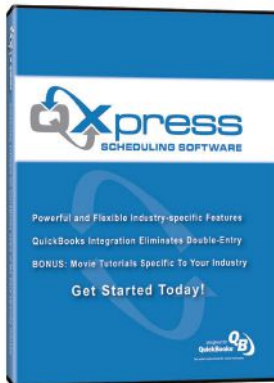
QXpress is the scheduling software of choice for green industry companies who use QuickBooks.

QXpress is a true QuickBooks add-on that turns your favorite accounting package into top-rated, industry-specific management software by adding scheduling, job costing and invoicing capabilities.

You don't have to learn a whole new system—you can just add industry-specific functionality to your existing QuickBooks.

Highlighted QXpress features:

- ▶ Instantly integrate with your entire QuickBooks database with one click.
- ▶ Real-time synchronization: i.e. when a customer is added in QuickBooks, it instantly appears in QXpress and vice versa.
- ▶ Scheduled services turn into QuickBooks invoices, minimizing data entry and mistakes.



- ▶ QXpress comes with a built-in "Template Designer" to fully customize work orders, invoices, etc.
- ▶ QX Mapping™ uses highly advanced logic to re-route services to the optimal technician, day and time.
- ▶ QX Mobile™ is the most advanced handheld software available for the industry, allowing wireless synchronizing, remote printing, signature capture and a customizable data-entry screen.

QXpress Online:

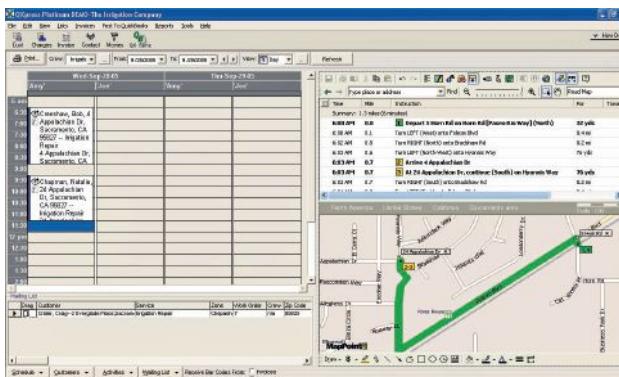
A customizable, web-based version of QXpress Scheduling Software is now available. QXpress Online is completely customizable, so you can create your ideal scheduling add-on for QuickBooks. Simply edit existing screens, or create your own screens, tables, fields, forms, buttons and entire business processes using drag and drop wizards (no coding!).

With QXpress Online, you can access your QXpress and QuickBooks data from anywhere with an Internet connection. Using patent-pending real-time sync technology, it is the first and only web-based field service app to sync with QuickBooks in real-time.

In addition to scheduling capabilities, QXpress Online also includes a full featured CRM, customer portal and automatic backups of your database. To see a full list of features, visit www.qxpressonline.com.

Sales & technical support:

Sales and support can be reached Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. EST at 888-QXpress. Call sales for a free online demo or view movie tutorials at www.qxpress.com/MovieTutorials.



Walter K. Byrd
President

R&K Pump & Equipment

Product focus:

R&K Pump & Equipment manufactures sprayers for the lawn care, pest control, aquatics, nursery and agricultural industries. With 30 years of experience in the spray equipment industry, we produce

more than 50 models with various pump, engine and hose reel options to meet every spraying need. Our exclusive all-welded aircraft-grade aluminum frames

allow us to produce a high-strength, lightweight piece of equipment that will never rust and never needs painting.

Manufacturing facility:

Located in Pompano Beach, FL, since 1980, R&K is proud to be an American manufacturer. All welding, fabrication and assembly is completed in-house to ensure quality control and on-time deliveries. Our shops are organized into work cells that can easily be adjusted to build a custom unit or 100 production units just as efficiently. We manufacture for some of the largest fleets in the lawn care and pest control industries and provide maintenance for more than 1,500 commercial spray units.

Major product lines:

➤ **Lawn/Turf Care Trucks.**



Truck-mounted spray systems are available from 200 to 1,600 gallons.

We offer complete turnkey body and chassis combinations, or we can custom build on your existing vehicle.

➤ **Pro-Series Skid Mounted Units.** Skid units range in size from 50 to 600 gallons with poly or fiberglass tanks and more

than a dozen pump and engine combinations. These units offer exceptional service at an economic price.

➤ **Portable Commercial Sprayers.** Our 50-, 100- and 200-gallon 4-wheel carts and 2-wheel trailers are available with boom spray options and hose reel accessories to match any spraying application.



R&K Pump & Equipment, Inc.
500 NE 28th St.
Pompano Beach, FL 33064

Phone: 954-295-3144
Fax: 888-229-4341
Web site:
www.randkpump.com
E-mail:
ken@randkpump.com

Anthony "Tony" LaFetra
President

Corporate Philosophy

Water is a precious resource—and the need for each of us to use it wisely has never been greater.

As the world's largest provider of irrigation products and services, Rain Bird leverages state-of-the-art technologies that help our customers use water effectively and responsibly. From smart controllers to pressure regulating rotors and low-volume drip irrigation, Rain Bird creates products that use water efficiently.

Through partnerships and educational initiatives, Rain Bird also strives to create opportunities for our industry partners to become better stewards of this essential resource.

To learn how The Intelligent Use of Water™ philosophy is woven into every aspect of the Rain Bird organization, visit www.rainbird.com/iuow.

Rain Bird

970 W. Sierra Madre Ave.
Azusa, CA 91702

Phone: 1-800-RAINBIRD
(1-800-724-6247)

Web site:
www.rainbird.com

Twitter: @RainBirdCorp

Facebook: www.facebook.com/RainBirdCorp

YouTube: www.youtube.com/RainBirdCorp

Rain Bird

A History of Innovation

For more than 75 years, Rain Bird has offered the world's most trusted line of irrigation products for homes, commercial developments, farms, golf courses and sports arenas. A true industry pioneer, Rain Bird has been awarded more than 130 patents, including its first in 1935 for the original horizontal action impact drive sprinkler.

Today, Rain Bird continues that same spirit of innovation at one of the most comprehensive irrigation testing facilities in the world. At this facility, Rain Bird engineers evaluate products under the most demanding conditions, helping ensure unsurpassed product performance and durability while finding more efficient ways to provide the moisture that turf and plants need to thrive.

Quality products for top performance

► **Controllers.** Rain Bird continues to break new ground in the control category. The new ESP-LXME offers the simplicity users expect from Rain Bird: modular station capacity from 8 to 48 stations, along with flow sensing and management. Another recent innovation, the ESP-LXD, combines the programming ease of traditional controllers with the flexibility and cost savings of two-wire decoder systems. Compatible with the ESP-LXME



and ESP-LXD, new IQ™ v2.0 Central Control Software offers state-of-the-art command and control features in an easy to learn and use interface.

► Drip Irrigation.

Rain Bird's drip irrigation products continue to provide outstanding water efficiency. Unaffected by wind or evaporation, XF-SDI Series Subsurface Dripline effectively irrigates turf, shrubs and groundcover with 30% to 70% less water than overhead sprays. Patent-pending Copper Shield™ Technology protects the dripline's emitters from root intrusion without the use of chemically-treated filters.

► Sprays and Rotors.

For decades, Rain Bird's sprays and rotors have developed a proven track record of unmatched performance. For use with the legendary 1800™ Series Spray, the new HE-VAN Nozzles combine variable arc flexibility with even coverage and large droplets for healthier landscapes that use less water. And Rain Bird's 5000 PRS Rotors save 15% to 45% more water than other brands of rotors on the market today.

► Accessories.

Rain Bird offers a host of irrigation system accessories that save time and water. The revolutionary SMRT-Y Soil Moisture Sensor measures plant and turf moisture levels where they matter most—at the roots—and transmits that information back to the controller. A water-saving accessory that's both efficient and affordable, the WR2 Wireless Rain and Rain/Freeze Sensor makes it possible for customers on a budget to enjoy the benefits of smart technology.

The Intelligent Use of Water™

Rain Bird's commitment to excellence extends beyond products to education, training and services. From the new EPA WaterSense-labeled certification program offered by Rain Bird Services Corporation to thought-provoking white papers like *Water Conservation and the Green Industry*, Rain Bird continues to promote The Intelligent Use of Water™.

Visit www.rainbird.com and discover the many reasons why Rain Bird is the world's leader in irrigation.

Swanson Graves
President

Reddick Equipment Co.

Product focus:

Reddick Equipment Co. has been manufacturing sprayers since 1965. We produce sprayers for multiple markets, including lawn care, turf, pest control, deicing, tree care, nursery, agricultural and highway. Our equipment is available with frames built from mild steel, stainless steel or aluminum to carry poly or fiberglass tanks from 8 gallons to 1,650 gallons. With more

than \$1.2 million in sprayer parts inventory, we can build most equipment right off the shelf and provide replacement parts for most major brands throughout the industry.

Manufacturing facility:

Located in eastern North Carolina just east of I-95, we operate in 28,000 square feet of manufacturing space. The strong values of our rural community are reflected in the conscientious attitude of our employees and management staff.

Technical support:

Our customer service department is staffed by five senior technicians with a wide variety of expertise within the spraying industry, and they enjoy sharing their knowledge. The value to you is receiving the right parts and equipment for your job—the first time.

Major product lines:

› **Pest Control / Lawn Care**

Skids. Aluminum skid frames with poly tanks or our seamless fiberglass tanks with safety cross baffles from 30- to 500-gallon capacity to fit ATV, UTV and truck applications. Diaphragm, centrifugal and 12V pumps options, manual

and electric hose reel options.

› **Deicing Skids.** Aluminum or stainless steel frames and rear-mounted shielded spray booms with poly or our seamless fiberglass tanks with safety cross baffles from 100- to 500-gallon capacity.

› **Agricultural.** Three-point hitch, utility tool bar and trailer sprayers up to 1,000-gallon capacity with spray booms available up to 72 feet.



Reddick Equipment Co.
1909 W. Main St.
Williamston, NC 27892

Phone: 800-334-3388

Fax: 252-792-4913

Web site:

www.reddickequipment.com

E-mail: sales@reddick.cc



Pat Cappucci
President

Mission Statement

To make it easier for grounds care professionals and serious do-it-yourself homeowners to care for their property and gardens and achieve the superior results they demand.

Vision

To have our brands be recognized by our end-user customers as the performance leaders in each segment of the grounds care market that we serve.

Schiller Grounds Care
1028 Street Road
Southampton, PA 18966

Phone: 877-596-6337
Fax: 215-357-1071
Web site:
www.schillergc.com
E-mail:
lbeattie@schillergc.com

Schiller Grounds Care



Product focus:

Schiller Grounds Care manufactures some of the most trusted brands in the outdoor power equipment industry—BOB-CAT, Classen, Little Wonder, Mantis, Ryan and Steiner. To learn more about our brands or to locate a dealer in your area, visit our web sites:

- www.bobcatturf.com
Commercial walk-behind and riding mowers
- www.classenturfcare.com
Turf care equipment
- www.littlewonder.com
Landscaping and debris management equipment
- www.mantisdealer.com
Gardening and yard care
- www.ryanturf.com
Turf renovation equipment
- www.steinerturf.com
Mid-sized compact tractors and attachments

Manufacturing facilities:

Southampton, PA; Johnson Creek, WI; Norfolk, NE

Major product lines:

- Mowers: Walk-behind & Zero-turn riding mowers
- Tillers
- Walk-behind Blowers
- Hedge trimmers
- Edgers
- Loaders
- Debris vacuums
- Composters
- Log splitters
- Aerators
- Dethatchers (Power Rakes)
- Seeders
- Sod cutters
- Tractors
- Snow management tools and accessories

Our core values / beliefs:

- Customers Come First. Walk a mile in their shoes.
- Innovation and Product Quality
- Customer Service and Continuous Improvement
- Teamwork
- Passion
- Entrepreneurial Spirit





Tony Bass
President

Mission Statement

The Super Lawn Truck eliminates the need to pull a cumbersome trailer.

Neatly organize, store and transport over 30 landscape tools, power equipment and mowers in a professional-looking warehouse on wheels! The enclosed body style reduces your need for warehouse space, protects tools and provides handsome billboard-size advertising. On board fuel tanks improve productivity and eliminate gas cans. Locking toolboxes and tool storage provides effective security and protection. Build your own customized Super Lawn Truck in 8 simple clicks at www.superlawntrucks.com. Watch videos, request a price quote or do some quick research! FREE BUSINESS PLAN ONLINE- Call: 866-923-0027

Super Lawn Technologies

1434 Peach Parkway
Fort Valley, GA 31030
Phone: 866-923-0027
Fax: 478-822-9707
Web site:
www.superlawntrucks.com
E-mail:
sales@superlawntrucks.com

Super Lawn Technologies



Product focus:

Design, build and deliver road-ready commercial trucks for landscape and lawn maintenance contractors in the United States and Canada. Our patented system operates in private landscape companies, municipalities, state and federal government agencies. Call us toll free at 866-923-0027 for price quotes on Super Lawn Trucks.

Technical support, sales, training and customer service:

Toll-free support is available by calling 866-923-0027. Build your own truck at www.superlawntrucks.com

Major product lines:

- ▶ Trucks – Lawn trucks, trucks, commercial trucks, truck bodies
- ▶ Ramps and hydraulic ramps

- ▶ Tool storage system
- ▶ Tool racks
- ▶ Fuel tanks and fuel transfer tanks
- ▶ Tool boxes
- ▶ Marketing systems
- ▶ Fleet graphics
- ▶ Truck painting and graphics
- ▶ Isuzu Trucks, GMC Trucks, Chevrolet, Ford, UD, Hino, Fuso

Manufacturing facility:

Super Lawn Truck, Inc.'s world headquarters are located in Fort Valley, GA.



Mission Statement

The vision of Syngenta is to provide the best products in the industry, to build superior packages of chemistries and technology, and to provide strong technical field support, all to help professional turf managers exceed the expectations of their customers while growing their profits with add-on services.



Syngenta

Major product lines:

Syngenta offers some of the industry's most effective herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and plant growth regulators, including:

➤ **Barricade®**, a selective pre-emergence herbicide that offers low-rate, season-long control of more than 30 grassy and broadleaf weeds, including crabgrass, goosegrass and *Poa annua*. Barricade offers a wide application window in both liquid and wettable granule formulations, both of which give operators a high degree of flexibility. Barricade is also available in an "on-fertilizer" formulation.

➤ **Meridian®**, a low use rate insecticide that provides lawn care operators with control and application flexibility in managing a broad spectrum of grubs and insects. It also metabolizes slowly in turfgrass, allowing for extended control with good knockdown activity.

➤ **Headway®**, a fungicide that includes two complementary active ingredients to deliver broad-spectrum disease control against brown patch, dollar spot and other major turf diseases. Headway's dual

modes of action provide lawn care operators with a cost-effective and practical way to control major turf diseases plus ward off disease resistance.

➤ **Heritage® G** granular fungicide, which provides the same effectiveness of a liquid formulation, but with the flexibility to spread when weather or other conditions prevent spraying. Heritage G uses a highly water-soluble carrier that offers long-lasting, broad-spectrum control of turf diseases including brown patch, anthracnose and take-all patch.

Customer support:

Syngenta offers lawn-care operators:

- More than 30 territory managers, who consult with customers to solve problems and work in partnership with a nationwide network of full-service distribution partners;
- Field technical managers located across the country, who are available to assist with issues that customers might face;
- A Customer Center, available at 1-866-Syngenta(a), which gives lawn care operators access to technical and product support as well as assistance with marketing programs;
- Innovative online tools such as GreenCast® (www.greencastonline.com), a web-based technology platform that delivers weather,



pest and reference information directly to customers' desktops; and

➤ The GreenTrust™ 365 Professional Turf Management Program, which allows customers to earn rebates for purchases of qualifying products throughout the year. Program participants can lock in a yearlong rebate percentage with only \$5,000 worth of purchases of qualifying products during the early order period. Details are available at: www.greentrust365.com.

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Syngenta
P.O. Box 18300
Greensboro, NC 27419

Phone: 866-SYNGENTA
886-796-4368

Fax: 336-632-6135

Web site:
www.greencastonline.com

E-mail:
dan.steltz@syngenta.com

Mac McIlvried
President

Mission Statement

Our mission is to remain a highly regarded landscaping company with operational excellence. Our foundation must be strong and we must practice continuous improvement each day.

TruGreen LandCare



Formerly part of the ServiceMaster brand, TruGreen LandCare is an independent company with different ownership, a newly engaged leadership team and strategic goals that align to our individual company's direction and mission.

TruGreen LandCare has emerged as a leader in commercial landscaping. The company attributes this to its talented group of specialized professionals driving the businesses across the country. With full-scope capabilities, having the right people in place and delivering clients a comprehensive package of landscape management services is essential.

On a daily basis, we are in the midst of setting foundational

systems and processes, and placing people who will sustain, grow and develop our business while we continue to meet the needs of our customers. We are focused on engaging and leveraging resources, expanding our portfolio, and achieving financial goals for our stakeholders.

In all aspects of our business, we have the opportunity to create. We want to implement refreshing ways of doing business and reach customers in a way that signifies our intent to establish and continue lasting relationships.

We are optimizing the best resources to attract talent by partnering with industry organizations, colleges, universities and local communities.

A comprehensive portfolio of services

- › Irrigation
- › Consulting
- › Design & Installation
- › Grounds Maintenance
- › Snow & Ice Removal
- › Specialty Services

How we operate

Branches operate as independent units with the advantages of a national company. Staff is empowered to manage the business as entrepreneurs delivering customized local service.

TruGreen LandCare continues to have a strong hold in markets throughout the United States. Its footprint extends throughout major metropolitan areas, from coast to coast.



TruGreen LandCare
9416 Doctor Perry Road
Ijamsville, MD 21754
Phone:
877-LANDCAR (877-526-3227)
E-mail: Careers@landcare.com

Meet the LM Team



Dan Jacobs

Editor-in-Chief

Jacobs is a veteran of the Green Industry and an award-winning journalist. During his 20-year career, he has written for a variety of newspapers and magazines. He is a past president of the Press Club of Cleveland and a graduate of the University of Cincinnati and John Carroll University. He joined *Landscape Management* in 2006 as Managing Editor and was promoted to Editor-in-Chief in April 2011.



Beth Geraci

Senior Editor

Geraci has worked as a professional journalist for more than 15 years, including six years as a writer for the *Chicago Tribune*. A graduate of Allegheny College and Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, Geraci is an award-winning reporter who has expertise in both print and online media.



Marty Whitford

Editorial Director

Whitford is an award-winning journalist and editorial leader at Questex Media. He has served Questex's Green Group for four years, including two years at the helm of *LM*. He steered *LM*'s reader-driven print and Web site redesigns that helped the brand win a record number of awards from the Turf & Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA). Whitford brings with him 18 years of experience in business-to-business integrated media.



Matt Lobe

Technical Editor

Lobe joins *LM*'s team as Web Editor/Marketing Coordinator. Lobe holds a bachelor of arts degree in journalism from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Prior to joining *LM*, Lobe served as a digital media editor with another Questex Media brand, *Nightclub & Bar (NCB)* magazine, producers of The NCB Show.

Ask anyone... *Landscape Management* is the **No. 1 resource** for business management content from one of the most experienced editorial teams in the industry! In fact, in 2011 *Landscape Management* celebrates its 50th year of publishing. With more than 50 years of editorial experience, there's no doubt the magazine that has supported Green Industry business professionals for 50 years will be around for 50 more!



Ken Hutcheson
President

Mission Statement

To provide our customers with the highest-quality landscape management program at competitive prices through a national organization of dedicated local owner-operators and their employees, supported by the expertise of today's most accomplished industry leaders. In pursuit of excellence we are committed to honest and forthright dealings with our customers, our employees and our vendors.

NATIONAL STRENGTH • LOCAL COMMITMENT

 Commercial Landscape Management at its best

U.S. Lawns
 4407 Vineland Road,
 Suite D-15
 Orlando, FL 32803

Phone: 407-246-1630
Toll-free: 866-781-4875
Web site:
www.uslawns.com or
www.uslawnsfranchise.com
E-mail:
Franchise@USLawns.net

U.S. Lawns

Grow or start your business today with U.S. Lawns!



Since 1986 we have helped existing landscape businesses and new business owners become successes within our franchise family.

Invest in your future with a U.S. Lawns franchise

Be your own boss. Discover income potential you never thought possible. Do it all by leveraging a nationally recognized brand and our record of 25 years of proven success by starting your own business with a U.S. Lawns franchise.

Commercial landscape management is one of the most sustainable new businesses you can start. Commercial property landscape must be maintained. And that's where you come in. Over 200 franchisees in more than 30 states have started with one thing in common: the desire to succeed as a business owner.

Business-to-business provides economic stability

Annual commercial contracts produce recurring income. As a U.S. Lawns franchisee,

you support only commercial accounts. Commercial properties need professional business partners to maintain their landscapes year-round and supply an accounting of costs and quality control. Our proven model allows your business to grow, regardless of the economy.

What about prior experience?

If you lack experience starting or expanding your own business, don't worry. Our industry professionals will support and train you, while your crews service the properties.

New offer for conversions:

If you already own a business, we can take your business to the next level. U.S. Lawns has brand recognition. We are the leading franchise company in the commercial landscape management industry.

We offer special finance options for those converting to a U.S. Lawns business. No money down! We have marketing and

systems for effective bidding, efficient routing, timely invoicing and business plans that set you on a growth path. The best part? You retain ownership of your business.

Our systems and support

You will have access to experts in commercial landscape maintenance, business and accounting. A regional franchise advisor will visit you as you get started and work to keep your success on track.

You will receive ongoing one-on-one mentoring in bidding and estimating, financial management, routing and scheduling, marketing and customer acquisition. You'll benefit from our corporate purchasing power for your equipment and supplies. We have support and training for your office procedures and human-resource needs.

With U.S. Lawns, get set to grow!





Bob Walker
President

Mission Statement

The only way for a small company to enter an established product market and stay there is to design products with irresistible superiority and uncompromising quality. A conventional product with conventional performance may be acceptable and even attractive when offered by a large established company; the same company cannot hope to survive in the marketplace where profit margins are small, competition is strong, and consumer loyalty to existing product lines is great.

WALKER MOWERS
out front mowing

walkermowers.com

Walker Manufacturing Co.
5925 E. Harmony Road
Fort Collins, CO 80528

Phone: 1-800-279-8537

Fax: 1-970-221-5619

Web site:

www.walkermowers.com

E-mail:

info@walkermowers.com

Walker Manufacturing Co.

Product focus:

➤ **WALKER RIDING MOWERS MEAN "PRODUCTIVITY"**

Contractors, municipalities and homeowners alike are finding the Walker Riding Mower to be one of the most compact zero-turn-radius mowers available. The tractor's size and maneuverability are designed to fit and do the work of mid-size walk-behind mowers with the increased productivity of a rider. Ten tractor models are offered from 13- to 31-hp with gas or diesel engines, and 13 mower deck sizes range from 36-74-in. with grass collection, side discharge or mulching capability. All decks tilt up to 90 degrees for easy maintenance and compact storage.

In conjunction with Kohler Engines, Walker has become an industry leader for Electronic Fuel Injection (EFI) designs in power equipment—an efficiency that offers easy starting over a wide temperature range, less maintenance, and improved



throttle response; along with considerable fuel savings.

Manufacturing facility:

Walker Mowers are hand crafted in our 216,000-sq.-ft. facility in Fort Collins, CO. Walker takes pride in being more than an assembly shop. We have a full metal fabrication area and a full staff of highly skilled welders. Our average term of employment is over nine years.



Technical and sales support:

Walker sells through two-step distribution throughout North America and around the world. Our distributors are factory supported for service but have their own in-house technical staff to support their dealer network.

Major product lines:

Commercial riding mowers and a full range of attachments make the Walker Mower a work horse all year long.



Western Products



Product focus:

For 60 years, WESTERN® snowplows have been the choice of the professional plower.

Major product lines include:

➤ **PRO PLUS®:** Since its introduction, the PRO PLUS has been a best seller that's big, tough and built to last. Designed for heavy-duty commercial and municipal applications, the PRO PLUS line fits a wide range of vehicles, from ¾-ton to F550-size trucks.

➤ **WIDE-OUT™ Adjustable Wing Snowplow:** The WIDE-OUT features a 9-ft. scoop and 9- to 10-ft. straight blade. With the leading wing angled forward, it delivers the ultimate in high-capacity windrowing. At the touch of a button, WIDE-OUT hydraulically transforms to perfectly match every plowing condition, delivering time-saving performance at each jobsite. It's the one plow that does it all.

➤ **MVP Plus™:** As the ultimate in speed and efficiency, the MVP Plus line takes V-plow performance to the next level with industry-leading speed and productivity. It's available in steel or poly in three sizes: 7½, 8½ and 9½ feet.

➤ **PRO-PLOW® & POLY PRO-PLOW®:** Leave it to the Pros. Designed to meet the requirements of the professional plower, the 7½- and 8-ft. PRO-PLOW models are available in both powder-coated steel and maintenance-free poly. An 8½-ft. model is offered in steel only.

➤ **HEAVYWEIGHT:** With the largest blade available from WESTERN, HEAVYWEIGHT plows are ideal for all-purpose, low-speed plowing. They are a great choice for clearing local streets, parks, county roads and large parking lots.

➤ **MIDWEIGHT™:** As a leaner plow with lots of muscle, the 7½-ft. MIDWEIGHT is a high-performance plow designed for personal and light commercial use. It's available

in powder-coated steel or high-density polyethylene.

➤ **HTS™:** The new WESTERN HTS snowplow is a full-size, full-featured plow designed for today's lighter half-ton 4WD pickup trucks, providing pro-like performance without the extra weight.

➤ **Ice control equipment:** WESTERN offers a full line of spreaders. Choose from ICE BREAKER™ hopper spreaders in 8- and 10-ft. lengths or the redesigned TORNADO™ poly/electric hopper spreader in 7- and 8-ft. lengths. A variety of top-performing tailgate spreaders are also available.

Manufacturing facilities:

Western Products' 150,000-sq.-ft. manufacturing facility is in Milwaukee. As a division of Douglas Dynamics, LLC, the country's leading manufacturer of snow and ice removal equipment, WESTERN® products and components are also manufactured in Douglas Dynamics' facilities in Rockland, ME.



Western Products
7777 N. 73rd St.
Milwaukee, WI 53223

Web site:
www.westernplows.com
E-mail:
info@westernplows.com



Tim Fontana
VP & GM,
WorkTruck Transport

Mission Statement

WorkTruck Transport provides unique transportation solutions for truck and fleet owners to exceed customer expectations and fulfill a commitment of safe, responsive and professional delivery to all parties involved with the vehicle.

WorkTruck Transport
An Amerifleet Company
1360 Union Hill Road,
Building 2
Alpharetta, GA 30004
Phone: 800-728-9235, ext. 685
Web site:
www.amerifleet.com

WorkTruck Transport

WorkTruck Transport’s Turn Key Ready Delivery - getting work trucks on the road faster

According to industry statistics, an average work truck produces \$1,500 in revenue per day. That makes for serious losses when new trucks are delayed in the delivery process. Unfortunately, when new units are ordered, up-fitted, and delivered to new car dealers to be picked up by employees, the traditional delivery process makes for serious delays in getting vehicles on the road. Industry experts say leaving pick up to employees takes up to 2 to 3 hours, and shipping alone can add up to two weeks to the process – a loss of \$21,000 per vehicle.

WorkTruck Transport’s Turn Key Ready Delivery program re-engineers the delivery process, improving delivery times and increasing revenue: The order is placed with OEM, OEM builds the vehicle, the vehicle is up-fitted, WorkTruck Transport picks up the vehicle at the up-fitter, inspects it, and completes all required services for the truck to be road-ready.

WorkTruck Transport can manage the entire process of logistics and every step of the way carries a \$6 million primary

insurance policy. In addition, even greater efficiency can be added when WorkTruck Transport picks up the used vehicles and takes them directly to auction or a remarketing center for immediate disposal.

The WorkTruck Transport process leaves truck pick up and delivery to our service delivery professionals, saving your employees the time and hassle of pick up, and increasing their productivity in turn. Before vehicles reach their drivers, WorkTruck Transport handles all license, title and registration services, another time-saving measure for employee drivers.

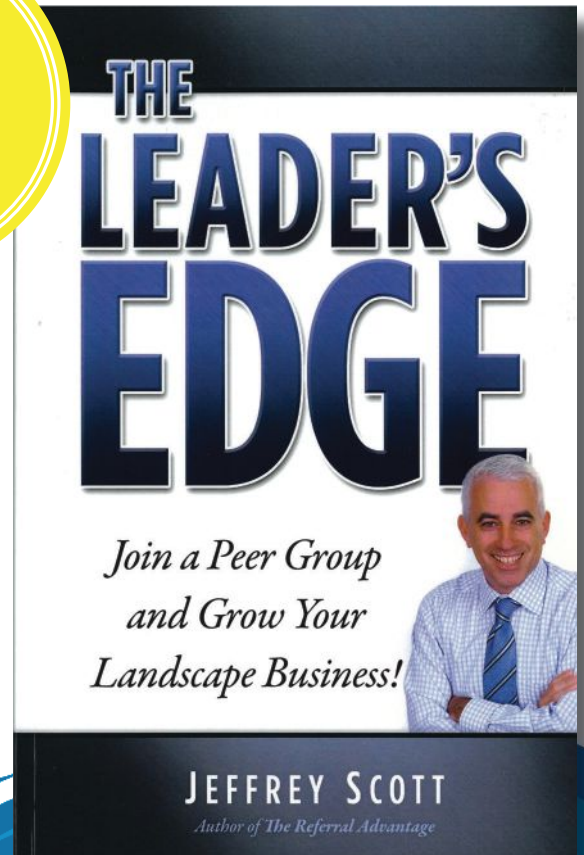
WorkTruck Transport can also inspect vehicles before and after delivery as needed. Delivery of units directly to end users gets trucks on the road immediately upon arrival, ready to produce revenue. WorkTruck Transport’s internal DOT and CDL compliance department hires, trains and tracks our service delivery professionals, ensuring a safe and compliant transaction, and earning WorkTruck Transport the highest federal safety rating available.

L.M. bookstore

>> WHAT YOUR INDUSTRY IS READING

Order
your copy
at the
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LM REPORTS

YOUR GUIDE TO PRODUCT RESEARCH

MAINTENANCE: VEHICLES & ACCESSORIES

Mitsubishi Fuso Truck of America



The 2012 4-door Canter FE Crew Cab model offers the same advanced, highly efficient powertrain as the standard-cab Canter FEs. And for 2012, the GVWR has risen to 15,995 lb. and maximum body length has increased to 19 ft. Inside, the instrument panel has been refined, with a digital display that gives

the operator every detail of vehicle operation, fluid level and system status at a glance. The cab is fully trimmed; interior space and amenities have been improved, and storage areas increased, so a crew of seven can ride to the job site in comfort. With its new 4P10 dual-overhead-cam, dual-balance-shaft, dual-turbocharged, intercooled 4-cylinder diesel engine coupled to an advanced Mitsubishi Fuso 6-speed, DUONIC transmission, the Canter FE160 Crew Cab provides smooth efficient operation and car-like drivability all day, no matter how tough the duty. *MitFuso.com*

Hankook Tire



The new AH24 is designed as a premium regional haul, all-position tire that focuses on high-scrub situations where endurance, durability and high mileage are vital. AH24 was developed with adverse weather conditions in mind, and employs solid wide ribs and an improved kerf design to displace water for outstanding grip. An enhanced sidewall design is intended to prevent damage such as cuts and abrasions and to extend casing durability and tire life cycle performance. In addition, the new DH06 is a premium deep drive, open shoulder, regional haul tire developed for exceptional grip and control. An improved, deeper tread block design allows DH06 to offer extraordinary traction in rain, mud and snow conditions. Particular attention was paid to maximize DH06's casing life cycle mileage performance. *HankookTireUSA.com*



Gravelly

The new Truck Loader picks up leaves, grass clippings, mulch, plastic bottles and more. All models feature a lightweight, durable pickup wand combined with a steel-ribbed flexible hose designed to be quickly disconnected with an automatic shut-off switch. The 10- or 12-in. diameter intake hoses provide appropriate intake capacity for large and medium size jobs, and a 360° rotational discharge chute offers easy and efficient uploading in any direction. Three height adjustments allow for flexibility and extend cleanup capabilities. The unit features 20- and 22-hp Subaru engine options and a 5.8-gallon fuel tank for fewer fueling stops. Built for durability, the Gravelly Truck Loader's 29x65x29-in. frame has 11-gauge steel construction and a 5- or 6-blade steel impeller. Optional accessories and attachments include a tailgate mount kit, a steel flex house exhaust extension kit, a multi-directional exhaust with adjustable deflector chute kit and a discharge extension kit. *Ariens.com*



Cole Hersee

The new Voltage Sensing Relay & Timer (VSRT) conserves the starting power of a vehicle battery by shutting off auxiliary loads when either starting voltage drops

to a low level, or a pre-set timer times out. The 4x3x1-in. piece of equipment alerts the vehicle operator when starting voltage is low, then temporarily cuts off any non-essential electrical loads, thus conserving power to start. Its service life exceeds 1 million on/off cycles, operating for the entire lifetime of the vehicle. The device has a rating of 10A, and can handle many loads directly or drive a relay or solenoid for higher amperages. Overvoltage and overcurrent protective measures are also included, providing extra levels of assurance. The VSRT is also completely weather resistant, waterproof and dustproof, allowing it to be mounted anywhere on the vehicle while remaining reliable and functional. With minimal wiring and a snap-in connector, it does not require any additional heavy or bulky hardware, so installation is easy and simplified. *ColeHersee.com*

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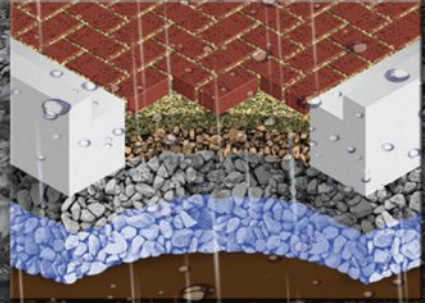


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RAIN  BIRD®



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Isuzu Commercial Truck of America

The 2012 Reach features a body designed by Utilimaster Corp. atop a rugged Isuzu NPR ECO-

MAX chassis and powered by Isuzu's 3.0-liter diesel engine. It will achieve 35% better fuel economy than a traditional commercial van application while offering the functionality of a custom-built work truck — along with the styling and ergonomics of a cargo van. The stripped chassis's engine has been relocated to minimize engine protrusion into the cab, facilitating driver movement in and out of the front seat for improved productivity. Likewise, the driver seat position and numerous component locations have been revised to accommodate the walk-in van body. The Reach is offered in two wheelbases (134 and 151 in.) and three body lengths (10, 12 and 14 ft.). With an interior up to 27 in. higher than a conventional Ford or GM van and 10 in. wider than a Sprinter van, the cargo area can offer 450, 540 or 630 cu. ft. of storage, depending on wheelbase and body length selected. IsuzuCV.com

Knaack LLC

New features of the redesigned Hi-Side Truck Boxes include the Weather Guard-exclusive gutter design, which channels rain and snow off the box to keep its contents dry. Along with the full-weather seal, this new gutter design vastly improves weather resistance. Other new enhancements include a new Drill-Resistant Lock Core, which protects against theft and vandalism. An Attachment Point has been added to the rear of each box to secure or lock down tools and supplies in the truck bed. Hi-Side organization is improved with the addition of a top-mounted, Removable Parts Bin, to keep small parts such as fasteners and components organized inside the box. And productivity is enhanced with adjustable Tool-Less Quick-Release doors that open from 90° to 180° for unrestricted access to tools and equipment. Heavy-duty stainless steel aircraft-type cables quickly and easily unhook with QuickClips, with no tools required. WeatherGuard.com



Forestry Suppliers

This 35/15-gal. EZ Fill Split Fuel Transfer Tank is made of heavy-duty, high-density poly plastic and is compliant with U.S. Department of Transportation standards. Features include tethered heavy-duty commercial gas caps, commercial hose and nozzles with heavy-duty safety hooks, multiple hose hooks, multiple labeling options, universal threaded mounting points, and locking gas valves. Find Forestry Suppliers' complete selection of D.O.T. Safety Fuel Cans in its current catalog, available for free upon request. Forestry-Suppliers.com

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MAINTENANCE: SITE PREPARATION & MAINTENANCE

Billy Goat

The distinct black intake housing is the heart of the new Force II — a new single-shot, closed-face fan. With 16 blades, the Billy Goat Force II has more than twice the blades of most competitors, according to the company. Surrounding the fan is a smooth rounded housing, which eliminates air voids, reduces noise, increases output, won't rust or dent and is up to 30% lighter than stamped metal housings. Other new features to the blower is that it's 9 lbs. lighter than previous models, and features a self-propelled option. BillyGoat.com

Husqvarna

Husqvarna 326E, part of the X-series, is equipped with the E-Tech II engine for increased power and better fuel economy. The front handle can quickly be adjusted using the thumbscrew. A wear plate under the engine and a reinforced spark plug guard provides added protection to the unit. The shaft is curved to place the operator in an ergonomically better position. The 25-cc, 1.2-hp 323EX curved-shaft edger is equipped with an E-Tech engine's power-to-weight ratio. The improved, lightweight 327ES straight-shaft edger features an easy-to-access air filter and starter recoil. The straight shaft allows for maximum transfer of engine power to the gear head. Husqvarna.com



Schiller Grounds Care Inc.

The new Classen Hydro-Drive sod cutter line features an ergonomic handle with elastomeric vibration dampening system, as well as bearing isolators that reduce the vibration felt by the operator. Benefits of the hydrostatic-drive vibration reduction mechanism for sod cutter users include smoother operation, less operator fatigue, and increased productivity. Blades in the line range from 12 to 24 in., with 5.5- to 8-hp Honda engines. Optional blade assemblies are available to allow the unit more flexibility. The drive allows infi-

ninitely variable transport speeds of up to 4.7 mph and powered reverse. Other features include simple controls within easy reach, center blade placement for consistent cutting depth, fingertip throttle for adjustable speed control, and knobby tread drive wheels for stable traction. ClassenTurfCare.com



Grasshopper Mower

The powerful vacuum action of a Grasshopper PowerVac Collection System moves a high volume of air to pick up virtually anything — from grass clippings and leaves to pine straw and other debris — leaving a beautiful, manicured finish. Compatible with all Grasshopper mowers, each system is equipped with a trash-ingesting steel impeller that chops, propels and compacts debris for fewer stops and uninterrupted productivity while you mow. The deck-driven PowerVac is easy to install and operate, and removes quickly for side-discharge or mulching applications; it also eliminates the need for a loud and cumbersome auxiliary motor. Choose between easy-to-handle nylon mesh bags or large-capacity metal hoppers. GrasshopperMower.com/powervac.php

STEC Equipment

With more than 20 years of seeder manufacturing experience, RotaDairon introduces its SMC seeding technology to the North American market, available through STEC Equipment. Featuring a new "peg-wheel system," the SMC seeders are able to precisely distribute seeds of any size, from bentgrass to wildflowers. This high precision is based on the volumetric adjustment of the peg-wheels, which are ground driven, and distribute according to forward speed. This results in seed savings and higher germination rates with less waste. Innovative design features also include a protection grid, seed valve agitator and dividing plates — all easily removable for cleaning of the seed hopper. Seed calibration can be done quickly, easily, and in place with a hand adjustable and measureable calibration system. STECequipment.com

continued on page 194

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continued from page 192

Stihl

The new FSA 85 professional straight-shaft grass trimmer, the latest product available for the 36-volt Stihl Lithium-Ion battery technology system, delivers fuel savings, time savings and environmental benefits for gasoline-free trimming applications, the company says. Eliminating fuel costs and engine exhaust emissions, the easy-to-use trimmer offers users another way to reduce their impact on the environment. With this new technology, there is no more fuel mixing, no power cords, and greatly reduced engine maintenance. Plus, high cutting speeds allow the user to complete trimming tasks quickly. Both units run at full speed until the battery is depleted, with no gradual drop in power as with other battery technologies. Designed for user comfort, the FSA 85 is lightweight with excellent balance and low vibration, featuring an easy-to-use trigger start. It also features a convenient on-board hanging slot that allows for easy storage, as well as a loop handle that adjusts without the use of tools. *Stihl/USA.com/trimmers/FSA85.html*



Atlas Copco

The Atlas Copco SBU 220 hydraulic breaker features a patented one-piece housing construction. The solid-body concept integrates the percussion mechanism and guide system into one single block of steel. The one-piece housing is designed to have fewer components to maintain and to provide a greater return on investment. With an operating weight of 494 lbs., and a tool shank diameter of 2.56 in., the SBU 220 hydraulic breaker is intended for carriers ranging from 6,150 to 13,230 lbs. The breaker is designed to offer a favorable percussive power-to-weight ratio. It offers an oil flow rate of 11 to 20 gpm and an impact rate of 720 to 1,380 bpm. The unit features the Atlas Copco VibroSilenced system with sound pressure rated at 89 dB(A) and sound power at 118 dB(A). This is designed to allow the unit to work close to schools, hospitals and other areas where noise can be an issue. *AtlasCopco.us*



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MAINTENANCE: STAND-ON MOWERS

Gravelly

The Gravelly Pro-Stance stand-on mower has five models that feature floating and fixed decks. The Pro-Stance gives an unobstructed view from nearly every angle and is easier to maneuver in confined spaces. Made of 7-gauge steel with fully fabricated and welded construction, the optimum operator position promotes stability on hills and uneven terrain. With a Kawasaki KAI gas engine, Hydro-Gear 10cc pumps and 12-cu.-in. wheel motors, the Pro-Stance travels at 9 mph forward ground speed. A comfortable suspension platform enhances the ride and provides increased stability for the operator. A more compact footprint makes it quicker to trim around landscape features, to avoid obstacles and to maneuver in confined spaces. The ergonomically designed cockpit minimizes engine vibration, while absorbing the shock from bumps that occur when mowing. Available attachments include wheel covers, a mulching kit and grass collection. *Ariens.com*



Wright Manufacturing

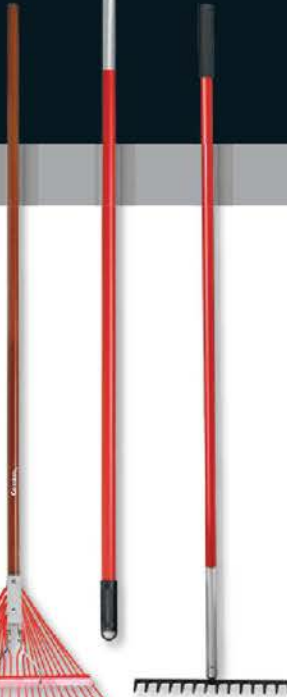
A new deck design is now standard on all Wright Stander X and Sport X mowers. The new Aero Core deck's space-saving design increases deck strength, while recessed caster wheels result in a more compact footprint and improved agility. Anti-clumping baffles in the Aero Core deck prevent debris build-up at the discharge chute, and air-tapered blade surfaces create pressure to pull grass up for a cleaner, more uniform cut. Test drives are available from your local dealer. *WrightMfg.com*

Deere

Designed for landscape professionals looking for maximum maneuverability, as well as durability and reliability, the new Quik-Trak PRO Series offers the 7-Iron PRO deck in a compact and powerful package. The three updated models in the series — 48-in.-cut 647A, 54-in.-cut 657A and 60-in.-cut 667A — also feature higher 22- and 24-hp Kawasaki engines. *Deere.com*



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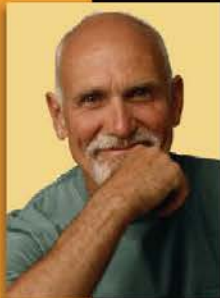


Syngenta

Tenacity herbicide, a reduced risk product, has received registration from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use on residential lawns. The selective pre- and post-emergence herbicide controls 46 broadleaf weeds and undesired grasses in most cool-season turf types. In addition to weed control in established turf, Tenacity can be applied at seeding to reduce weed competition for improved seedling development. Check with your state or local extension service before purchase to ensure it's approved in your market. TenacityHerbicide.com

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LD/B Solutions

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i-News

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition praised efforts by the House of Representatives to restore \$25 million in funding for the LWCF that was cut from the program in a bill being debated by the House.

LMdirect!

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Jacobs, Questex Media Group, LLC, 600 Superior Ave. East, Suite 1100, Cleveland, OH 44114; Senior Editor: Beth Geraci, Questex Media Group, LLC, 600 Superior Ave. East, Suite 1100, Cleveland, OH 44114</p> <p>10. Owner - Full name: Questex Media Group, LLC, 275 Grove Street, Suite 2-130, Newton, MA 02466. The sole shareholder of Questex Media Group, LLC is: IMG Holdco LLC, 275 Grove Street, Suite 2-130, Newton, MA 02466</p> <p>11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities: Questex Media Group, LLC is the Mortgagor under a Note and Equity Agreement dated December 16, 2009, with various lenders as named therein from time to time. The agent for the lenders is: Credit Suisse, Agency Manager, One Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10010. 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Does not apply</p> <p>13. Publication Title: Landscape Management</p> <p>14. Issue Date for Circulation Data: August 2011</p> <p>15. Extent and Nature of Circulation</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: center;">Average</td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">No. Copies</td> <td style="text-align: center;">No. Copies</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Each Issue</td> <td style="text-align: center;">of Single Issue</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">During</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Published</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Preceding</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Nearest to</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">12 Months</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Filing Date</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run) 49,499 50,321</p> <p>b. Legitimate Paid and/ or Requested Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)</p> <p>(1) Outside County Paid/Requested Mail Subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541. (Include direct written request from recipient, telemarketing and Internet requests from recipient, paid subscriptions including nominal rate subscriptions, employer requests, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies.)</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: center;">45,561</td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: center;">48,489</td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> </tr> </table>		Average					No. Copies	No. Copies				Each Issue	of Single Issue				During	Published				Preceding	Nearest to				12 Months	Filing Date				45,561	48,489			<p>(2) In-County Paid/Requested Mail Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541. 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Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4)) 45,734 48,644</p> <p>d. 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Total Nonrequested Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3), (4)) 3,750 1,667</p> <p>f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e) 49,485 50,311</p> <p>g. Copies not Distributed 14 10</p> <p>h. Total (Sum of 15f and g) 49,499 50,321</p> <p>i. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c divided by 15f times 100) 92.4% 96.7%</p> <p>16. Publication of Statement of Ownership for a Requester Publication is required and will be printed in the October 2011 issue of this publication.</p> <p>17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner Antoinette Sanchez-Perkins, Senior Audience Development Manager Date: 9/14/11</p> <p><i>I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanction</i></p>		0	0				173	155				0	0				3,358	1,304				0	0				0	0				392	363		
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MY BIGGEST MISTAKE

LESSONS LEARNED THE HARD WAY » BY CASEY PAYTON



Evaluate relationships up front, so they don't cost you in the end.



Dave Tollefson (blue shirt, seated), president of Urban Farmer, and Sean Lynam, business development manager (third from right), with the rest of the management team.

COMPANY: Urban Farmer Inc.

HEADQUARTERS: Thornton, CO

SERVICES: Landscape irrigation, installation, seeding, erosion control, etc., 79%; design/build 5%; maintenance 16%

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 300 (100 year-round)

2010 REVENUE: \$18 million

2011 REVENUE PROJECTION: \$19 million

AFTER DEALING WITH a developer that was constantly raising issues,

Sean Lynam, business development manager of Colorado-based Urban Farmer Inc., says he's learned that when working with developers — particularly homebuilders in this tough housing market — it's important to evaluate the job and make sure it's something you feel comfortable with before diving in.

In a time when so many are eager for work and jump on almost any job opportunity, this can be challenging. After all, it may mean turning work away. But Lynam says that getting involved in a poor working relationship can hurt a business significantly.

"We now try to evaluate each job as its own entity and look at who it's coming from, what their background is, and what our history is with them," says Lynam. "We ask questions like 'What is your long-term plan?' or 'What will happen if you don't sell

20 houses or don't lease out this office park — are you still going to want this same level of work?' We've learned the importance of being upfront with *everything* that might come up in the future."

Knowing where the money's coming from and how you're going to get paid should also be part of that upfront research, adds Lynam.

"Ask where their funding is coming from and what factors come into play before you get paid," he advises. "When you ask those questions, make sure they're being open with their responses. If they say 'Don't worry about it,' or 'We're a large company so there won't be any issues,' those are red flags that there could be issues that arise."

After having these frank conversations, Lynam says Urban Farmer decides whether going forward would be a good business move. Each contract is evaluated individually.

"Everyone wants to move forward so they can make progress and make money," he says. "If we don't think we can do that with a particular job, it doesn't make sense to take it just to get work."

Lynam says that a bad experience with a developer brought the importance of this upfront due diligence to light. "The developer was constantly questioning what was installed or where we

installed it," remembers Lynam. "Then they'd say they didn't want to pay and it really soured our relationship. We ended up canceling multiple contracts with them. We felt like every day was a battle, and we weren't getting anything good out of the relationship. Today, by asking the right questions about possible scenarios, we try to prevent those situations from happening in the first place."

"Attempting to foresee such problems is important, as it's certainly not always easy to get out of contracts," says Lynam.

"If you're stuck in a bad contract, sometimes you just need to ride it out and take lessons from it — so you know how to better evaluate the next job and prevent that situation from happening again," he says.

Another lesson learned from some formerly challenging business relationships was that doing more work in-house was a good fit for Urban Farmer.

"Now we're more careful about evaluating what we're bidding and who we're bidding for," says Lynam. "We're trying to work good relationships. We want to grow with the philosophy of quality over quantity, and letting it be the quality work that brings more quantity."

In the end, it comes down to being cognizant about who you're doing work for, what kind of work you want to do.

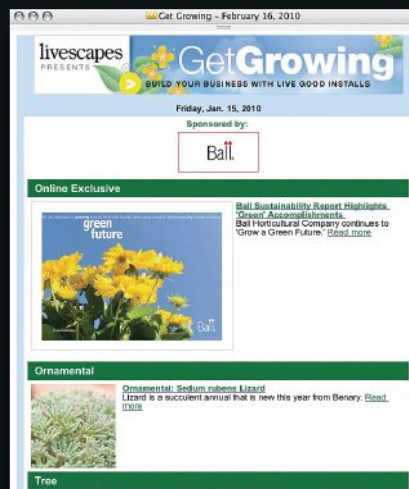
Payton is a freelance writer with six years of experience covering landscaping.

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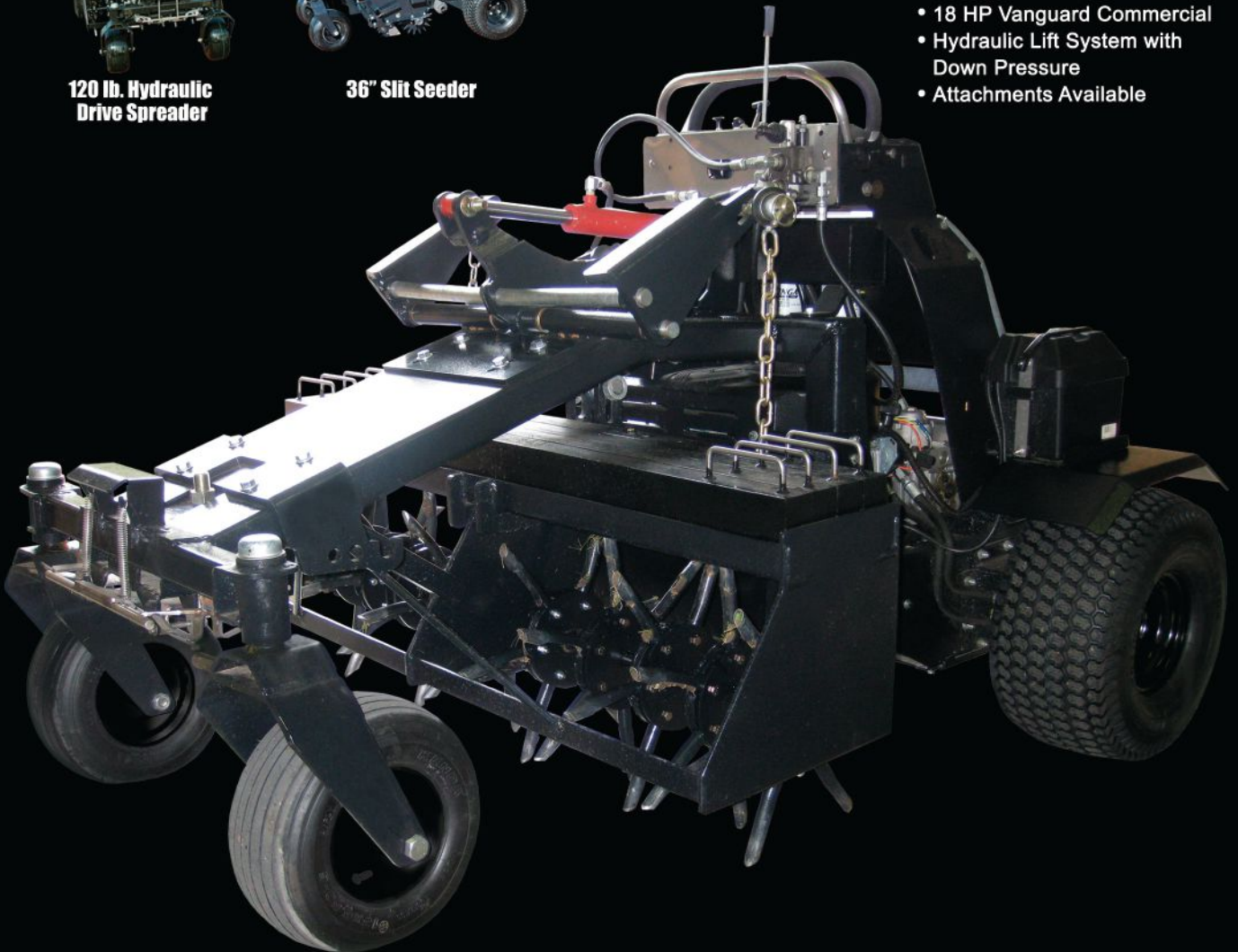
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