



## EDITOR'S NOTE

MARISA PALMIERI EDITOR

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# 'That's not my job'

**T**his column's headline is a phrase I've cringed at since my first experience as a manager. For several years, starting at age 17, I supervised a staff of about 10 other teenagers at a time as a Dairy Queen shift manager.

I'd started working there three years earlier. It was my first job and, as such, it was my introductory experience with customer service (don't mess with someone's special Blizzard requests), quality control (I bet I can still make a perfect "Q" on top of a soft-serve cone) and slackers. What do you expect? It's a bunch of teens working at their first jobs. Some of them are going to be loafers.

When I graduated from "table girl" to ice-cream maker/cake decorator to manager of my peers, I amassed a list of employee/co-worker pet peeves, of which I'm sure you have your own.

The statement "That's not my job" quickly climbed to the top of mine.

I thought of my DQ days and that phrase in particular three times recently.

1. The first was when I read *Landscape Management* blogger and Green Industry consultant Phil Harwood's blog post, "High Performance: The absolute best way to find good people" ([buff.ly/1mstQdp](http://buff.ly/1mstQdp)).

"Most organizations are made up of some good people, some not-so-good people and a few great people," Harwood says. "I'm sure you know who's who in your organization. It's usually obvious." Harwood is right, and, of course, that was true of an ice cream shop staffed primarily by teenyboppers. The point is not only did the owner and managers know "who's who," but

the employees knew, too. And there was nothing more demotivating for the good and great employees than to be scheduled alongside those with the "that's not my job" attitude. They dragged everyone down. The quicker we weeded out those kids, the better it was for everyone.

2. The second time I thought about my least favorite phrase was just as the *Landscape Management* editorial team was mulling over design mock-ups for this magazine's cover. We had a slew of options featuring stock art illustrations, but we weren't satisfied with them and it was too late to commission a freelance photographer to do a photo shoot.

What to do?

We realized a co-worker lives within 30 miles of Ryan Lawn & Tree, one of the firms featured in our cover story, "Ownership pride." And this colleague—Seth Jones, editor-in-chief of our sister brand *Golfdom*—just so happens to be great behind a camera, although that's patently *not* his job.

After one phone call Seth was not only on board to take photos for us but was genuinely enthusiastic about it. Forty-eight hours later we had in our hands the photo you see on the cover—and about 200 others to choose from. Suffice it to say, we owe him one. How's that for "that's not my job?"

3. Finally, after reading and rereading this month's cover story, I can imagine there's probably nothing better about working at a company with an employee stock ownership plan than the absence of the "that's not my job" mentality. When everyone's an owner, everything is everyone's job.

# Landscape Management

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