



EDITOR'S NOTE

MARISA PALMIERI EDITOR

Contact Marisa at 216/706-3764 or via email at mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net.

Frequency illusion

Have you ever had one of those days or weeks where multiple bits of information—all with the same message—seem to materialize out of thin air, like they're screaming, "Hey, you! Pay attention to this!"

It feels like fate, but it's really just a matter of the brain's ability to recognize and call attention to patterns. It's called frequency illusion or the Baader-Meinhof phenomenon.

This recently happened to me. I'm taking the message as a cue to improve the way we do some things around here at *Landscape Management* (I won't bore you with the details of the magazine production process) and the way I do some things at home (paying bills, cleaning the house—also boring, I know).

What's not boring for a business owner, I'm sure, is operating an unsystemized business. In fact, if you're in this camp, it's probably downright chaotic and draining for you and for your employees. As for your clients? We probably don't even want to know what they think about your erratic procedures.

This topic—the disorder caused by a lack of standard operating procedures—is the one that's been following me around all week.

First, I came across this quote from legendary process improvement expert W. Edwards Deming: "If you can't describe what you're doing as a process, you don't know what you're doing."

Interesting, I thought, and true. *But wait, that sounds a lot like the message from the cover story I'm finishing up on*

the Weed Man USA way: Start with a solid plan and create systems to support it.

Then the other day, when I was refamiliarizing myself with the tenants of *The E-Myth* in preparation for the February issue of *LM*, I got that not-quite-déjà-vu-but-still-kind-of-strange feeling that comes when you can't avoid a piece of information.

The concept that seemed to be hitting me over the head became clear: Business systems and processes breed competency, structure and scalability—and, in turn, less stress and more profits.

Although this idea seems fundamental, apparently it's not.

Landscape Management research shows as many as 40 percent of Green Industry firms don't make an annual budget. The Benchmark columnist Frank Ross cites a study showing less than 10 percent of construction contractors plan out their years compared to 80 percent of manufacturers. Pair those facts with various research revealing anywhere from half to 80 percent of small businesses fail within the first few years, and you get the picture: Many companies, in the landscape industry and otherwise, are flying by the seats of their pants.

If you're not currently operating this way, congratulations. You're probably a recovering pants-seat flyer, aren't you?

If you are currently improvising your business as you go, let my case of frequency illusion—and lessons shared throughout this issue—serve as the catalyst to get your company's process-development program in place. Otherwise, you risk leaving your growth to fate.

Landscape Management

HEADQUARTERS

1360 EAST 9TH ST., SUITE 1070, CLEVELAND, OH 44114

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor Marisa Palmieri 216/706-3764 | mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net

Associate Editor Sarah Pfladderer 216/706-3756 | spfladderer@northcoastmedia.net

Contributing Editors Heather & Jamie Gooch 330/723-3539 | hgooch@northcoastmedia.net, jgooch@northcoastmedia.net

Art Director Tracie Martinez 216/363-7924 | tmartinez@northcoastmedia.net

ADVERTISING STAFF

Publisher Bill Roddy 216/706-3758
Fax: 216/706-3712 | broddy@northcoastmedia.net

North American Sales Manager Craig MacGregor 216/706-3787
Fax: 216/706-3712 | cmacgregor@northcoastmedia.net

National Account Manager Chris Lavelle 216/363-7923
Fax: 216/706-3712 | clavelle@northcoastmedia.net

Account Executive Classifieds Kelli Velasquez 216/706-3767
Fax: 216/706-3712 | kvelasquez@northcoastmedia.net

BUSINESS STAFF

Vice President, Sales Patrick Roberts 216/706-3736
Fax: 216/706-3712 | proberts@northcoastmedia.net

Administrative Coordinator Petra Turko 216/706-3768 | pturko@northcoastmedia.net

Marketing Manager Ryan Bockmuller 216/706-3772
Fax: 216/706-3712 | rbockmuller@northcoastmedia.net

Marketing Specialist Michelle Mitchell 216/706-7922
Fax: 216/706-3712 | mmitchell@northcoastmedia.net

Manager, Production Services Terri Johnstone 216/978-9622 | tjohnstone@northcoastmedia.net

Senior Audience Development Manager Antoinette Sanchez-Perkins 216/706-3750 | asanchez-perkins@northcoastmedia.net

MARKETING/MAGAZINE SERVICES

Reprints & Permissions Nick Iademarco 877/652-5295 | niademarco@wrightsmedia.com

Circulation List Rental Antoinette Sanchez-Perkins 216/706-3750 | asanchez-perkins@northcoastmedia.net

Subscriber, Customer Service 847/763-4942
For current single copy, back issues, or CD-ROM



CORPORATE OFFICERS

President & CEO Kevin Stoltman 216/706-3740 | kstoltman@northcoastmedia.net

VP of Finance & Operations Steve Galperin 216/706-3705 | sgalperin@northcoastmedia.net

VP of Graphic Design & Production Pete Seltzer 216/706-3737 | pseltzer@northcoastmedia.net

Editorial Director Marty Whitford 216/706-3766 | mwhitford@northcoastmedia.net