

Finding opportunity



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As we move into the next lawn and garden season it seems the media is still serving us a steady diet of doom and gloom. Certainly the nature of the current U.S. economy makes our jobs as business owners more challenging. But I've always believed you can find opportunity in any kind of economy. My great-grandfather started our family business in 1933 in the midst of the Great Depression. He had to set his priorities, stay focused and challenge the doom-and-gloom mindset that surrounded him at that time. But with a small loan borrowed against his life insurance policy, he slowly and steadily grew a business that would go on to sustain three more generations of employees.

Despite the negative news about the economy, there are many landscape businesses that are not only surviving, but thriving, in this uncertain market. I personally choose to focus on improving efficiencies in my business and use any downtime to get best prepared for the imminent upswing. One advantage of an uncertain economy is that it forces focus—whether we like it or not. It's times like this when all business owners need to monitor their business, manage their cash and even reassess their profit structure.

Whatever position you find your business in as we go into the next year, we all need a clear focus on profitable growth. Selling short your services is not a viable business model. It only will catch up in the near future and it will hurt the entire Green Industry in the long run. As an industry, we need to find new opportunity to create value for our customers—even if it means finding more and more creative ways to do so.

Certainly, all of our success hinges on the weather to a certain extent, but there are many positive indicators that show we are moving in the right direction as an industry. Use this downtime to make sure you will come out of the gate strong, healthy and re-energized for your most successful year yet!

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