

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."