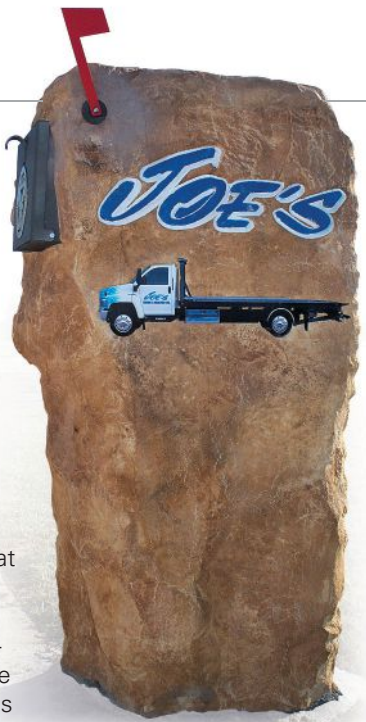


Concrete boulders bring Engels Lawncare added revenue.



## The boulder business

A small landscape company finds that custom-made boulders are a great way to boost business.

**K**EVIN ENGELMANN, OWNER and operator of Engels Lawncare in Frankfurt, IL, says that finding an additional business or service to complement his landscape company has always been in the back of his mind. When he came across information on Boulder Designs, he knew he had the perfect fit. As a company that develops made-to-order concrete boulder products, Boulder Designs had many tie-in opportunities with Engelmann's landscape business.

While many of the Boulder Designs franchisees are developing commercial business signage with the product, Engelmann saw an opportunity for using the boulders in residential properties. The product not only offers an unusual alternative to traditional business signage, but it can be a beautiful addition to both commercial and residential landscape design.

"I'm a small landscape company, and wanted to find something that was an add-on that I could still do myself," says Engelmann, who is now also the owner of the Boulder Designs of Will County franchise.

"I thought this was something neat —

and a little different — so I gave them a call. It's something I really enjoy. You get to make something from nothing, and end up with a beautiful product that customers love."

Traditional man-made boulder products typically use chicken wire, Styrofoam and a concrete mixture — and as a result, are not always very durable, Engelmann says. Part of the appeal of the Boulder Design custom-made solution is that it uses specially enhanced concrete and is solid. This gives the boulders the same characteristics as the "real thing," he says, and ensures the product is strong and durable.

The secret to building these boulders is proprietary. Franchisees are walked through the process and are then able to

build their own boulders at their own sites.

Engelmann says that in addition to the step-by-step secret of building the boulders, Boulder Designs has been helpful in its marketing support. But, he says, the best marketing has been word-of-mouth.

"It's really a see/touch/feel thing," says Engelmann. "Customers need to see the product to appreciate how neat it is. I find the more I get out and sell, the more new customers I pick up. When people see the product, they love it and want one for themselves."

Besides selling to new customers, Engelmann says that this new add-on business has been an opportunity to go back to former clients and pitch something new. And he says it's been a great upsell for his current projects.

"The possibilities are endless when it comes to using the product for landscaping purposes," he says. "A new product we're working on now is benches, which are really sharp."

Now that he has the boulder business, Engelmann says it's another way to keep revenue flowing. "You might get a call for a landscaping job, and then give them a brochure for the boulder business and wind up with that sale, too," he says. "Or it's happened that maybe I didn't get the landscape job, but I still sold them a boulder."

Engelmann says the learning curve for building boulders was manageable and something that any hands-on landscaper would be able to easily pick up. "It helps to have an artistic side — which many landscapers do," he adds. "But it's something that isn't too hard to learn. I felt that the cost investment was relatively low for the opportunities you have to make that money back. For me, it's really been a great decision."

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



Commercial signage is a perfect fit for this add-on biz.

### » SERVICE SNAPSHOT

**ADD-ON BUSINESS:** Boulder Designs of Will County

**WHY BOULDERS:** "I was looking for something unique that not everyone else was already doing," says owner Kevin Engelmann. "There's not a lot of competition for this, and there are protected territories through the franchise."

**PRIMARY BUSINESS:** Engels Lawncare

**NO. OF EMPLOYEES:** 2

**CLIENTS:** 90% residential; 10% commercial

**SERVICES:** 80% maintenance; 20% design/build