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mini skid-steers
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[GOOD TO BE BACK] Ready for GIE?

Are you excited for this year's in-person GIE+EXPO? After a year off of traveling due to COVID-19, we know we are! Be on the lookout for next month's issue, which will serve as a guide to help navigate the hundreds of products that'll be featured on the show floor. Also, feel free to let us know what you're most looking forward to about the show by emailing LM Editor Christina Herrick at cherrick@northcoastmedia.net. See you there!



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Rockin' in the free world

We are clearly still rockin' here at LM headquarters as we go back to back on rock 'n' roll cover headlines, this time channeling Neil Young's 1989 hit "Rockin' in the Free World." I tip my cap to Publisher Bill Roddy who saw the cover image and gave us the idea for the headline. And I also say thank you to our friends at DeHamer Landscaping in Grandville, Mich., for allowing us to come out and photograph the crew hard at work for the cover image. You guys rock.

I myself have been rockin' in the free world lately. The Jones Family, like many American families, took a family vacation. It was the first time my wife and kids (ages 14 and 9) left the state of Kansas since the onset of the pandemic. We road tripped it south for 16 hours to South Padre Island, Texas, a frequent vacation spot for the Jones family. We drive because we like to stop at our favorite pit stops along the way, particularly Whataburger.

We don't have Whataburger in Kansas. The first Whataburger in Oklahoma City is always a cause for celebration. This was the first time we sat down in a Whataburger in about two years ... and we waited almost as long for our order to be delivered.

As we left, we saw an angry Okie trying to back out of the log-jammed drive-thru, to no avail. I felt his pain. My guess is he hadn't gone two years without a Whataburger though! I forewarned the kids that this could be a

“If our favorite restaurants weren't understaffed, they might be worse: closed. The pandemic has left many businesses searching for workers.”

recurring theme of our trip. If our favorite restaurants weren't understaffed, they might be worse: closed. The pandemic has left many businesses searching for workers.

Turns out, I called it. We were dismayed when we arrived at Casa Rio, our favorite restaurant on San Antonio's River Walk, only to find it closed. The sign read, "Due to circumstances beyond our control, we cannot yet open. We hope to be back soon." I told the kids, "Sorry folks, park's closed, the moose out front should have told you." (My kids haven't seen "National Lampoon's Vacation," but I told them to trust me; Dad just nailed a perfectly timed movie quote.)

Clearly, these staffing problems go beyond my vacation dining troubles. In the Resources section of the magazine, we often ask for your success stories. Today, I'm asking for you to share with me some of the nightmares you've experienced with the current labor scenario. It's a story that we will share in a fall issue.

I can already foresee that issue's rock 'n' roll cover headline: The Allman Brothers Band, "No One to Run With." 🎸

IN MEMORIAM: JEFF HEIDE

For the past 26 years Jeff Heide worked for North Coast Media and its publications. His name never appeared on the *Landscape Management* masthead. He was our office manager, our behind-the-scenes guy. When new hires arrived on their first day, Jeff would give them the office tour. If a printer was fussing, Jeff would fix it. Jeff, a Cleveland sports nut, ran the office Super Bowl square pot.

We were all saddened when we learned that Jeff passed away recently at age 61.

I'll fondly remember the time I came into the office and Jeff lit me up because he saw me on TV in my Royals jersey, celebrating a Kansas City home run in the Progressive Field outfield. "I've been going to games for 50 years and I've never been on TV!" he told me. I told him the key was I was in the visiting team's jersey. He assured me he'd never try that trick.

To celebrate Jeff, the company will be turning off the lights at NCM headquarters and taking some time to enjoy the upcoming Cleveland Indians/Oakland A's day game together. I'm sure you'll understand if you can't reach us that afternoon.

It looks like this Royals fan will be adding an Indians jersey to his wardrobe after all. Cheers, Jeff.



Jeff Heide



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EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD



MORE ONLINE

See more great advice and complete answers from our Editorial Advisory Board in the online version of this feature at LandscapeManagement.net.

What should contractors consider before integrating a new piece of technology?

“Ask for a list of previous customers and follow up with them to see if the value was really there for the new technology. Usually, there’s a disconnect with the salesperson and reality.”



Landscape Professionals

Richard Bare

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Norcross, Ga.

Troy Clogg

Troy Clogg Landscape Associates
Wixom, Mich.

Paul Fraynd

Sun Valley Landscaping
Omaha, Neb.

Luke Henry

ProScape Lawn & Landscaping Services
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Laguna, Calif.

Jeffrey Scott

Jeffrey Scott Consulting
New Orleans, La.

“Try to determine how many labor hours it will save you instead of focusing only on what it costs.”



“You have to have an unwavering commitment to implementing it, wrap your company around it and hire people to help you implement it if you have to.”



“Incentivizing adoption.”

“Any new technology should be assessed in light of existing ones. In other words, will it potentially integrate or just add more data collection that needs someone to manage?”



“The biggest mistake I see is not making full use of your existing technology ... dig deeper into the newest upgrades and features in existing tech before considering a new technology.”



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LM GALLERY

Check out a few of the places where the **LM** team made its rounds recently

1 Like riding a bike At the 2021 Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) meeting in Kohler, Wis., attendees got reacquainted to being at an in-person conference. L to R: Bill Goetz, Louisville Tourism; Karen Williams, Louisville Tourism; Maura O'Hara, MemPro USA; and John Finley, CEO of MemPro USA, took a moment away from discussing their hopes for GIE+EXPO.

1



2 Power players For expertise in outdoor power equipment, look no further than this foursome: (L to R) Craig Magalen, Kohler Co. VP of sales and Latin America; Kevin Parker, outdoor power equipment chief sales officer for Sheffield Financial; Kris Kiser, president and CEO, OPEI; and Bob Byrne, business development officer, Sheffield Financial.

2



3



3 Love for Louisville Anything regarding Louisville can be answered by this group: Troy Winebrenner, Sellers Expositions; Cleo Battle, Louisville Tourism; Goetz; Williams; and Aaron Bludworth, Fern Co.

4 Luck of the Irish During the OPEI golf scramble, this group found favorable lies on the undulating Irish Course at Whistling Straits. (L to R) Doug Odell, VP of sales and commercialization, Bemis Manufacturing; Tom Rugg, senior VP, global sales and marketing, Briggs & Stratton; Kevin Stoltman, president and CEO, North Coast Media and LM; and Lee Van Boxtel, president, CMS, Bemis Manufacturing.

4



5 Reading greens LM Editorial Director Seth Jones (left) and Group Publisher Bill Roddy (right) found themselves relying on their playing partners often for putts and drives, as well as insights and opinions on the state of the green industry. With Jones and Roddy are (L to R) Tim Cooper, GM, Duramatic Products; and Mike Horak, commercial leader, outdoor power, Wells Fargo Distribution Finance.

5



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RENEWAL & REMEMBRANCE RETURNS

BY CHRISTINA HERRICK | LM EDITOR

The National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) marked the 25th anniversary of its Renewal & Remembrance event on July 19.

Landscape professionals from around the country came together to enhance the grounds at Arlington National Cemetery. This year, Renewal & Remembrance expanded to include enhancements at the National Mall near the Washington Monument because a limited number of volunteers were permitted at Arlington.

“To be able to volunteer on a national cemetery, a place where people come to

honor and visit their loved ones, and to know that we’re helping maintain and enhance a place that is so sacred and has the power to heal those who come to visit, that’s pretty powerful,” said Shayne Newman, founder of Yardscapes Landscape Professionals in New Milford, Conn., and president of NALP’s board of directors.

More than 100 people spread 350 cubic yards of wood chips at the National Mall to help preserve the cherry trees near the monument. Volunteers also performed needle tining and slice seeding on the 33 acres of turf on the JFK Hockey Fields, FDR Memorial fields

and the polo field at the National Mall.

Bruce Allentuck, owner of Allentuck Landscaping in Clarksburg, Md., said the wood chips serve a specific purpose: to add organic material to the soil and introduce beneficial microorganisms to the root zone of the trees. Allentuck, who has been volunteering at Renewal & Remembrance for 18 years, said the National Park Service told volunteers that this process has been implemented at another location with noticeable improvements to the health of the trees.

“I was just so happy to be working in the shadow of the Washington



Volunteers at the R&R event spread 350 cubic yards of wood chips under cherry trees at the National Mall.

PHOTOS: PHILIPPE NOBILE PHOTOGRAPHY



Monument,” Allentuck said. “Thirty-one million people visit (the National Mall) a year. One hundred of us spent the day working on it. The National Park Service does it every day. So, we made a very small contribution.”

At Arlington National Cemetery, 125 volunteers installed lightning protection for historic oak trees. They also installed irrigation system repairs and upgrades to the Columbarium, the Administration Building and near the National Park Service’s Arlington House and performed hardscape repair, landscape lighting installation and turf improvements.

Newman and his family laid the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on behalf of NALP. While Newman said that ceremony was a special moment, he added, “It’s more about the association and its members and what we do collectively as a group.”

Things were a little different for this year’s event than in previous years. Because of the pandemic, NALP did not hold the children’s program. NALP also recognized John Eggleston with Spartan Irrigation in Lansing, Mich., for serving as the Renewal & Remembrance chairperson for six years in a row at a kickoff event the night before.

Allentuck said NALP’s Renewal & Remembrance committee had about three months to figure out the logistics of hosting volunteers at Arlington National Cemetery and the National Mall. Newman said it was gratifying to connect with NALP members and friends for the first time in more than a year.

“It was the first time our members have been together in 18 months,” he said. “And for it to be that event, it couldn’t have been for a better reason.”

Volunteers perform hardscape repairs at the 2021 R&R event.

Former seed manager sentenced for wire fraud, money laundering

Christopher Claypool, a former general manager of the Jacklin Seed Co., a producer and marketer of grass seed and turfgrass in the Pacific Northwest, was sentenced to prison in early July for conspiring to commit wire fraud and money laundering to defraud J.R. Simplot Co., Jacklin’s former owner, and its customers.

Claypool was sentenced to three years in federal prison and three years of supervised release. He has paid \$8.3 million in restitution and will forfeit \$7.8 million in criminally derived proceeds.

According to the U.S. District Attorney’s office of Oregon, Claypool oversaw Jacklin’s domestic and foreign sales to distributors. He contracted with independent growers in Oregon to produce proprietary grass seed varieties, which had variable seed yield rates and resulted in the overdelivery of some varieties and underproduction of others.

Three cheers for Marty!

LM Columnist Marty Grunder of Grunder Landscaping Co. and The Grow Group has been named to the 2021 Dayton Business Hall of Fame.

“Dayton, Ohio, is full of passionate people. When you think of the rich history that Dayton, Ohio, has in terms of dreamers and doers. I think there’s a can-do spirit here, and people like supporting small business owners,” Grunder said.

Grunder was recognized for his positive impact on his community through economic and civic endeavors.

“His passion and enthusiasm for Dayton, growing up here going to (the University of Dayton), starting this business, he’s always looking to give back not only to his associates and employees but to his customers and the community. He recog-



nizes that for his team to thrive, he needs the community to thrive,” said Vail Miller Jr., CEO of Heidelberg Distributing.

FMC to give away Ford F-150 at LM Growth Summit

FMC Corp. will celebrate the 25th anniversary of its Talstar insecticide registration with the giveaway of a new Ford F-150 pickup at the LM Growth Summit, to be held Dec. 6-8 at Reunion Resort in Orlando, Fla.

This Ford F-150 giveaway is part of FMC’s larger celebration of Talstar this year. Talstar insecticide provides long-lasting, broad-spectrum control of lawn and ornamental pests.

“We are proud to highlight the longevity of the Talstar brand,” said Sam Pass, pest and nursery market manager with FMC. “Lawn care operators have built their businesses on a product like Talstar. We look forward to a yearlong celebration and offering additional resources for our end-user customers.”

To enter to win the Ford F-150, visit the LM Growth Summit website (LMGrowthSummit.com) and click on the Talstar truck giveaway image.

The *Landscape Management* Growth Summit brings together professional lawn care applicators and supplier partners to address challenges and examine the very latest solutions in an intimate setting. Visit the website to apply.

Green Group adds Lawn Tech, enters Dallas market

Green Group extended its platform to North Texas with the addition of Lawn Tech to its family of brands.

Located just north of Dallas, Lawn Tech has provided the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex with lawn care services since 1985. Green Group will retain Lawn Tech employees and plans to expand and hire additional employees in the coming year. Lawn Tech will continue to operate locally under the Lawn Tech brand and remain headquartered in Prosper, Texas.

DESIGN BUILD + INSTALLATION

KEEP ON

In the landscape world, mini skid-steers and compact track loaders are hot, but manufacturers say that growth isn't coming at the expense of larger options

BY ROBERT SCHOENBERGER
LM SENIOR EDITOR



ROCKIN'

Wade Vugteveen almost never gets to choose between sending a large track loader or a mini skid-steer to a job site. The head of operations for DeHamer Landscaping, Grandville, Mich., says with most jobs, only one tool will do.

"We're often in really tight spaces, moving through backyard gates or between houses," Vugteveen says. "With smaller machines, it's easier to use them when you're on-site and easier to get them on the trailer to the site. Usually, we can't bring anything else. It's either a compact machine or hand tools."

Landscape companies and equipment manufacturers say demand for smaller equipment, such as ride-on compact track loaders and stand-on mini skid-steers, has grown rapidly for more than a decade. Such machines were especially useful during pandemic lockdowns as many homebound people opted to improve landscaping or build outdoor living areas.

However, few see a trend of small machines replacing their big brothers. Rather, they say, the boom in minis comes from more products hitting the market for people who historically used few pieces of power equipment.

"They're not just niche products," says Matt Hutchinson, Vermeer's product manager for tree care, rental and landscape equipment. "It's its own market and industry with many competitors and different classes of machines to do different types of work."

Hutchinson and Luke Gribble, solutions marketing manager for John Deere Construction and Forestry, say the boom in small products matches rising sales for medium- and large-scale construction equipment. Rather than displacing larger machines, compact track loaders and mini skid-steers could be giving small companies that don't have the resources to buy larger, more expensive machines a taste of horsepower — something that could lead to bigger tools in the future.

MANPOWER SOLUTIONS

Derek Taussig, owner of Taussig Landscape in Manhattan, Kan., says the decision to add mini skid-steers and a mini excavator to his equipment list came down to two things — people and pain.

"We're struggling in finding good laborers," Taussig says. "That, and I've been a landscaper for 20 years, and my back hurts. Using one mini skid-steer, we can do the work of three men, and I don't have to be on the site every day."

About 70 percent of Taussig's business is residential landscape and hardscape installations, mostly retaining walls and patios. The rest of the company's business comes from irrigation installation, commercial landscaping and a small amount of maintenance work.

He has several sizes of Ditch Witch mini skid-steers, but the most critical tool, the SK800, is the smallest.

"We do a lot of irrigation systems on existing yards and landscapes, so being able to go into a backyard, through a 36-inch gate and pull pipe, that's a major savings for me," Taussig says. He adds that to bring larger machines to a backyard, he'd

Continued on page 14



"WITH SMALLER MACHINES, IT'S EASIER TO USE THEM WHEN YOU'RE ON-SITE AND EASIER TO GET THEM ON THE TRAILER TO THE SITE."

— WADE VUGTEVEEN

Continued from page 13

either have to take down a section of fence and reinstall it, or he'd have to stick with walk-behind tools. Either way, manpower costs rise.

In Michigan, Vugteveen says some of the manpower savings from smaller machines are surprising. About 50 percent of DeHamer's work is landscaping installation for new construction, with the rest coming from landscape renovations (about 30 percent), lawn maintenance (about 10 percent) and snow removal (about 10 percent). DeHamer began using mini skid-steers at its offices about 10 years ago to prepare for jobs and noticed a radical difference.

"When we were loading plants in the morning, getting on and off over and over again, it felt like I was moving three times faster," Vugteveen says. When choosing between his company's stand-on mini skid-steer and its larger loaders, he adds, "You don't realize how much time you

"BEING ABLE TO GO INTO A BACKYARD, THROUGH A 36-INCH GATE AND PULL PIPE, THAT'S A MAJOR SAVINGS FOR ME."

— DEREK TAUSSIG

spend climbing into the cab, sitting down and standing up again."

He adds that it's easier to train new people to use compact equipment because there are fewer settings and the controls tend to be streamlined compared to controls on full-sized machines. Plus, the lower cost of the machines and lower power levels compared to full-sized equipment mean less risk.

"You can trust a less-experienced person with a smaller piece of equipment," Vugteveen says. "They're going to do a lot less damage if they get something wrong."

FLEXIBILITY VS. POWER

Users say smaller machines have a lot of bonuses — lower starting prices, greater maneuverability, weights that allow them to tow units to jobs with standard pickups instead of having to hire people with a commercial driver's license. However, there are tradeoffs.

Smaller machines have smaller engines, less available power for hydraulics and attachments, tend to be slower and can be more expensive to maintain.

Taussig says he loves his minis, but maintenance time and costs are his No. 1 complaint.

"The smaller wear out a lot faster than the big machines. That's the big technology that we're missing out on right now," Taussig says. "After 2,000 hours on my (large) skid loader, it's barely time for a maintenance check. At 2,000 hours on some of the mini skid-steers, that's when it's time to retire them."

Continued on page 16

PHOTO: MARVIN SHAOUNI



BACKYARD ACCESS

DeHamer Landscaping relies on compact equipment to get into backyards and other tight spaces for jobs such as installing retaining walls.

"THE AMOUNT OF MONEY THIS MACHINE PUMPS OUT IS INSANE."

– Jamie Hageman, Manager, GreenLawn



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FLEXIBILITY

Mini skid-steers tend to be slower and have lower load ratings than larger machines, but users say they gain flexibility when going small.



Continued from page 14

The compact sizes that make these machines so useful also mean tight spaces for hydraulic lines and other components, he adds, saying he's had to replace

hydraulic lines on several mini skid-steers because they rub against other components.

Vugteveen has similar complaints, noting that higher maintenance costs are almost baked into smaller gear. Smaller tools equal smaller components, making each part more susceptible to damage from daily use — anything from hitting a big rock when grading a space for a new patio to minor collisions when loading machines on trailers.



Luke Gribble

At Deere, which does not offer any equipment smaller than a compact track loader although it's closely watching the mini market, Gribble says maintenance costs and power needs tend to bring people from small machines to bigger tools.

"Contractors can't find enough help, they can't bid on jobs fast enough. They're just go, go, go all the time," Gribble says. "Compact and mini equipment can let them bid on some of those jobs, but at some point, you have to balance flexibility with productivity. Customers are asking us to go to the limit. 'How much capability can we get out of this machine?' There is a limit."

ADVICE FOR GOING SMALL

Contractors using small equipment say the versatility and maneuverability of small machines more than makes up for power limitations and maintenance costs, but they warn that going small can be a complex decision.

Continued on page 21

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QUALI-PRO



PERFECT TIMING

WHY EARLY ORDER PROGRAMS ARE EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THIS YEAR

Figuring out how much product a lawn care company will need the following year might sound like a difficult task. But even more daunting is dealing with product outages, delayed deliveries, price increases and knowing the company missed out on major rebates if only they'd ordered sooner.

That's why lawn care operators looking to maximize their savings and efficiency are turning to Quali-Pro's early order program (EOP).

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Beginning Aug. 15, owners can begin taking advantage of Quali-Pro's early order program. Their first order period runs through October, with the second beginning in November. The rebate values are cut in half for end users who wait until November to place their orders, says Jake Wylie, Quali-Pro Mid-South area manager.

One thing that makes Quali-Pro's program stand out is that all of their brand's products have rebates. The products are broken down into two tiers: base and platinum. The platinum products are newer technologies, combinations or exclusives.

LCOs can also qualify for additional multipliers on those rebates, increasing their savings. If 50 percent or more of their order are platinum products, they will also



North Carolina-based GrowinGreen takes advantage of Quali-Pro's early order program.

receive three times the rebate on the included base products.

"They're putting money back in their pockets by buying early," Wylie says.

In addition to the savings, the early order program also helps owners ensure they have the products they need — which has proven difficult during the past year and a half with product outages and shipping delays.



Wylie

"This year it's more important than ever to look at doing an early

order program," Wylie says. "It allows you to have the product you need when you need it, instead of pulling on demand. If you need to make an application and can't, that's time wasted. The price may also increase over the year especially with supply being down. That's a big reason it's important for the lawn care market to jump on board with the program."

After users submit their orders, they will receive either a gift card or credit on their account by the distributor within six to eight weeks — which is more than a year earlier than rebates with some manufacturers.

QUALI-PRO

COMBINE OFFERS

Lawn care operators appreciate the simplicity of Quali-Pro's EOP, says Ken Gagne, Central Florida territory manager LCO/PCO at WinField United in Orlando, Fla.

"From the customer standpoint, there's an ease to using Quali-Pro's program. It will show you product, point values and how much you can save," Gagne says.

When customers go through a distributor for the early order program, they can qualify for additional perks. For example, Gagne's customers lock in pricing and don't pay for their order until the following June.

They also try to deliver everything the customers purchased from the early order program before the end of the year. Distributors may offer percentage-based rebates, as well, allowing the customer to take advantage of both.



Gagne

"If you buy something in October and there's a shortage come March, you won't be without product," Gagne says. "You don't have to see your reps or deal with deliveries or ordering every week. For managers who had been spending three to five hours a week putting in chemical orders and going from one manufacturer to another, it saves them a lot of time."

When customers are interested in the early order program, Gagne talks with them about how much they spent on the program last year,



Florida distributor WinfieldUnited helps LCOs understand how much they can save on products through an EOP program.

how much inventory they have left and what needs they will have for the next season.

They also look at how much they could have saved if qualifying purchases had been done through the EOP. He sees a range of order amounts from \$10,000 on up, so the program isn't only designed for larger companies, he adds.

"Companies that have a finger on the pulse of their business don't see any negatives to the early order programs at all," Gagne says.

SUPPORT MEETS SAVINGS

Jonathan Rigsbee, owner of GrowinGreen, has been using Quali-Pro's products for about a decade, initially turning to the brand to find alternative products to those offered by larger brands.

"They were in our backyard working with NC State University," says Rigsbee, whose company has offices in Kernersville and Cornelius, N.C. "We were also impressed with the efficacy of their pre-emergent and how well it mixed in our tanks."

GrowinGreen provides athletic field management, lawn care and tree and shrub care services, and their customers are about 90 percent residential and 10 percent commercial.

When customers go through a distributor for the early order program, they can qualify for additional perks.

With the majority of his early orders being Quali-Pro products, Rigsbee says one reason for that decision is because of the manufacturer's dedication to the lawn care industry.

"They're the first company that's really given lawn care an even footing in the industry," Rigsbee says. "A lot of companies and their products are more focused on the golf industry."

Quali-Pro has listened to their feedback and needs as well, he says, which has helped his company in its day-to-day operations. That includes having a good relationship with all of the reps, knowing they were only a quick phone call away.

"I've always had one-on-one support from my rep and been able to call them and get things taken care of when we've had a problem. Even when I've had issues that were my own fault, they've still backed it

up,” Rigsbee says. “The product is one thing, but having the support to back it up when we need it and being able to have input and getting questions answered without having to go through an 800 number is invaluable.”



Rigsbee

Having a local rep who is involved in the industry and available to look at issues within a day has been hard to beat, he adds. So, it only made sense that he would turn to his trusted Quali-Pro reps to purchase through the early order program. They help ensure all of Rigsbee’s products are ready well before the season gets underway, which helps prevent possible issues once it begins.

“It runs smoother during the busy times of the year,” Rigsbee says. “I encourage all business owners to take advantage of the early order program so they aren’t wasting time chasing down products when they need to be out making money.”

He sits down to look through

his numbers and figure out how much product he will need for the projected square footage they will cover. That allows him to plan for the next year and save the most money.

“We might buy a product with Quali-Pro versus another company because it might make the rebate and multiplier go up. That allows us to bundle more together to get other products cheaper,” Rigsbee says. “We want to take advantage of as many discounts and bundle as much as possible. Then we know we will have the needed product on the shelf. I’m not chasing 50 pounds of product at a time.”

His company has gotten to the point where they know their numbers pretty well, which has helped them limit the chance of over-purchasing and needing to store until the next season.

“It’s somewhat of a learning process in the beginning,” Rigsbee says of EOPs. “You’re constantly growing, so your numbers are always changing. You’re trying to anticipate and add enough on every year so you don’t get to the end and see you didn’t order enough.”

For Rigsbee, his distributor’s

terms and savings are the main benefits to using Quali-Pro’s early order program. That allows him to lock in the previous year’s price, which typically increases at the end of the year. He also doesn’t pay for the products until May or June of the next year.


“We’re able to use the product and bill the customer before we have to pay for it,” Rigsbee says. “I don’t have to tie up my capital. We can get the cash flow moving for the year before we have to pay the bill.”

He encourages other LCOs to work with a rep to understand the program and maximize their savings. Not knowing how to fully take advantage of the program is often what keeps owners from using EOPs, he says.

“It can get a little complicated with how the tiers work until you’ve done it a few times because it changes every year,” Rigsbee says. “That’s why it’s important to have a local rep who is accessible and will sit down with you to go over the program.”

Receiving not only competitive pricing through the early order program but also reliable support continues to provide value to LCOs and their businesses throughout the year.

“Quali-Pro has as good, if not better, products and customer support as any company in the industry for a better price,” Rigsbee says. “I own my own company, so those dollars come out of my pocket. You get more bang for your buck with Quali-Pro. They have done a great job with their products, pricing, value and listening. We’ve been very pleased with Quali-Pro.”

Participating end-users must earn a minimum rebate of \$100 to qualify. For more information on Quali-Pro’s early order program, visit Simplygrowtogether.com 



The majority of GrowinGreen’s early orders are Quali-Pro’s products because of their dedication to the lawn care industry.



August 15th - November 30th

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simplygrowtogether.com.

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quali-pro.com

Continued from page 16

"We ran into problems with some attachments not working on compact track loaders the way we wanted," Vugteveen says.

Manufacturers say the number and variety of attachments in the mini and compact spaces are growing rapidly, but contractors should carefully consider what tools they typically use and ensure that mini skid-steers and compact loaders have those options.

Deere's Gribble says some contractors who have focused on new construction installations or other nonresidential work may not be used to the need to protect turf, and they may not be familiar with smaller loaders or the attachments they use.

"Get a better understanding of using smaller attachments," Gribble says. "You're probably going to have to move slower on the site. You're going to have to understand how your operation is going to work."

At Vermeer, Hutchinson says users should also know exactly how big and heavy some small equipment is. Just because a stand-on track loader is smaller than a ride-on unit, crews will still have

to lay down plywood or pads to protect turf on many job sites.

He adds that the biggest piece of advice is to listen to the employees who will be using the equipment.

With labor shortages hitting most landscape companies while demand for services skyrockets, owners should talk to employees about how compact and mini tools can let them complete more jobs while doing less physical labor.

If implemented well, Hutchinson says, "employees are happier at the end of the day, so that's good for retention." ■

OTHER VOICES

In addition to contractors and representatives from John Deere and Vermeer, *Landscape Management* spoke with Blane Burroughs, Kubota CE product specialist; Keith Kramlich, Takeuchi national sales and training manager; and Kevin Coleman, skid-steer loader/compact track loader (CTL) product marketing at Caterpillar.

Landscape Management: Have you seen a shift in sales from larger skid-steers or track loaders to mini units, wheel loaders and track loaders?

Burroughs: Smaller equipment does not seem to be stealing sales from other product classes but creating its own pure market and customer demand.

Kramlich: The skid-steer market continues to decline as customers see the advantages that a CTL offers and make the switch.

LM: Do you have any products on the horizon designed for tighter working spaces?

Kramlich: We have short-tail compact excavator models available now, and new short-tail models are coming soon. Also, we're planning to launch a Takeuchi tiltrotator (attachment) line later this fall.

LM: What tradeoffs do companies face in using smaller machines?

Coleman: As machines increase in size, so do the rated operating capacities and auxiliary hydraulic flow rates that power hydromechanical attachments. Smaller machines will likely have lower lift heights that may not reach the top of larger trucks (during loading) or require a small ramp.

Kramlich: A larger machine will come with a higher price tag, but it will be more productive, so the customer will typically save in the long run.

LM: When does it make more sense to take down a fence, bring in bigger equipment and reset the fence at the end of the project? Or, is it almost always better to opt for smaller equipment?

Burroughs: This type of calculation should be made on a case-by-case basis weighing the cost of tear down and construction, damage caused by ground disturbance and the productivity gained by bringing in a larger machine.

Kramlich: Let's say (the company has) \$3 million and just three months to get a job done. It may want to move the fence and bring in the bigger equipment. If it has \$1 million and nine months, it may need to opt for less site impact and go with smaller equipment.

LM: What advice do you have for contractors deciding to go small?

Coleman: Rearview cameras provide a wide-angle picture of hard-to-see areas behind the machine, which can be especially helpful in smaller, tighter job sites.

Think about the track tread pattern — bar-tread rubber track minimizes ground disturbance.

Kramlich: Watch your surroundings. Working in a large, open area with a large piece of equipment is much different than working next to a house, pipeline or power lines. Be cautious booming up, as there may be a power line right above you, and be careful swinging next to structures as the machine's counterweight can swing wider than the tracks.

LM: What are some hidden benefits of going small?

Burroughs: The cost barrier to entry is significantly reduced with these smaller machines.

Coleman: The opportunity exists to potentially carry more attachments, which would provide even greater machine utilization and versatility.



Blane Burroughs



Keith Kramlich



Kevin Coleman



Matt Hutchinson

>> DID YOU KNOW

How to manage grubs

Preventing grubs also controls bigger pests that love to eat the prolific larvae

BY ROBERT SCHOENBERGER
LM SENIOR EDITOR

Grubs not only damage turf, they're tasty to skunks and other nuisance animals. Aside from the stink, animals foraging for grubs attack plant root zones, causing even more damage to lawns. Because of those dual problems, pest control experts call grubs one of the most damaging creatures that lawn care operators (LCOs) regularly face.



Aaron Hathaway

"It is difficult for LCOs to forecast, however, whether a property will or will not have a grub infestation," says Aaron Hathaway, technical services manager for Nufarm. "Keep tabs on the history of grub damage at each property as beetles may lay eggs from year to year in the same areas. It is also worth taking a quick look within the soil during peak grub feeding, typically in August or September, in lawns that haven't been treated by digging up a Frisbee-sized area and counting the grubs seen just underneath the sod."

And then what? Hathaway says the grub count test should guide LCOs on pest control.

"Just because grubs may be present doesn't mean that control is necessary. A threshold of more than

10 grubs per square foot is a good rule of thumb to warrant control measures," Hathaway says. "A healthy lawn can maintain health with minimal populations. This attention to detail can bolster the relationship with a client and help turf managers become more familiar with different lawns and make better decisions based on real observations in the future."

BEST CONTROL PRACTICES

Rakim Turnipseed, Ph.D., product development manager, insecticides, at FMC, says there are some basic steps LCOs should take to prevent and control grubs.

- Maintain a healthy lawn with proper fertilization, mowing and watering to create turfgrass tough enough to withstand some pests.
- Identify the type of grub present. This step is vital to proper treatment. Grubs are beetle larvae. Identify the most common pest populations in your area to determine whether the grubs are from Japanese beetle, European or masked chafer, Oriental beetle or other beetle varieties. Knowing the grub type will tell you which insecticide to use and what watering methods will move the active ingredients into the soil.
- Apply treatments at the appropriate time based on whether it is a curative or preventive product.

Some products that work as preventive treatments need to be applied earlier in the season.

"Unfortunately, treatments that don't work well curatively are often made too late in the season after grubs



THE TIPPING POINT
Ten or more grubs per square foot may indicate control is necessary.

have grown too large," Turnipseed says. "And, sometimes LCOs fail to water in insecticides immediately after application."

COMMON MISTAKES

Nufarm's Hathaway lists common errors LCOs make when controlling grubs, agreeing with Turnipseed that timing is critical.

Not having preventive products down early enough in the season is a common mistake, he says. Preventive products depend on having insecticide in place before or just at peak egg laying. This approach is preferred to curative methods, experts say. The more targeted applications lower insecticide use because the degradation time from application to grub ingest shrinks.

Hathaway says not watering in insecticide applications is another common misstep. The target for preventive applications is the soil where they can be absorbed by turfgrass plants and subsequently be fed upon by grubs. That's why they must be watered in. On turfgrass leaves, active ingredients can be mowed off or broken down by sunlight. ☺



Rakim Turnipseed



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PRODUCTS THAT WORK

Spreaders and topdressers



TURFCO T5000 SPREADER-SPRAYER

COMPANY: Turfco

URL: Turfco.com

Turfco's T5000 Spreader-Sprayer is designed for a variety of properties. The high-capacity T5000 Spreader Sprayer is fast, nimble, easy to learn and a hill-stable machine. End users can add an optional three-in-one tank and spray up to 300,000 square feet with one fill. With a 13-foot spray width, users will increase productivity by at least 29 percent, according to the company. Precision steering and the patented boomless design let operators maneuver in tight areas and zoom past obstacles but won't tear up turf.

WALK-BEHIND SPREADER

COMPANY: Walk Behind Spreaders

URL: PowerSpreaders.com

Walk Behind Spreaders machines are available with either gas power or electric power. The gas-powered spreaders are available with Honda or Briggs & Stratton motors with variable forward speeds up to 3 miles per hour.

The electric spreaders are calibrated to run at 2.4 miles per hour and are available with a lithium-ion battery for a long run time.



Z-SPRAY LTS SPREADER SPRAYER

COMPANY: Z Turf

Equipment

URL: ZTurf

Equipment.com

The Z-Spray

LTS stand-on

spreader sprayer from Z Turf Equipment offers lean-to-steer controls, enabling one-handed speed and direction control. This feature frees the other hand to adjust spread or spray controls or use the easy-access spray wand. Features include a Spyker-style spreader system that broadcasts up to 22 feet; a 175-pound hopper capacity, with space to carry 50 pounds of bagged material atop the tank; selectable wide and narrow spray systems that provide an adjustable spray width from 4 to 22 feet; a 20-gallon tank with molded-in graduations; constant in-tank agitation that keeps materials in suspension for consistent application; and a stainless-steel operator platform that uses isolation mounts for a more comfortable ride.



62SP TOPDRESSER

COMPANY: Earth & Turf Products

URL: EarthAndTurf.com

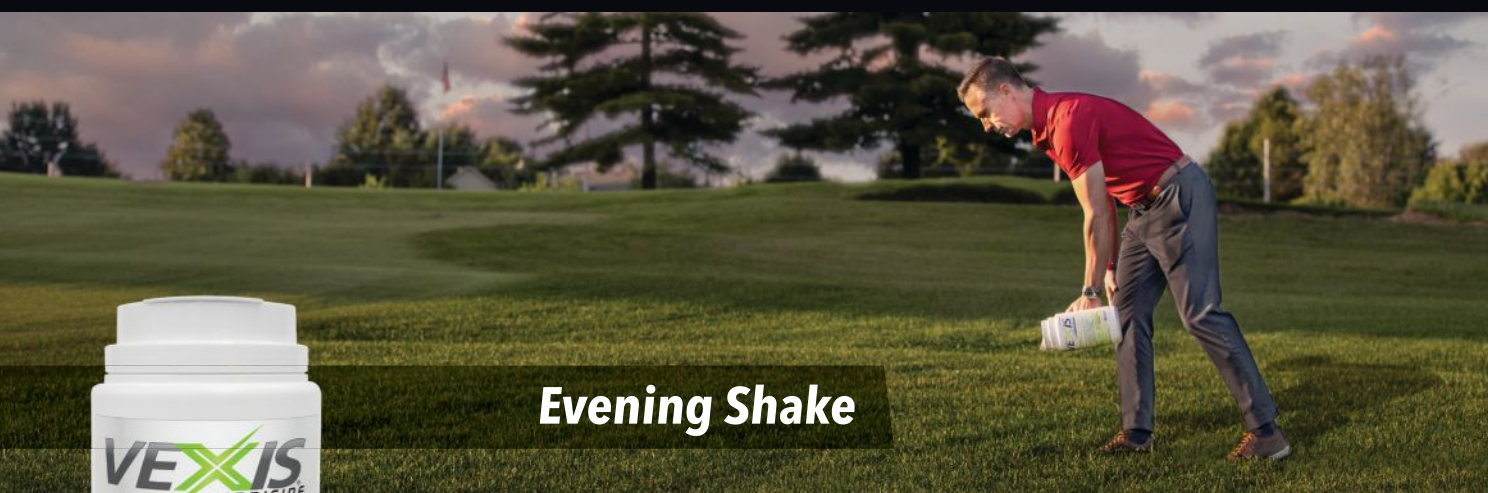
The new 62SP is now a four-wheel stance topdresser with a hydrostatic transmission and a stainless-steel hopper with a 6.7-cubic-foot capacity. The 62SP includes forward and reverse speeds up to 5 miles per hour and still only spread in the forward direction. The spread depth is controlled by an adjustable end gate, and because the conveyor and beater are tied to ground speed, the spread depth will be the same if you are spreading at 2, 3 or 4 miles per hour. The units are all built to carry their full capacity in sand, the heaviest material the product can spread.



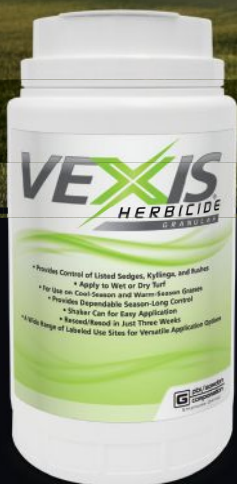
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BUSINESS BOOSTERS

Route it out

Two lawn care operators describe how GPS tracking built into software makes for seamless operations

BY SARAH WEBB
LM MANAGING EDITOR

Timekeeping, route plotting, location verification — GPS tracking software has come to serve multiple purposes for lawn care operators (LCOs).

Matthew Gragg, CEO of NuView Lawn Pros in Shelbyville, Tenn., and Levi Duckett, president and owner of Sunshine Landscape in Meridian, Idaho, discuss the ways GPS tracking systems integrated into software have made their operations more efficient and reliable.

YES, WE WERE THERE

Gragg says GPS tracking software on vehicles gives NuView confirmation that technicians were actually at a site when they said they were.

Unlike with mowing or design/build work, Gragg notes it's difficult to get visual confirmation that a lawn has been treated until weeks later.

"There's this term in the industry called 'ghosting' where technicians will pull up and put a sign in the yard but they don't actually treat the lawn," Gragg says. "If there are ever any questions about it from the customer, then we have that backup to show them crews were actually there and for how long."

NuView, which has about 12 employees and provides lawn care, maintenance and design/build work to an

80 percent residential, 20 percent commercial clientele, fully implemented Arborgold's software in the spring of 2015 and hasn't looked back since. Gragg appreciates that the GPS module built into the software allows for monitoring of crews using the Arborgold app and that it's included in the subscription.

"We can schedule work orders to crews on the fly," Gragg says. "If we have a call for an emergency repair, we use the crew tracker to assign it. It tells us what location they're at, what job site they're on and how long they've been there."

For other LCOs looking to incorporate software, Gragg recommends finding one that gives definite proof of when crews are active and when they're not. For example, if crews try to turn off their location, Arborgold gives a notification that it's been turned off.

"It doesn't just tell us where they're at; it tells us where they're at when they clocked into the job. It tells us where they're at when they clocked out of the job," Gragg says. "Plus, there's no tracking back and forth between two different software systems; it's all integrated."

FLEET SMART

Sunshine Landscape is in the process of switching over to Aspire's FleetSharp software. FleetSharp is a mobile device that plugs into the on-board diagnostics sensor inside a vehicle. It's not included in the basic Aspire subscription. Sunshine Landscape plans to use the software to help with equipment replacement, reporting and safety.

"We want all the data off the trucks, like engine alerts, route tracking and safety features," Duckett says. "Fleet-

Sharp allows us to import all of our info into the Aspire portal, so we know when services are due on trucks or equipment."

Like NuView, Sunshine Landscape also uses the software to verify crews were on a job site.

"We can look at how they get to the job sites, so we know if they're taking a longer way to get there," Duckett says. "We can put geofencing around a job site. So, for example, if they pull in 8 a.m. but then go to the gas station down the street for a half-hour and don't log out of the job site, it'll show up with an alert in Aspire. Before, you just assumed you were on the job site the whole time."

The company also plans to use FleetSharp to keep its safety benchmarks high. For instance, FleetSharp grades drivers and gives them a score from 0 to 100.

From a liability standpoint, if a driver gets into an accident in a company vehicle and he or she is not at fault, FleetSharp can help verify that the driver wasn't at fault.

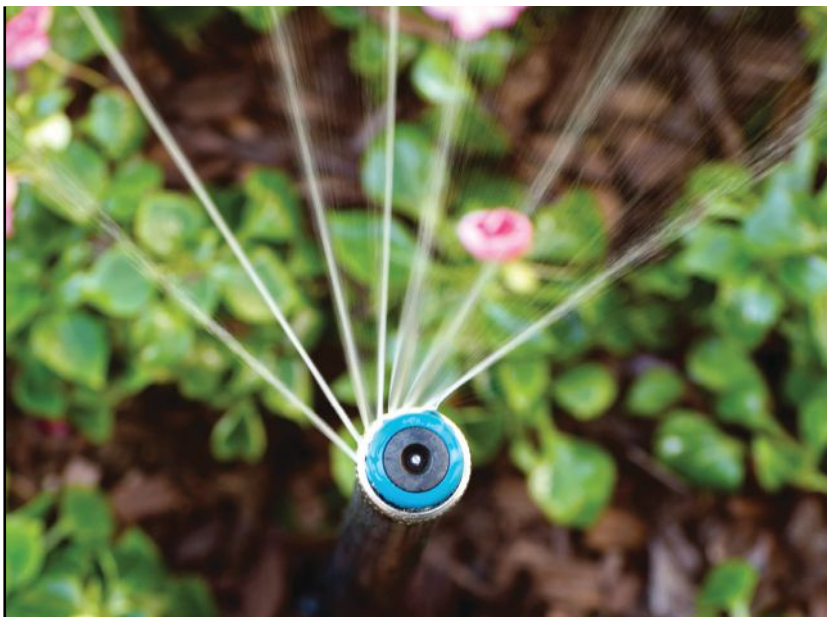
"There was a lady turning into traffic into the median across a five-lane road, and my truck was coming in the inside lane, and she just went right through the median and into traffic and said that our guy was the problem," Duckett says. "But, because of our GPS, we were able to determine it was her fault." 📍





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PROTECT YOUR TURF



Save time with scheduling

Experts share the importance of scheduling to crews, clients and the bottom line

BY CHRISTINA HERRICK | LM EDITOR

With scheduling, it comes down to efficiency. Landscape company owners share the tools they use to maximize their scheduling or routing. *Landscape Management* spoke with Nicholas DiBenedetto, president of ND Landscape Services in Georgetown, Mass., and Andrew Walsh, co-owner of My Fertilizing Co. in Livonia, Mich., about why scheduling is an important part of an operation.

TECH TOOLS

It's easy for contractors to understand exactly how to maximize the time on a job site with equipment to do the job quickly and efficiently. Time spent going from job to job and the time a crew might spend in traffic getting to the site can eat into that job site efficiency.

ND Landscape Services uses Boss LM software for its commercial and residential design/build, maintenance and snow and ice management. Produc-

tion managers pull together schedules using the software. Each account includes data on the square footage of the property, which helps production managers estimate the amount of time associated with that service. Production managers can easily see the man-hours for the task and drive time from stop to stop.

"You're in real time getting the hours associated with the list," DiBenedetto says of each day's work schedule.

BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP

An office manager uses Real Green's service assistant software to set My Fertilizing

Continued on page 30

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Some software includes square footage with each account, allowing managers to estimate time spent on-site.

PHOTO: ND LANDSCAPE SERVICES

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The advertisement features a dramatic landscape with a large lighthouse on the right, shaped like a jug. The lighthouse has red and white horizontal stripes and the word "COASTAL" in large white letters on its red base. A small flag at the top reads "EAST COAST". In the background, a golf course with a green and sand trap is visible, along with a small house and a smaller version of the lighthouse. The sky is dark and cloudy, with sunlight breaking through on the left. Several birds are flying in the sky.

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PROTECT YOUR TURF

Continued from page 28

Co. routes the day before, and Walsh says this process gives his crew time to prepare for the materials they'll need for the next day's applications. The company primarily serves residential customers with lawn care, maintenance, tree and shrub, mosquito and pest control and holiday lighting offerings. While Real Green's service assistant software designs

the routes, an office manager prints out hard copies of the materials needed for those calls, so they can load their trucks with the correct product.

"They already have their next route," he says.



Andrew Walsh

"They know what it looks like, they know what exactly to load."

Walsh says his company sends out emails or automated messages via text or phone call to clients about the pending service. The email includes a photo and bio of the technician, services scheduled and the price.

"We think about what our customer wants, and then we try to tailor our service for that," he says. "What the customer wants is to know when you're coming and who's going to be there. I think it's a lot easier to fire My Fertilizing Co. than an actual individual technician if they have a relationship."

RIGHT CREWS FOR THE JOB

DiBenedetto says one thing his produc-



Nicholas DiBenedetto

tion managers take seriously is the need to match the skill set of the crews to the tasks scheduled.

"When you're scheduling the activity, there's a lot more to it than just the activity," he says. "It's the upfront prepping for that activity. You're looking at skill set first. Do you have the right crew with the equipment to be able to perform it?"

DiBenedetto says thanks to Amazon and other same-day delivery services, clients expect services much faster than is feasible, but he says his sales team sets a realistic time frame for maintenance.

"We've tried to get in front of that in the sales process to tell how many weeks we've booked and what activities are going to come before them," he says. 📅



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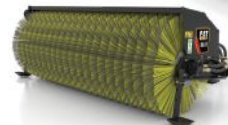
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THE BIG ONE

A community effort

LOCATION Honey Brook, Pa.

COMPANY Ruppert Landscape

DETAILS Tel Hai, Hebrew for “hill of life,” is a massive retirement community in Pennsylvania Amish country, nestled about halfway between Philadelphia and Lancaster. In addition to managing thousands of shrubs, trees, perennials and 44 acres of turf, Ruppert Landscape’s crew members play key educational roles, working with the active gardeners among the site’s 875 residents to keep the campus green.

“There’s a lot of hands-on education and daily communications with residents and employed staff,” says Brian Windley, Ruppert Landscape’s branch manager for the area that includes Tel Hai. The size and variety of the account’s landscaping activities — mowing, pruning, mulching, turf management, weeding, pest management for more than 1,500 trees and more — demand specialized equipment and lots of planning, Windley says.

“We do a lot with scripting to break down the job into smaller sections,” Windley says, which eases coordination with the site’s managers and residents. With many individual homes on the campus, Ruppert must provide service windows to residents. Often, those residents are waiting for crews with questions about the best fertilizers for their flower beds.

Ruppert primarily uses Exmark mowers: 60-inch to 72-inch riders and 48-inch to 60-inch walk-behind models. Some of the site’s larger buildings have central courtyards that are only accessible by going through the buildings. There, crews typically use Husqvarna electric mowers and handheld electric tools to limit noise.

The project earned Ruppert Landscape a Gold Award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals’ Awards of Excellence program.

See more photos from this project at LandscapeManagement.net/thebigone.



PHOTOS: RUPPERT LANDSCAPE



Captions | **1.** The Tel Hai retirement community sits on a 124-acre campus that includes more than 1,500 trees, 6,500 perennials and grasses, 8,000 shrubs, more than 650 cubic feet of mulch and 44 acres of turf. **2.** Four miles of walkways traverse the property, requiring up to 48 hours per week to edge paths and nearby beds. **3.** Residents who plant and maintain the site's community garden often tap Ruppert Landscape maintenance crews for gardening advice, while the adjacent amphitheater presents a mowing challenge with crews using wooden ramps to access different levels. **4.** Two interior courtyards can only be accessed by a hallway through the building, so crews lay down plastic tarps to transport push mowers, edgers and wheelbarrows full of mulch through the building. **5.** Garden club members choose the foliage for signs around the property, but Ruppert Landscape crews maintain those features. **6.** Gathering areas and building entrances are more high profile and receive extra attention during twice-weekly maintenance visits. Crews typically arrive around 7:30 a.m. but do not use machines until after 8 a.m. Most work takes place throughout the morning, and crews are usually there as late as 6 p.m. **7.** The property's 44 acres of turf require weekly mowing and get five fertilizer and weed control treatments per year. Aerating and overseeding takes place as needed, but the size of the property precludes aerating or overseeding all turf.

BUSINESS BOOSTERS

Handheld must-haves

Landscapers share the handheld equipment they use every day and wouldn't dream of starting a job without **BY LAUREN DOWDLE | CONTRIBUTOR**

Many contractors have a trusty tool they can rely on to get the job done. Take, for example, the three must-have pieces of handheld equipment the three owners we spoke to can't live without.

DO DOUBLE DUTY

The one piece of handheld equipment Jeff Cartwright, owner of Cartwright Landscaping in Richmond, Va., uses the most is the Stihl HSA 26 battery-powered shears.

"What I like about it and why it's my favorite is there are so many different ways to use it," he says.

His company provides design/build, installation maintenance, irrigation, tree removal, grading, clearing, lighting, drainage and tree removal services to a 95 percent residential and 5 percent commercial clientele. The company does \$1.5 million in annual revenue.

The trimmer comes with a shrub cutter and grass trimmer attachment, and he uses both on his job site quality assurance checks.

"The ergonomics are great. It's an extension of your hand," he says. "You can use it with one hand because it's light, using the other hand to grab stuff or to push stuff out of the way — like grabbing decorative grasses to get the dead foliage growth off so new growth can come in."

When fully charged, it has a run time of about 80 minutes with the shrub cutter and about 120 minutes with the grass trimmer, he says.

"With a battery, you don't have to mix oil and gas, and there are no pollutants," he says. "You have the power, but it's quiet, so you can use it early or late without disturbing anyone. We use them daily on job sites."

CUT LABOR

For Josh Currivan, owner of Currivan Green Co. in Andover, Mass., his must-have product is the Echo PPT-2620 power pruner and pole saw with a looped handle. His company has an annual revenue of \$425,000 and offers hardscape

and landscape services to 60 percent residential and 40 percent commercial clients.

Before switching to the power pruner and pole saw three years ago, his crews either pruned by standing on a ladder with a small chainsaw or by using manual pruners.

"If you prune trees or shape or cut suckers off branches, the trimmer is going to cut your labor time in half," Currivan says. "It paid for itself within two, one-hour jobs in the beginning when I first got it. We still charge the same amount of labor, so the return on investment is definitely there."

He currently has two of the power pruners and says they've been durable and efficient. "It cuts like a hot knife in butter if you keep it maintained," Currivan says.

TIGHT SPOTS


Blowers are the go-to products for Steven Lowe, owner of Steven's Lawn Care of the New River Valley in Shawsville, Va. He uses Stihl's gas-powered blowers, including the handheld residential-grade BG 55, which has been discontinued, and BG 56 models and BR 700 backpack blowers. He rotates the equipment as it wears out, purchasing five to six new blowers each year.

His company has an annual revenue of \$750,000 and services 70 percent residential and 30 percent commercial properties. It provides lawn maintenance, pruning and lawn care services.

Lowe uses the blowers for cleanup after mowing and pruning, around stone mulch beds and on leaves in the fall. Crews also have used them to apply insecticides for mosquito control and on fungicide applications to plants.

"The blowers are user friendly, so a new hire can figure out how to start one," he says. "They get quieter every year a new model comes out, which helps with noise restrictions."

The BR 700 backpack blower carries a collapsible tube, making it easier for his operators to get around tight areas. They also come with a semi-automatic choke and throttle trigger lock with a built-in momentary stop switch.

"You can squeeze the trigger, and it goes to the idle position," he says. "You don't have to turn it off." 

LOTS OF PROS
Jeff Cartwright uses Stihl's battery-powered shears due to their versatility and battery life.



Dowdle is a freelance writer based in Nashville.

PHOTO: STIHL

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REV YOUR ENGINES

Customers as a resource

Ed Wright, CEO of Wright Manufacturing, and J.W. Washington, senior director of customer learning and development at Ariens Co., share the vital role customers play in product development

BY ROBERT SCHOENBERGER | LM SENIOR EDITOR

Ed Wright, CEO of Wright Manufacturing, and J.W. Washington, senior director of customer learning and development at Ariens Co., talk to *Landscape Management* about how dealing with customers has become a two-way street.



LM: WRIGHT OFTEN GIVES LANDSCAPING COMPANIES LONG-TERM LOANS OF MOWERS THAT YOU'RE DEVELOPING. WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

ED WRIGHT: We're very dependent on real-world testing. At the early stages, we're not looking at durability testing. We're more interested in how they're using it. We learn a lot about controls and where to place things. Sometimes, we run into issues we hadn't thought about, like how multiple mowers fit on a trailer. If they don't fit together as well as they should, you can't get as many on a trailer, and you won't be able to use that mower if you need to get a bunch to a job site.

LM: WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU RUN INTO THAT PROBLEM? DO YOU TRY TO FIX THE DESIGN OR IS IT BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD?

WRIGHT: We have no problem going back to the drawing board if it means adding a feature or making a change that customers absolutely need. We don't believe in patching something to maybe make it work. If a critical feature isn't part of the design, it's really difficult to add that function later.

LM: WHAT SORTS OF LANDSCAPE PROS MAKE THE BEST TEST-PRODUCT CANDIDATES?

WRIGHT: Smaller operators can be better. If the person who's going to be buying equipment also gets some experience on the mower, that makes a big difference in the type of feedback we get. But, we can't go too small. Sometimes, we have to pull a mower out of circulation to study it or write a report. If the user is too small, he or she might not be able to give up a mower that day (for Wright to study). ☺



Ed Wright

TRAINING RESOURCES

Ariens Co. has expanded its learning and development division and plans to double staff to more than eight people in the coming year to produce more training materials for dealers, technicians and customers. J.W. Washington, the division's senior director, says boosting training brings vital feedback to Ariens that it can use when designing its mowers.

"Part of the expansion was creating interactive electronic training manuals (IETMs) on some products, and that's an online document, so we can track use," Washington says. Using standard web-traffic tracking software, "we can see, dealership-by-dealership, where technicians are spending their time. If the dealers keep pulling up the same error codes, looking for instructions on how to fix those problems, that can be a sign that there's something we need to address in the (mower) design."

As technicians get more used to using the online documents, Washington expects a steady stream of valuable data that design teams can use to spot potentially faulty components or parts of mower designs that might need more reinforcements.

"Our IETM traffic can be that canary in the coal mine, letting you know there's something going on that we can't see," Washington says. He adds that the online manual project began with the Gravely Pro-Turn EV commercial ride-on electric mower earlier this year.

Because the electric model was so different than gasoline-powered mowers, qualifying technicians was critical, Washington says. "For most of them, this is all-new technology. Instead of talking about fuel filters, we're talking wiring harnesses."

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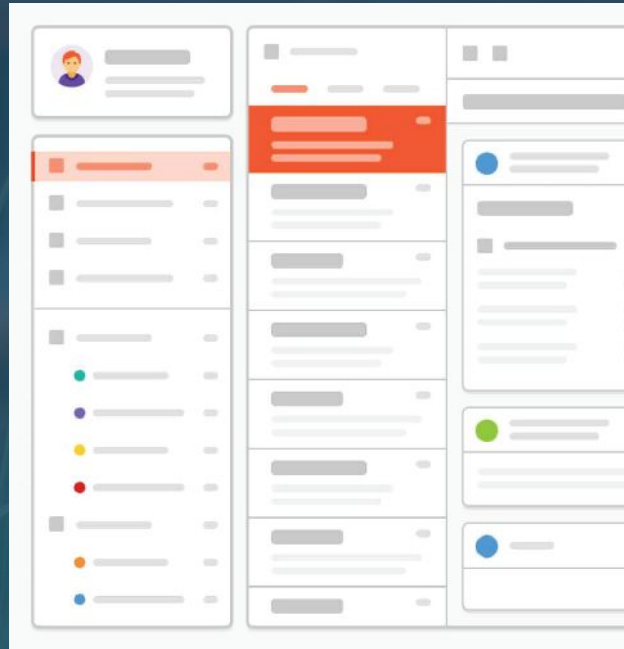
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TECHNOLOGY CASE STUDY

Managers and a landscape designer share how technology allows their operations to run more efficiently and smoothly

BY CHRISTINA HERRICK
LM EDITOR

Technology is a broad term and can mean many different things within the green industry. *Landscape Management* takes a look at how

Bennett Polley, operations manager with GroundMasters/Snow Management Services in Denver, Chris Kline, landscape designer and estimator for Todd's Environments in Louisville, Ohio, and Bryan Raehl, general manager of Agronomic Lawn Management in Chesapeake, Va., use the technology available in the industry to better their businesses.



COMPANY: GroundMasters and Snow Management Services

TECHNOLOGY: ClearPathGPS

GroundMasters/Snow Management Services in Denver has been using ClearPathGPS for four years now to keep tabs on its fleet of vehicles for its commercial snow and ice business. GroundMasters also offers commercial landscape maintenance and irrigation services.

Bennett Polley, operations manager with GroundMasters/Snow Management Services, says ClearPathGPS provides fleet management information,

including where employees and vehicles are at all times. Polley says fleet tracking ensures crews use the most efficient driving routes, eliminating excessive idling, rough driving or speeding.

"When we first started monitoring the idling, I would get reports constantly, but now (crews) know that it's being monitored and that they shouldn't do it," he says.

All that efficiency results in less wear and tear on vehicles, as well

Slingshot's reporting features sends Bryan Raehl updates on key performance indicators.

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Bennett Polley says he's noticed fleet vehicles getting better gas mileage since installing ClearPath GPS tracking.

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as better gas mileage for the fleet, Polley says.

"It's always hard to pinpoint why some of those costs go up because they happen maybe a year to three years down the line," Polley says. "It might be a transmission that goes out a little sooner than it should have or brakes needing replaced a little sooner."

Polley gets notifications whenever a truck leaves the yard. He also gets daily reports with recaps of the truck deployed and the stops made. Those notifications come in handy during the hustle and bustle of a busy snow season. When a client calls in to get a service update, Polley uses ClearPathGPS to see where the plows are on the route.

"If it's a bigger site, and the client is wondering why the

north end hasn't been plowed yet, I can pull up the GPS and say, 'well, they're there on the east side, so they'll be over there soon,'" he says.

Having the ability to provide instant tracking helps him deploy crews for additional service calls, too. Polley noticed his payroll is more accurate since tracking departures and arrivals of trucks and the business then passes those savings on to other parts of the business.

"Those cost savings translated to other things, whether it's raises, new trucks or just company parties," he says. "There's a tangible benefit for the employees."

Polley says business owners need to understand that the reports generated by GPS tracking will show areas of your business to improve upon from an efficiency standpoint.

"It's no different than how you would look at your P&L statement and make sure everything's dialed in," he says. "Look at the tracker's daily record the same way because that's going to directly affect the P&L statement."

COMPANY: Todd's Envirosapes

TECHNOLOGY: LandOne Software

For Chris Kline, landscape designer and estimator for Todd's Envirosapes in Louisville, Ohio, the ease of use of LandOne Software has helped him work on a variety of projects for the company. Todd's Envirosapes provides an even split of residential and com-



Bennett Polley

mercial lawn care, maintenance, design/build and snow and ice removal services.

One feature Kline appreciates about LandOne Takeoff is that it highlights different aspects of a design

mockup, which he says comes in handy for commercial projects. Kline uses this feature to highlight different types of plant material or different grass seeds to make it easier for installation crews.

"They love being able to highlight plant material," he says. "It helps them interpret the commercial plans better. It helps our field guys be productive and be efficient in the field."

Kline says his clients have had nothing but good things to say about the designs he renders using the software.

While LandOne Software is thought to be a design program, Kline says he also uses it to help the snow and ice removal managers with bids for new contracts.

"I have used LandOne on multiple occasions to assist our snow managers in getting takeoffs put together for bids," he says. "Quickly being able to pull area measurements off project documents and getting the necessary

Continued on page IT6



Chris Kline

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Continued from page IT4

information over to our team, that all has really been a year-round program for us.”

Kline also says the ability to have conversations with Joshua Martin, founder of LandOne Software, about features he thinks would improve the software has been another great aspect of using LandOne Software.

“They listen to their clients, take the suggestions to heart and implement them into the program,” he says.

COMPANY: Agronomic Lawn Management

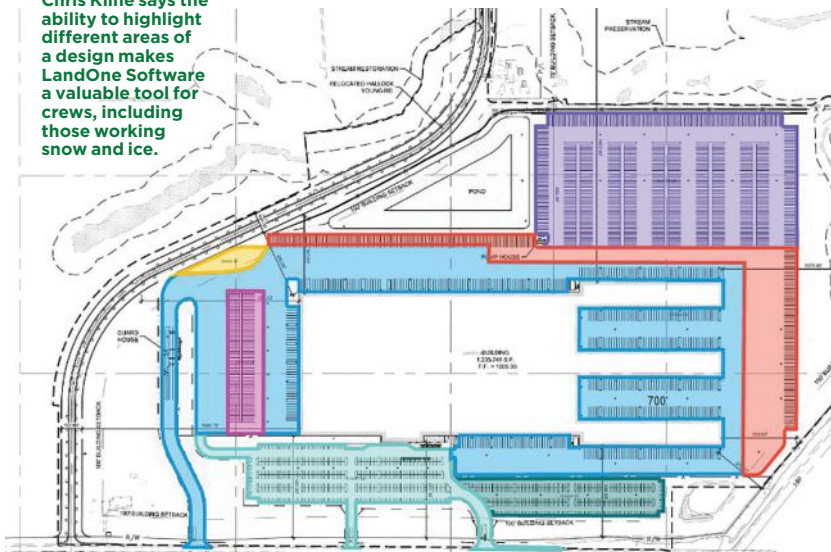
TECHNOLOGY: Slingshot

Bryan Raehl, general manager of Agronomic Lawn Management in Chesapeake, Va., says his company has been growing consistently by 20 percent year over year for the last 10 years, and he says the business had hit a point where maintaining relationships with current customers and fostering relationships with new clients had become tough to do with his current workforce.

Agronomic Lawn Management implemented Slingshot’s answering service for sales leads and after-hours calls at the start of the year for its primarily residential lawn care, tree and shrub care and mosquito control business.

Raehl says adding Slingshot allowed his business to make some staffing changes without

Chris Kline says the ability to highlight different areas of a design makes LandOne Software a valuable tool for crews, including those working snow and ice.



missing a beat. “Slingshot really gave us a foundation to feel like we were on firm footing to make those personnel changes to know that we weren’t going to lose customers because we can’t service them.”

He says another big benefit has been how Slingshot takes any sales leads into a service assistant for a follow up with team members at Agronomic Lawn Management.

“That really moves Slingshot from the category of just taking messages to talking about a significant decrease in labor,” he says.

A lot of this functionality comes from how Slingshot approaches onboarding new companies. Raehl says the process was thorough, and this helped Slingshot tailor how represen-

tatives answer the phone and respond to different inquiries. Slingshot logs and records all calls, so he’s able to see which representative answered the call and access audio of the entire conversation in case any issues arise.

Another feature Raehl points to includes adjusting the amount of service needed from Slingshot, based on the seasonality of the business and automated metric reporting. He identified a few key performance indicators and the interval for when he wants to know about them, and Slingshot automatically sends him those reports.

“I don’t have to think about it or remember to go check on that,” he says. “I can basically forget about it until it shows up weekly in my inbox, and then I can see what’s going on, based on the measurements that mean the most to me.”



Bryan Raehl

THE FEEDBACK LOOP

Software users and developers talk about the importance feedback has on new updates and offerings for the green industry

BY CHRISTINA HERRICK | LM EDITOR



When it comes to software development, it's all about relationships between the software companies and end users. *Landscape Management* spoke with Levi Garner, chief technology officer for Arborgold Software, Carlos A. Perez Jr., director of technology for Blue Native Landscape and Irrigation, and Dan Blake, chief product and technology officer for Aspire Software, about the importance of user feedback in the software development process.

FOR THE GREATER GOOD

It was the ability to offer feedback in development that was the selling point on Arborgold Software for Blue Native Landscaping and Irrigation's primarily commercial landscape design/build, maintenance and irrigation business. Perez says Arborgold was looking for input from a design/build company.

"We have weekly meetings to plan new features

and discuss how current testing deployments are working for us," he says. "They ask us what type of issues prevent us from fully utilizing the features and if any improvements can be made to streamline the workflow process."

Perez says he worked with Arborgold to implement a batch-editing feature to Arborgold's timesheet function to cut down on the time it took to correct any timesheet issues.

"We have nine crews and five or six guys on each crew," he says. "If there's any error in the day or if we get rained out, you would have to edit them one by one. It would take one person an entire day just to go through line by line to verify yesterday's timesheets. Now, we're doing the same thing in under four hours."

Perez says he also worked very closely with Arborgold to add the ability to export payroll data to QuickBooks. While many of his talks to Arborgold directly benefit his operation, he knows the insight he offers could help other Arborgold users.



Carlos A. Perez Jr.

HOW SOFTWARE COMPANIES IMPLEMENT UPDATES

Aspire Software logs all customer requests and feedback customer service reps have received for future updates. Aspire looks for the same request from multiple customers.

"What we're looking for in the customer requests is patterns," Blake says. "We take all that into account and try to come up with a list of the things that are the highest priority for us to work on from that standpoint."

From there, Aspire evaluates the feasibility and critical need for users regarding those updates, additions and the users' end goal.

"It's a balancing act," he says. "It's trying to figure out the highest-priority items that are going to have the greatest impact on the customer base. Those are the ones that we give priority to."

Garner says Arborgold approaches updates the same way,

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Dan Blake

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noting that beta testers play a critical role in the update process.

“Our goals are to listen to what our clients are telling us they need versus assuming we understand 100 percent of their unique day-to-day operations,” he says.

Both Arborgold and Aspire do beta and alpha testing. Internal alpha testing ensures there are no issues or bugs

with the updates before beta testing. Users get beta tests of the update to ensure proper functionality of the update. Aspire deploys updates to users the company has identified as requesting the functions or super users in that specific area of the software.

“We identify the people, either the people who requested that or who would be particularly well suited to test it for us,” Blake says. “We turn that feature on for them and let them take a look at it. Sometimes, we’ll do that with batches of features and get their feedback.”

Depending on the update, testing could last as little as a week or a few months. As testers are using the features, the design team will update the feature as needed based on feedback, and once everything works as it should, that feature will be available for all users.

Arborgold deploys updates at the best time for customers to help mitigate downtime during a busy workday. Blake says that’s all part of the process of alpha and beta testing to make it as seamless as possible.

“We have an enormous appreciation for our beta testers and forum group members as our predominant voice of the customer during development,” Garner says. 



Levi Garner

UNCHARTERED TERRITORY

Michael Mayberry, chief technology officer for Level Green Landscaping in Upper Marlboro, Md., shares how working with Scythe Robotics has benefited both the green industry and his company as a whole.

Level Green Landscaping is an early partner with Scythe Robotics. Mayberry sees this technology playing an important role in the future for the company’s commercial maintenance, design/build and installation and snow and ice removal company.

“We’ve already signed on for a bunch of machines that when they start coming off the production line, we’re eagerly awaiting those,” he says.

Mayberry works with Scythe Robotics on everything including marketing and the look and feel of the robotic mower itself.

“We talked about cut quality — the way the machine handles clippings,” he says. “In our region, we use mulch kits for all of our mowers. We are not ejecting clippings, so it’s really important for us that we get that really good, consistent clean look without having those windrows of clippings.”

Being involved in marketing and pricing discussions with Scythe will benefit the green industry, Mayberry says.

“Scythe has created a payment model that will demonstrate ROI to business owners,” he says. “It makes it a lot easier for me when I’m going to go to my owners to say ‘Hey we need these.’ I can already justify the ROI because we’ve already talked about it with Scythe. The fact that we work through that together really fosters a great relationship.”

He says he was also impressed with the approach Scythe Robotics took to the development of the mower, including the design of the blades, the type of metal used in the frame and the type and placement of batteries to maximize the mower’s run time. Mayberry says another aspect of the mower he worked closely with the company on was the feel of the mower, so it felt and operated very similar to a mower that’s on the market currently.

“We want our people to be able to hop on these mowers and operate them, without having to spend a lot of time retraining them or learning how the machines operate,” he says.



Michael Mayberry



Scythe Robotics worked with green industry professionals on the design and marketing of the company’s first autonomous mower.

PHOTO: SCYTHE ROBOTICS

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ClearPathGPS

Q+A with **Steve Wells**
Founder and CEO

How do GPS fleet tracking systems complement other software being used by landscaping companies?

GPS fleet tracking has become a vital part of the industry's tech stack, helping landscaping companies more effectively improve their operations and bottom line. For instance, many of our landscaping customers rely on ServiceTitan or Aspire-type software. These are great systems to run your back-end office. However, when you add live GPS tracking, it brings these systems to life.

Dispatching is a lot easier if you know exactly where your fleet is, especially if they are in between jobs. Having GPS tracking data to support billing and proof of service helps with accounting and customer service processes. The ability to use our data to promote safer driver habits or mitigate after-hours usage are just a few other examples of how our system has become a vital part of landscaping businesses' operational ecosystem.

Plus, with our seamless integration with many of these systems and use of our open application programming interface, customers are able to leverage data even easier.

What are some of the challenges you're seeing in the industry, and how does your system help?

Top of the list for many of our customers is the continued labor shortage. Using our system for better fleet utilization helps them do more with less, including improved routing and dispatching, having "virtual" eyes in the field to help spot inefficiencies or discrepancies before they become problems that impact the bottom line.

Supply chain issues have also become more prevalent, directly impacting the cost of replacing vehicles and assets. Our system helps better protect a business' fleet, including real-time alerts of unauthorized movements and helping in the quick recovery of stolen vehicles and expensive equipment. On the maintenance side, our system keeps track of when service is due and helps cut down on erratic driving, which



also helps avoid accidents and costly repairs.

What are some of the successes you've heard from your landscaping customers using your system?

We love all the stories we hear and have quite a few posted on our website, including a customer who recently shared that by leveraging our GPS data and timecard padding report, they have saved more than \$160,000 just in payroll and billing.

What differentiates ClearPathGPS from other GPS fleet service providers?

I'd say without a doubt, our focus on the success of our customers. We're quite proud of the customer-centric reputation we've built in the industry, as evidenced by top reviews on Trustpilot and Capterra.



INNOVATION + TECHNOLOGY GUIDE



Arborgold Software



with **Donna Garner**
Chief Marketing Officer

What innovation will you be featuring at GIE+EXPO?

At GIE Expo 2021, Arborgold is excited to introduce a variety of new features including:

- Real-time online access to local and regional nursery inventory availability and pricing through LandscapeHub.
- Arborgold's new mobile app time-tracking features and cloud app payroll preparation module.
- Advanced estimating tools featuring Arborgold's new and improved auto-price calculator.
- Enhancements to Arborgold's Supply Chain Management module, where crews capture and report expenses as well as order, record and update inventory based on job site material deliveries.

What problem does your innovation solve for its users?

Arborgold solves a variety of challenges that face lawn, tree and landscape companies each day including:

- Improves the accuracy and speed of response during the estimating process.
- Digitally capturing and preparing detailed direct and indirect payroll costs.



- Increasing visibility and automating supply chain needs with real-time inventory usage and purchase planning.
- Provides project overview reports as well as detailed service line-item status with the software's project management tools.
- Connects estimators with hundreds of local and regional nurseries for real-time access to tree, shrub and plant pricing and availability.

How does your product improve day-to-day operations for its users?

Arborgold Software:

- Virtually eliminates the ongoing

burden of manually collecting, validating, approving and administering payroll.

- Improves the efficiency of field estimating and sales teams with real-time access to material costs and availability and service group auto-price calculations.
- Provides detailed KPI visibility with detailed job costing analysis reports and dashboards so companies can run their business by the numbers.
- Supports sales teams with features designed to help them win more business including pipeline management and automated proposal follow-up.
- Captures clients' plant and tree inventory location, health status, treatment history and treatment options, thereby opening up additional upsell and renewal opportunities while improving overall customer satisfaction.



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STREAMLINE OPERATIONS

Improve scheduling capacity and reduce costs with integrated GPS crew tracking, route optimization, time tracking, real-time inventory management, resource management, project management, and intelligence reports.

CLIENT CASE STUDY



"None of our business growth would be possible without Arborgold."



- Carlos Perez, Blue Native Landscape & Irrigation

In 2020, Blue Native was looking for a comprehensive software system that would remove the need for paperwork while streamlining design, quoting, project management, and invoicing for their landscape and irrigation company. After watching a demo of Arborgold Software, they knew that Arborgold's technology was the answer.

Since launching Arborgold, Blue Native has hired several new employees to keep up with the new business made possible using Arborgold's all-in-one business management software.

Discover how Blue Native overhauled their sales and operational processes in partnership with Arborgold's estimating, scheduling, time-tracking, project management, job-costing, and billing features.

Read the full case study at arborgold.com/casestudies

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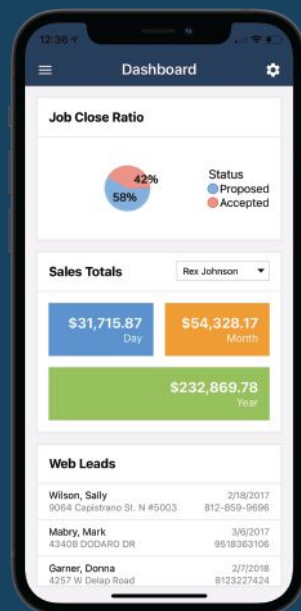
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Arborgold Estimator App

INNOVATION + TECHNOLOGY GUIDE



Go iLawn Q+A with Mike Rorie CEO

What is Go iLawn InstantEstimator™?

Throughout my 40 years of growing large-scale landscape companies, I learned the hard way that if you don't have a standardized, systematized way of getting accurate estimates, you can't scale effectively.

We developed InstantEstimator™ to help contractors standardize the key data and automate the needed calculations I wish I had when I was growing my company.

InstantEstimator™ eliminates "guestimating" and provides landscapers with the right answers to bid-winning questions like how long it takes their team to perform needed services with their tools and their materials.

How does InstantEstimator™ work?

Just click a measuring tool, assign services and start measuring the property. You'll see an accurate time and materials estimate appear in real time.

We loaded InstantEstimator™ with dozens of services all backed by rigorously tested and proven production factors. We designed the system to do the estimating work so you don't have to.

That said, everything is adjustable and customizable for your company. You can easily add your own services and production factors to suit your needs.

How can InstantEstimator™ help standardize the estimating process for my company?

With InstantEstimator™, you get a single system that becomes the source of truth for the entire job. It gives you 14 types of key job data in one view. We refer to this as your Property Intelligence. It gives you the information, accuracy and consistency you need to produce better bids and profitably grow and scale your business.

You can also optimize your estimating system over time. Just adjust global settings to your crew's performance, and it will automatically apply to future estimates.



Once fine-tuned for your company, InstantEstimator™ helps create an efficiency ripple effect across the organization. Now you can derive material quantities, equipment, man-hours and more for the entire year because your estimates accurately account for your crew's performance.

How do I know if InstantEstimator™ is right for my company?

I tell people all the time: The right software provides a tremendous advantage for landscape contractors. If you see an opportunity to gain speed, efficiency or advantage with software, you should take the time to try it and decide how it can impact your business.

In this case, trying InstantEstimator™ is fast and easy. You can get a 14-day free trial and compare it to your current estimating process. We hope you like it!



Instant Estimator™

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- **Bid-Winning System** – Differentiate your company and impress prospects with interactive sitemaps that show your value.

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giLAWN Instant Estimator

HOA Estimate

Total Hours: 2259h 40m

Estimate

Template

Parcel

Tags

Template: Custom Template

change template, delete measurements

36" Walk Behind Mower, Flat Trim Mowable Area

Common Area Mow

Fill 20%

Line 1px Solid

Depth 0 in

Units Length Area Volume

ft ft² ft³

Show

Parent Group

None

Services

72" Rider Mower

Measurement: 4,593,726.03 sq ft

Time: 83h 31m

Flat Trim Mowable Area

Measurement: 4,593,726.03 sq ft

Time: 42h 32m

Select a service:

Edges

125.85 ft² 10,338.85 ft

hedges

130,097.12 ft² 22,172.03 ft



INNOVATION + TECHNOLOGY GUIDE



Scythe Robotics

Q+A with **Isaac Roberts**
COO

What innovation will you be featuring at GIE+EXPO?

The innovative technology Scythe Robotics is featuring at the GIE+EXPO is the landscape industry's first fully autonomous commercial-grade mower. Built from the ground up, the stand-on 52-inch, rear-discharge mulching Scythe mower will change the narrative on the industry's labor woes.

What problem does your innovation solve for its users?

It's not often a commercial mower can be part of the solution to the landscape contracting industry's biggest challenge — identifying and retaining reliable labor — but the fully autonomous Scythe mower intends to do just that.

The mower will help contractors reimagine their commercial mowing operations by improving workflow and scheduling, managing labor costs, resetting crew responsibilities and increasing productivity levels.

The Scythe mower will provide landscape contractors with a reliable, safety-minded labor resource that will deliver productivity daily. Your crews can spend their valuable time keeping properties looking their best — mulching, pruning, seasonal color,

etc. — while the mower handles the mowing.

How does your innovation improve the speed, efficiency or agility of its users?

Not an after-market add-on or retrofit kit,

the mower has been built from the ground up with extensive input from landscape contractors. The mower follows contours, tackles slopes and automatically adjusts cut patterns to keep grass healthy and looking great. The mower will deliver a clean, consistent striped cut and improve client satisfaction.

The mower features cutting-edge technology and advanced artificial intelligence, including eight cameras and redundant 360-degree sensors. This allows



the mower to navigate the property safely and identify humans, animals or objects and trigger an automatic shut-off when needed. In addition to providing a high level of safety, the cameras and sensors will capture valuable property and mower performance data.

The data will provide landscape contractors with a visual record of the condition of a client's property, identify areas that need further attention (i.e., tree or shrub pruning, edging and trimming, turf issues, etc.) and open the door to potential upsell opportunities (i.e., pest management and fertilization services, adding seasonal color, irrigation needs and new tree plantings).



GIE+Expo
Indoor booth:
9093

GIE+Expo
Outdoor Demo:
5119D

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INNOVATION + TECHNOLOGY GUIDE



Aspire Software

Q+A with **Mark Tipton**
CEO

What's a major problem landscape companies face in terms of their technology?

As landscape companies grow, they may add software solutions and apps to handle estimating, crew management, invoicing and more. Before long, companies are using a variety of disconnected solutions that don't communicate well with one another. This patchwork of software means that data is siloed, leaving landscape company leaders in the dark about their company's performance and profitability. Disconnected solutions can also cause concerns about the accuracy of data — not to mention lost profits due to inaccurate estimates — because information from multiple sources must be input manually to generate financial reports, a process that often leads to errors.

How does Aspire Landscape improve the speed, efficiency or agility of its users?

Aspire Landscape is a cloud-based landscape business management software that offers end-to-end functionality, from estimating and scheduling to invoicing and accounts receivable. With a single integrated system, business owners can be sure that their data is

accurate. A single system can also provide real-time visibility into their operations through reports that can be filtered quickly and easily by job, division, service and crew.

The platform includes templates and kits to ensure that estimates are complete and based on accurate job costing information. Crews can track their hours more accurately with the system's mobile crew management capabilities. Aspire Landscape also provides streamlined material purchasing and tracking and integrated invoicing. This allows for account management, production and accounting staff to serve clients more efficiently and creates transparency between departments.

At Aspire, we're focused on helping landscape companies continue to grow. Our implementation managers have prior green industry experience and are focused on guiding users through the onboarding



process. They help users adopt the best practices built into the software and ensure they have the foundational knowledge and skills to utilize the core platform to its full potential. Our client success managers and AspireCare staff provide ongoing support that companies require to use the software successfully and deliver for their clients.

How does Aspire Landscape boost profitability for its users?

Aspire Landscape helps companies to run more efficiently, produce more revenue per dollar invested in equipment, use fewer overhead dollars to drive the same amount of revenue and be more efficient with using labor. The platform also shows how jobs are performing against estimates and simplifies the process for capturing upsell opportunities, which can help companies build partnerships with clients while increasing their profits.





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When you're running a landscaping company, it's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day and lose sight of the big picture. Aspire Landscape helps you stay in control of your business so you can focus on what matters most: profitable growth.

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Why it's important to keep your truck clean

Experts say neat and organized trucks and trailers can promote efficiency during the busiest times of the year BY EMILY SCHAPPACHER | CONTRIBUTOR

Most business owners know that organization and productivity go hand in hand. So, it's no surprise that landscape contractors want to keep their trucks and trailers neat and orderly. Particularly during the busiest times of the year, having tools and equipment arranged in a systematic, accessible way can help crews work faster and more efficiently.

"Being organized not only looks professional, but it also saves time and money," says Dan Doerr, director of new product development for Buyers Products Co., a truck equipment manufacturer in Mentor, Ohio. "Contractors can invest in their businesses by using professional tool carriers and choosing racks appropriate for what they need."

Organization is a top priority at Shearon Environmental Design, says Zach Shearon, vice president of the \$30

million company based in Plymouth Meeting, Pa.

"We are all about quality, efficiency and consistency," says Shearon, adding that the company provides 50 percent maintenance, 30 percent design/build, and 20 percent specialty services, such as tree care and irrigation, to commercial clients. "Organization is an important pillar of that."

MOBILE OFFICE

Shearon says his firm prefers to use enclosed trailers, which help keep equipment safe and secure at each job site. Enclosed trailers also allow crews to carry all the equipment they will need for every job. Shearon says crews use the same trucks for the duration of the season and often organize them to best suit their needs.

"We try to keep things enclosed so there's not a lot of equipment coming on and off — we don't want to have to run for supplies throughout the day," Shearon says. "Crews manage the same truck all season, so it serves as a type of mobile office for them."

Each morning begins with a pretrip inspection to ensure crews have everything they need for the day. Shearon says crews then "demobilize" at the end of the day, cleaning waste out of the truck, adding tools for the next day's jobs and fueling up.

"In the morning, we want to get rolling as soon as possible, so we prepare the night before," Shearon says.

KEEP IT SAFE
Enclosed trailers keep equipment secure and allow crews to transport all of their equipment to every job site.

"Everything has its place, and we

encourage guys to put things back where they go throughout the day to make the demobilization process easier. Of course, some guys are neater than others."


CUSTOM FIT

To keep things organized, Shearon has customized its trucks with features like tie-downs and chains to keep mowers and large machines in place, racks for items like fuel containers and storage bins for tools and small pieces of power equipment. Jeff Van de Motter, territory manager for Reading Equipment & Distribution, a truck equipment distributor in Bowmansville, Pa., says his company works with contractors to understand their needs and then creates custom organizational solutions for them.

For example, when Shearon converted some of its trucks to natural gas units, the team lost some storage space to accommodate the natural gas fuel tanks. So, Reading figured out a way to incorporate tool storage into the body of the truck itself. This has since become a standard feature in most of Shearon's trucks. Van de Motter says the most common organization components contractors add to their trucks are toolboxes, storage compartments and tarp systems.

"Before customizing a truck, we like to visit the company and see how they work," Van de Motter says. "The guys who work in the field usually have a lot of input about what they could use or what may not be working."

Doerr agrees that companies can benefit from organizing their trucks and trailers in ways that best meet their team members' needs.

"If contractors need every last inch of deck space for equipment, they can choose a rack that will give them that," he says. "If they need security, they can choose a rack that will keep their equipment secure. At the end of the day, the peace of mind alone is worth it." 

Schappacher is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.



PHOTO: SHEARON ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

SNOW STRATEGY

The art of negotiating snow contract terms



BY PHIL HARWOOD

The author is president and CEO of Pro-Motion Consulting. Reach him at Phil@GrowTheBench.com.

When we think about negotiating with a prospective customer, we usually think about negotiating on price. However, contracts for snow and ice management services are filled with other terms as well. While you may not be able to negotiate price to your satisfaction, you may be surprised to learn that other terms may, in fact, be negotiable, sometimes flipping a less favorable contract into a winner. In this article, we will discuss three categories of potential terms to be negotiated: scope of work, liability and payment terms. Before we do, let's address the obvious "elephant in the room" regarding this discussion.

Today's snow professional has a much deeper understanding of fair and mutually beneficial contract terms than most customers. Negotiating terms would be unnecessary if every contract were signed on the contractor's documents, using the contractor's terms. Unfortunately, that will never happen. Contractors end up signing the contract prepared by their prospective customer, using the customer's terms. As they do, the contractor may not even attempt to negotiate terms, believing it's not worth the effort. Like many things in life, it depends on the situation. However, it's always worth an attempt. If you're going to strike out, do so swinging.

THINK ABOUT THE CONTRACT

To begin with, let's consider the scope of work terms. Which terms, if you could alter them in your favor, would you recommend changing? Would it be beneficial to remove or reduce that trigger depth? If

you're unfamiliar with the term, this is the amount of snow required in many contracts to have fallen before work may begin. For example, a 2-inch trigger means that work may commence when a fresh snowfall reaches a depth of 2 inches at the customer's property.

To begin negotiating this term, simply ask what the customer expects to happen at 1.99 inches. This will generate a discussion that often leads to the removal of this requirement. Customers often have no idea why such terms are in their contracts to begin with or who included them. Nobody has ever questioned it before, so there it remains.

Other scope of work items to negotiate include pretreating with liquids or treated materials, daytime operations, property inspections between storms, dealing with drifts, snow dislodging from rooftops days after a storm, ice storms, blizzards, operations during dangerous temperatures and managing runoff from snow piles or roof drains. You may have the best language to address each of these situations in your contract, but most customer contracts remain eerily silent on these matters. Because they are all likely to occur, there is great danger in not negotiating them upfront. A reasonable customer will appreciate the professionalism and detail-mindedness of you doing so.



THINK ABOUT THE TERMS

Next, let's look at liability terms. Which terms, if you could alter them in your favor, would you recommend changing? Would it be beneficial to remove an approval process that requires the customer to provide permission to begin working during a snow or ice event? Customers may have legitimate reasons for wanting to approve work before it commences. However, what they are not aware of and need to become educated about (by you) is how an approval process shifts liability from the contractor to the customer.

Removing an approval process creates more liability for the contractor but also gives the contractor more control. Leaving the approval process intact creates more liability for the customer, but only if you require a release of liability statement. Requiring a release of liability statement is necessary because the customer is stepping into your shoes and is taking on the primary

Continued on page 56



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Learn more at [Exmark.com](https://www.exmark.com)



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Continued from page 54

responsibility and power of determining when to begin operations. The liability is directly related to that responsibility and power.

Other liability-related terms to negotiate include reporting of damages, damage remediation and many of the scope of work items listed above. For example, who is responsible for monitoring the conditions of the customer's property between snow and ice events, especially when thawing and refreezing occurs? If the answer is the contractor, how are you being compensated? Another example of how negotiating terms may work in your favor.

THINK ABOUT THE PAYMENT

Finally, let's discuss payment terms.

Customer payment terms are most likely dramatically different than those listed in your contract. Is your customer open to discussing changes? In my experience, many are. Moving up payments to earlier in the season is often possible after the customer has a thorough understanding of the upfront investments required by the contractor. Faster payment terms are beneficial for paying service partners, restocking materials, covering payroll expenses and buying fuel. Reasonable customers understand these basic realities.

Another payment-related term to discuss is late payments. What happens when the customer's payment is late? The contract says payments will be made within 30 days of service. What happens on day 31?

Is that a conversation for today or in the moment when there is no response to your emails or phone calls? I would argue that it's better to have that conversation upfront. Again, you are the professional and are proactively addressing things that have the potential to happen based on your years of experience. A reasonable customer will appreciate this approach.

Negotiating terms is not only something to consider doing. It is an essential step to developing a mutually beneficial, long-term relationship. Remaining silent on important terms and hoping for the best only leads to a lack of trust, unmet expectations and unnecessary risk for both parties.

Now go forth. 🐐

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DASHING THROUGH THE SNOW

Learn how GroGreen Lawn Care put their existing spreader/sprayer to use for snow removal, maximized their equipment investment, and made their business more efficient with the SG Snowplow attachment.



GREG BURGHALL

is no stranger to snow. Burghall goes out an average of 10 to 20 times during an Ontario winter season to remove snow on his customers' sidewalks and driveways, all the while battling storms that can lay down 18 inches and temperatures that can fall to -4 degrees Fahrenheit. With those conditions, Burghall needs efficient equipment, and his single- and dual-stage snow blowers were not cutting it anymore.

Consequently, when Steel Green came out with the SG Snowplow attachment for sprayer/spreader machines, Burghall jumped at the opportunity to purchase one, and the move swiftly paid off. By the end of the season, the SG Snowplow had made Burghall's business more efficient and helped maximize the investment he had in his sprayer/spreader.

"Because the SG Snowplow keeps my sprayer/spreader from sitting unused all winter," Burghall explained, "I can continuously make money and

capitalize on the investment I put into the unit."

By putting his existing equipment to work during the off-season, the SG Snowplow helped Burghall reduce the man hours required for snow removal and make the work less taxing on his crew.

"The SG Snowplow makes the work a lot faster," Burghall said. "On some of our routes, we used to spend 16-18 hours removing snow after a nasty storm and 12 hours after a milder storm. We were able to get that down to about between 8 and 10 hours for the same routes with the SG Snowplow."

GroGreen's snow removal business works primarily on residential driveways and sidewalks that traditional plows don't work well on, but the versatility and maneuverability of the SG Snowplow are perfect for these situations.

"The SG Snowplow's ability to remove snow on these surfaces, next to cars, and in small spaces quickly makes our snow removal business easier to run," said Burghall.

Burghall was impressed with how simple it is to install and uninstall the

SG Snowplow attachment for a speedy transition from fertilizing to snow removal and back again if needed.

"When I took the SG Snowplow and its attachment kit off after the snow removal season, it took just over half an hour," Burghall said. "That was it. Then, I was ready for the lawn care season."

Additionally, he said, "If you need to transition back to snow removal because of an unexpected storm, it's just as easy. The SG Snowplow does not need to be taken apart completely. I take the plow itself off the machine and put it out of the way. When I need to transition back to snow removal, all I have to do is reattach the plow. It only takes 5 to 10 minutes."

If you're in snow removal and looking for a better way to clear driveways and sidewalks, take it from Burghall, "Now that I've experienced the SG Snowplow in action, I'm never going back to my old equipment. It's just dramatically better."

To read the full story and other customer stories, visit steelgreenmfg.com/blog.

HARDSCAPE SOLUTIONS

Rock solid

LOCATION Bozeman, Mont.

COMPANY Blanchford Landscape Group

DETAILS The client contacted Blanchford Landscape Group (BLG) after seeing the company's advertisement in a local publication. The client wanted to ensure the design fit the multilevel home and the foothills of the nearby mountains.

Mason Shaffer, garden designer with BLG, says the company strived to not disrupt the native surroundings. This meant working from the back to the front of the house and installing all softscapes and hardscapes in each section, start to finish.

"We had to commit to what our equipment needed to do before we got out of there because we couldn't take the equipment back in after it was done," he says.

Noteworthy features include a native boulder transformed into a propane-powered fire feature and a multilevel patio. The company also installed a fire perimeter as part of the irrigation system, where Rainbird 1812 spray bodies with Hunter MP rotator nozzles at the edge of the perimeter point outward to form a protective border to keep smoke and heat away from the home when they're on.

"Interestingly enough, this home was in a forest fire last year," he says. "We got to see how that fire perimeter worked. They didn't receive any heat or smoke damage like all their neighbors did."

This project earned Blanchford Landscape Group a 2020 Gold Award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program.

See more photos from this project at LandscapeManagement.net/hardscapesolutions.



PHOTOS: SAUL CREATIVE (1-3, 5-8), BLANCHFORD LANDSCAPE GROUP (4)



Captions | **1.** A look at the completed front entry area, which features mossy boulder rock ledges, sandstone stairs, a sandstone patio, container plantings and bed plantings. **2.** A look at the completed back outdoor living space, which features a native sandstone patio, a gas fire pit cored into a mossy boulder, overflow boulder seating, boulder retaining walls and a pergola. **3.** The stone stairs on the left in the upper seating area connect to the front entry area. **4.** The home's front entry before construction. **5.** Container plantings and mossy boulder retaining walls accent the seating area with a stone patio. **6.** Railing, boulders, containers and rock stairs highlight the entry to the house. **7.** Blanchford Landscape Group approached installation in sections so it would disturb the natural surroundings as little as possible. **8.** The mossy boulder retaining walls and stone stairs appear to be part of the natural surroundings in the multilevel dining and sitting area.

BRAND U

A smart approach

One irrigation contractor explains why he chose Smart Rain controllers to help manage his company's many commercial properties

BY SARAH WEBB
LM MANAGING EDITOR

In order to manage the irrigation systems at the commercial properties it oversees, Piedmont Landscape Management decided to take a proactive approach by incorporating smart controllers, according to

Patrick Wells, president and landscape architect for Piedmont, which is located in Augusta, Ga.

The company provides landscape design and construction, landscape maintenance, irrigation construction and maintenance and seasonal color services to a primarily commercial clientele, including shopping centers, medical facilities, apartment communities and more.

Piedmont settled on Smart Rain controllers about two months ago after researching several options.

"We felt like Smart Rain's technology and approach to customer service and dedication to water management was vastly different than other companies," Wells says. "We have used several other companies on other sites, and where people fail is when there is mismanage-

Continued on page 62



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Statistics are from the Spring-Green Franchise Disclosure Document (FDD) dated March 2021. For more information, see the FDD. This information is not intended as an offer to sell, or solicitation of an offer to buy, a franchise. It is for informational purposes only. Currently, the following states regulate the offer and sale of a franchises: CA, HI, IL, IN, MD, NY, ND, OR, RI, SD, VA, WA and WI. If you are a resident of one of these states, we will not offer you a franchise unless and until we have complied with applicable pre-sale registration and disclosure requirements in your jurisdiction.

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IRRIGATION + WATER MANAGEMENT

BRAND U

Continued from page 60
ment of the controllers, issues with the computer system and poor data taken from weather stations.”

Specifically, Wells says he appreciates the log book feature of the controllers, which shows who made changes to the system, when the controller runs and for how long.

“This helps make sure nothing is changed without permission,” Wells notes. “Also, we save tons of time auditing the system because we can do it from our smart device.”

So far, Wells says the Smart Rain controllers have changed the way his company does business.

“We are able to be more efficient on the job site by not having to walk back and forth to a controller,” Wells says. “We have also been able to keep clients from tinkering in the control box because everything has to be done on the computer or phone.”

For other contractors looking to implement smart controllers, Wells says they should remember that getting employees up to date on the system takes time and training.

EASY AUDIT
Smart Rain's system allows technicians to view irrigation systems from a smart device.



“You cannot just set this and forget it,” Wells says. “The world is moving to this type of technology, so it's important that we be good stewards of our water.”

“The world is moving to this type of technology, so it's important that we be good stewards of our water.”

— PATRICK WELLS



smarttrain
Wireless Sprinkler Timer

Configuration Manual Camera

START

Zone 6

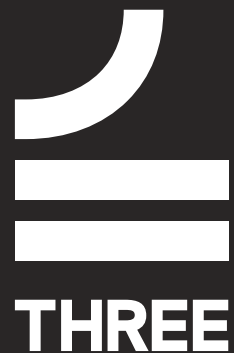
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RECOMMENDER

What types of heads and nozzles do you use and why?

Finding the right nozzle and sprayhead can help with water conservation and spray uniformity.



GREG WINCHEL
OWNER
WINCHEL IRRIGATION
GRANDVILLE, MICH.

The Rain Bird 5004 rotor nozzle is my favorite for residential irrigation. The nozzle design gives uniformity throughout the spraying system. The way that the water flows through the nozzle and breaks up the water, it really distributes the water evenly with no dry spots. I've been using it for 17 or 18 years, and I've been happy with it every time. We really like the life expectancy of the sprinkler heads. They're very durable, but if we ever run into a problem, they're really easy to replace as well.



TAVE CLOSE
PRESIDENT
GENESIS SPRINKLERS
AND WATER MANAGEMENT
SARASOTA, FLA.

We use Hunter Industries MP Rotator nozzles. Hunter Industries MP Rotator nozzles offer high distribution uniformity and conservation qualities. Our goal is to provide water management services that pay for themselves in less than one year in water savings.



ANDY HULCY
OWNER
ANDY'S SPRINKLER,
DRAINAGE & LIGHTING
DALLAS

Our go-to sprayhead is the 1800 series from Rain Bird, in particular, the SAM PRS and SAM P45 in the 4-inch, 6-inch and 12-inch models. The 1800 Series SAM head addresses elevation changes by keeping water in the lateral piping, which would otherwise be lost to low head drainage, and it helps us save water and components by eliminating puddling and dry-line shock. Instead of raising heads to spray over tall grasses and other plant material, we will install 6-inch or 12-inch pop-ups to avoid obstruction. Also, the close-in watering provided by the U Series nozzle improves water distribution uniformity and lowers the run times in each zone.

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MPR spray nozzles*

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FIVE QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW BY SETH JONES | LM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Russ Jundt

**FOUNDER AND BRAND LEADER,
CONSERVA IRRIGATION
RICHMOND, VA.**

1 What do you want to tell me about Conserva Irrigation? The driving principle is twofold: I founded the company to save the Earth's fresh water, and I wanted to create a business model where we could create more financially independent business owners than what's ever been created in the green industry. I wanted our owners to feel great about how they're earning their money. It's hard to argue; saving the Earth's fresh water is a great call to action.

2 What did you do before you founded Conserva Irrigation? My business partner and I have been best friends since fifth grade. We went into underground utility construction. It was called UGLI — Underground Logistics Inc. "No job too ugly." We loved that business. It was dangerous, and we had a hard time building scale. All of our crews that ran the smaller equipment kept getting chased down, "Hey, do you guys do irrigation?" They kept pestering us for it. They'd be like, "Dude, we've asked nine companies, and they won't come over. They ghost us!" Finally, I asked a client if he had irrigation, in case we disrupt it. He said no. I don't know what prompted me, but I said, "Want one?" He said yeah. I said we'll take care of it. That was on a Friday. So, we installed a system at my place on Saturday, at my (partner) Tom's on Sunday and then went and installed one at the client's on Monday. That was how we entered the irrigation industry. It was a few years later that we revisited the concept of building a scalable irrigation model — that's when Conserva was born.

3 How did you go from a Minnesota-based irrigation company to an irrigation company franchisor? I was the first franchisee of Mosquito Squad 17 years ago. I loved the experience of franchising so much, and I wanted to get back to irrigation. In 2009, 2010, there was no such thing as an irrigation franchise. It blew my mind. Because of that void, I started on my journey after going to the November 2010 Irrigation Association national show in Phoenix. My eyes were wide open. Smart irrigation was being talked about, high-efficiency nozzles, smart controllers. We hit the ground running. In the first 90 days, we had 305 clients. I knew I was on to something. In 2013, we started to expand across the nation. Since June of 2017,

since we started franchising the model, we are now celebrating our 50th franchise owner, 121 licensed territories across the U.S. in 26 states. We believe that by Dec. 31 of this year, we will be the largest landscape irrigation company throughout North America.

4 What is the product that made you successful? Our marquee product is how we productized our service offering. We developed a repeatable, scalable process whereby we could rate the efficiency of an irrigation system. We call it the SES — system efficiency score. That is the most important element of our brand. Everyone looks for that silver bullet, "What's the absolute best rotor?" I happen to think it's the Toro T5, but that's not what's building our business. The advent of the SES was the aha moment. To have a homogenous experience for the end user was ultra-important. How we drive, how we show up, how we dress, how we speak, the SES report that's generated ... that has been the driver to our growth.

5 If you had my job for a day, what would you write about? I'd challenge the existing irrigation industry to depart from business as usual. Challenge the status quo. We view ourselves as contrarians, as disruptors. I don't accept wasting water. There are a ton of highly professional folks, but I think we can all agree that the industry as a whole has labeled themselves as dirt plumbers. Rise to the challenge: Irrigation 2.0 is here. Wasting water is no longer acceptable. One of two things needs to happen: Raise your standards and rise to the challenge, or go find another job. If you're not going to rise up, there's no room for you in the industry. 🍷

BEST ADVICE

"Lead with passion. Lead with your heart. Hang it all out there on the field. That's how we play ball. There's no holding back. We have one chance to do this right."



PHOTO: JAKE MATHRE

THERE'S A TRIAD FOR EVERY JOB.



Drop the hammer on hard to control broadleaf weeds in turf – like clover, dandelion, plantain, even crabgrass and sedges – with visible results in just 24-48 hours. To learn more about all our powerful Triad herbicides, visit primesource-albaugh.com. They'll keep your turf clean and green.

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A LOOK BACK >>>

On the go

This issue includes our Innovation & Technology Guide where we profile the latest software and technological solutions to help your business.

In the August 2000 issue, *Landscape Management* covered how mobile technology helps landscapers do their jobs faster and quicker.

While the technology contractors and crew members use has changed throughout the years — from PalmPilots to smartphones — one thing that hasn't is the need to find solutions to help team members work more efficiently.

Even back in 2000, Tom Davis of Bozzuto Landscaping in Laurel, Md., was exploring the addition of GPS fleet tracking to help boost his company's fleet efficacy.

"With increased fuel costs, it's huge to be able to conserve wherever possible," Davis said.

Increasing response times was part of the motivation behind Larry Brinkley's move to the latest tools, including mobile phones and laptops — anything to help his team contact clients swiftly.

"We get one-third of our business from getting back to clients quickly," said the president of BLT Landscape Services in Dallas, Texas. "We get calls in the spring and fall from people who say we were the only one to call them back."

As part of the feature, experts offered a few suggestions to help contractors decide whether a new piece of technology was a fit within the operation.

Before deciding whether to invest in the latest technology for your operation, ask yourself a few questions:

1. Is it right for my service mix?
2. Is it cost-effective?
3. Can it be as effective outside the office as inside?
4. Will it help the overall operation become more efficient and productive?
5. Is it a top priority now or can it wait?



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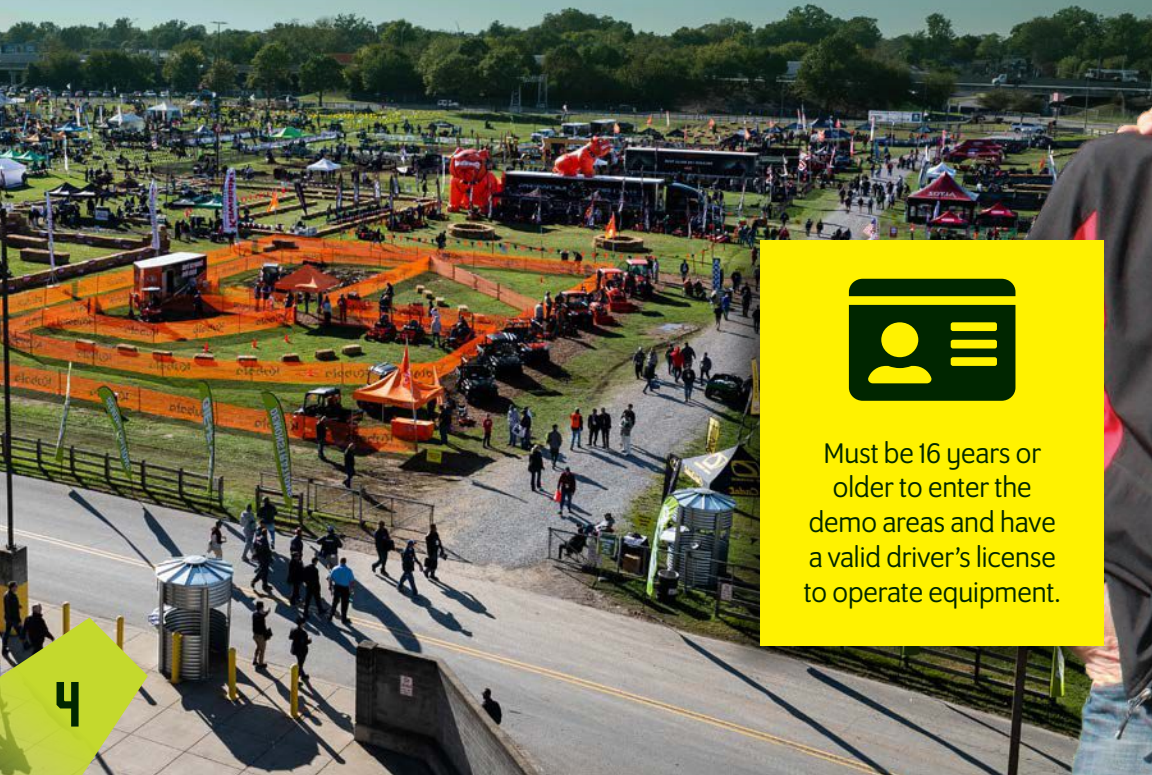


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- 6** UTV Driving Experience – FREE
- 7** Technology at GIE+EXPO
- 8** Technology Summit – FREE
- 10** Opening Keynote – FREE
- 12** The Drone Zone – FREE
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- 20** In-Tree Arbor Training – FREE
- 22** Mutt Madness and Food Truck Thursday
- 23** Concerts – FREE
- 24** Daily Schedule
- 26** Louisville
- 28** Kentucky Derby Museum – FREE
- 30** Travel Discounts and Registration

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TEST & COMPARE IN THE 20+ ACRE DEMO AREA Open Thursday & Friday

No other industry event gives you and your team this kind of “try-before-you-buy” opportunity.



Must be 16 years or older to enter the demo areas and have a valid driver's license to operate equipment.



NEWLY RENOVATED



"The Outdoor Demo Area alone is worth the 9-hour drive from Toronto. We used to have to go to several shows to explore every option and see all the different equipment. Coming here we can try it all in one day, in one place. It's awesome!"

SHAUN KOEPKE
ONTARIO, CANADA



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Drive and compare the latest vehicles while you put them through their paces on curves, hills, rocks, bumps and maybe even a little water and mud.

Attendees with a valid driver's license will be able to drive alongside a representative of the manufacturer who can answer all of your product questions – load capacity, features, price and more.

Plus, every eligible attendee receives an entry to win \$15,000 toward a UTV from participating manufacturers at the UTV Corral.



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Check the **Technology Summit** and **GIE+EXPO Workshop** schedule for learning opportunities:

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- Artificial Intelligence tools
- Software systems and business solutions
- Drones
- Robotics
- Google My Business
- And more

NEW **TECHNOLOGY SUMMIT**

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ASSOCIATION OF
**LANDSCAPE
PROFESSIONALS**

Wednesday, October 20

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

\$129, includes 3 Sessions

Robotics and Technology in Landscape Design and Maintenance

*Olle Markusson, Global Director Product Management,
Robotics – Husqvarna*

Co-presenter: Pam Dooley, Plants Creative Landscape

Are you ready to improve productivity, efficiency, and safety for your business? This session will cover the most innovative technology developments that can increase profitability and help take your business to the next level. Olle Markusson has been deeply involved in the development of the Robotic Mower business at Husqvarna since 1998.

Who What Where – What Apps are Best for Tracking Labor, Schedules and Project Management?

Nanette Seven, Include Software

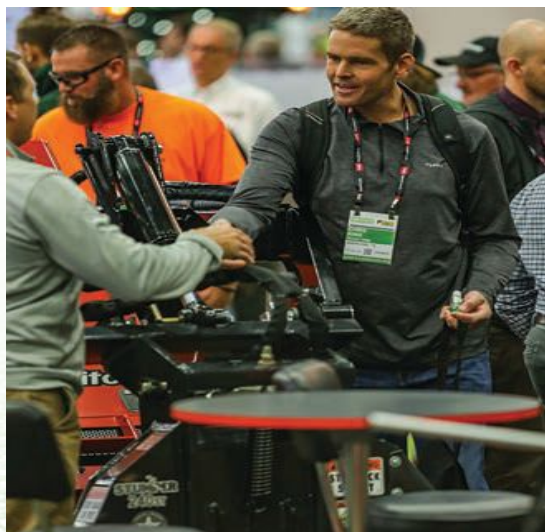
Confused by the latest insurgence of mobile apps in the marketplace? Want to know the pros and cons so you can make the right choices for your company? Learn about the newest apps that could help you track labor, schedules and project management. With more than 25 years of industry experience, Nanette Seven's focus is to build and improve software and services in order to help her clients' businesses grow.



Disruptive Innovation and Must-Have Technology for the Green Industry

Beth Berry, Real Green Systems

Learn key strategies and ground-breaking AI tools for converting your customer base into a subscription-based monthly membership club to increase retention and cash flow, reduce cost of collections and more. Take home everything you need to create an easy-to-implement strategy for “membership” and unprecedented retention in 2022. Beth Berry is a 30-year green industry veteran with top lawn and technology companies.



Following the Technology Summit:

2:00 - 3:00 PM

Opening Keynote by 4-star Navy Admiral James Stavridis

3:00 - 7:00 PM

Indoor Exhibits and Reception on the Trade Show Floor

OPENING KEYNOTE

Wednesday, October 20

2:00 - 3:00 PM

FREE with trade show registration

James Stavridis

Retired United States Navy 4-star Admiral and USEUCOM, 16th Supreme Allied Commander, NATO; Operating Executive, Carlyle Group



Leadership and a New World Order: The Need for Resilience

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A distinguished leader and the longest-serving global combatant commander in recent American military history, James Stavridis provides answers and strategies to address the most pressing global affairs challenges.

Admiral Stavridis led the NATO Alliance in global operations from 2009 to 2013 as Supreme Allied Commander with responsibility for Afghanistan, Libya, the Balkans, Syria, counter piracy and cyber security. Subsequently, he served for five years as the 12th dean of The Fletcher School of Law

and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Earlier in his naval career, he served as Commander of U.S. Southern Command, with responsibility for all military operations in Latin America. He holds more than 50 medals, including 28 from foreign nations.

Admiral Stavridis has published nine books on leadership, the oceans, maritime affairs and Latin America. He is a monthly columnist for TIME Magazine and Chief International Security Analyst for NBC News.

NETWORK LIKE A PRO

Find new resources, connections and vendors with GIE+EXPO's many networking opportunities – both on the show floor and off.

WEDNESDAY RECEPTION ON THE SHOW FLOOR 3:00 - 7:00 PM

Mingle with manufacturers and peers and enjoy refreshments compliments of the exhibitors – all while walking among the new products on display.



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**Test your ability on a flight simulator, then step into
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Open all three-days in the North Wing, The Zone will offer hourly sessions on using drones for marketing, water management, thermal imaging, multi-spectral analytics, GIS mapping and more.

Experienced or not, there's something in The Zone for you. A Drone 101 session will teach beginners about FAA Airspace and Basic Regulations while more experienced users can share tips and ideas with other contractors.

Drone technology is revolutionizing how landscaping is sold, designed and built. From creating 3D renderings and estimating to documenting progress and showcasing your products with fly-through videos, drones can give you the competitive edge.



REMOTE PILOT CERTIFICATION COURSE

Tuesday, Oct. 19 – 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Wednesday, Oct. 20 – 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

**\$175, includes Gleim Remote Pilot FAA
Knowledge Test Prep book**

From creating 3D renderings and estimating to documenting progress and showcasing your projects with fly-through videos, drone technology is revolutionizing how landscapes are sold, designed and built. Combining classroom knowledge with demonstrations and some hands-on opportunities, this two-day course will equip you for the Part 107 Remote Pilot Certification exam* that is necessary for commercial use.

**Certification exam will not be given at GIE+EXPO. Find an FAA-approved Knowledge Testing Center near you by calling 844-704-1487.*



**We're giving away a drone each day.
Stop by The Zone for your chance to win!**



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GIE+EXPO WORKSHOPS

Expanded Profit Options for You

Pre-registration is required for all education sessions.
See page 31 or register online at www.gie-expo.com.

\$85/session unless otherwise noted

Wednesday, Oct. 20

12:30 – 1:30 PM

**Irrigation Symposium –
Landscape Irrigation 2021:
Opportunities and Challenges**
Fee: \$85

*Hosted by the Irrigation Association
Moderator: Chris Pine, IrriTech Training,
Principal and BluGreen Solutions, President*

A panel of experts in contracting, irrigation management, product and supply will share real-world analysis and solutions for landscape professionals in the landscape irrigation industry.

3:00 - 4:15 PM

The Ins & Outs of Websites
*Chris Darnell, The Harvest Group
Hosted by NALP*

Does your website need an overhaul? Have you received quotes from one end of the spectrum to the next? Learn the components of your website and what you should look for to qualify someone to build or rehab it. Make sure your website is earning money. The Harvest Group's Chris Darnell knows what it takes to close sales and grow with the times in the landscape and snow removal industries.

4:30 - 5:45 PM

**Creating a Modern Workforce:
A 21st Century Approach to
Management**

*Neal Glatt, CSP, ASM, GrowTheBench.com
Hosted by NALP*

Neal Glatt will take an in-depth look at the factors that have formed the modern employee and why a real commitment to people is a necessity for business survival. You'll take away practical, data-driven techniques to increase employee engagement that will result in increased sales, profitability and retention.



Thursday, October 21

8:00 - 9:15 AM

Michigan State University's Landscape Services Technology Journey to Higher Performance

*Adam Lawver, Director of Campus Services,
Michigan State University*

Hosted by PGMS

The fast pace of technology leaves many wondering how and where to start. Leading the industry in the development and use of grounds management technology, Adam Lawver has helped redefine Michigan State University's grounds program. His expertise will teach you how to lead your organization's technological journey. You'll also get a preview of the newest technologies and how they can be adopted to innovate your business model.

8:00 - 9:15 AM

Secrets Every Contractor Ought to Know About the Hardscape Business **\$65**

Frank Gandora

Hosted by ICPI

Learn insider secrets of running a successful hardscape company. By combining strategies and best practices that top contractors use, Frank Gandora's goal is to share with you the best practices successful companies use so you can out-market, out-sell, out-perform, out-earn and out-enjoy your competitors.

9:30 - 10:45 AM

Estimating Hardscape Projects with Confidence **\$65**

Jerry Gaeta

Hosted by ICPI

Do you know your cost of doing business or performing the work that you sell or are you just guessing? This seminar will demonstrate the importance of an estimating strategy and show how to develop and implement the strategy to become profitable and stable and to ensure your company's survival.

11:00 AM - 12:15 PM

Human Resources Compliance Best Practices

Steven Cesare, Ph.D., The Harvest Group

Hosted by NALP

Landscapers are confronted with an overwhelming array of local, state and federal regulations. The Harvest Group's Steven Cesare, Ph.D., will provide an applied context for ensuring legal compliance ranging from I-9 Forms, OSHA record keeping, FLSA issues and EEOC violations. Most importantly, he will share best practices to help landscapers ensure legal compliance and minimize costly penalties.

continues on p. 16

GIE+EXPO WORKSHOPS

Expanded Profit Options for You

Pre-registration is required for all education sessions.
See page 31 or register online at www.gie-expo.com.

\$85/session unless otherwise noted

continued from p. 15

Thursday, October 21

1:00 - 2:15 PM

How Your Landscaping Company Can Optimize Google My Business to Generate a Constant Flow of Leads

*Christopher Yates, Success Landscape
Marketing*

Hosted by NALP

The Google My Business platform is constantly changing and improving. The latest features, when properly implemented, are great tools to drive leads to your landscape business. Christopher Yates will teach you strategies for optimizing your listing: The 8 most important ranking factors for being at the top of the local pack; how to interpret and learn from GMB Insights; and how to benefit from the best kept secret GMB feature. The author of "The Complete Guide to Marketing for Landscapers" Christopher has over 20 years of experience in developing and implementing both online and offline marketing strategies.

2:30 - 3:45 PM

Creating a Five-Star Brand

Jeffrey Scott, Jeffrey Scott Consulting, Inc.

Hosted by NALP

Do you wonder how some companies are able to grow and attract the very best clients? To scale up organically requires a top-to-bottom commitment to provide quality, an efficient work flow and an eye for details and utter integrity. How you pull it together makes all the difference. Jeffrey Scott, a leading consultant with more than 30 years of green industry experience, will teach a step-by-step approach to creating a five-star brand; how to retain clients and supercharge the growth of your business; and how to build a valuable legacy that will drive profitability and sustainable growth. Jeffrey ran a successful \$15+M landscape/pool company in New England and has written three business books for the green industry.



Friday, October 22

8:00 - 9:15 AM

Drones in the Green Industry

Jeremiah Saier, GIS Analyst,

Michigan State University

Hosted by PGMS

Do you understand the importance of technology as a support device but need help connecting the dots on how it could increase productivity? Jeremiah Saier's real-world examples can transform the way your operation utilizes drone technology. In this session you'll learn to:

- Identify products or services that can be supported by using drones
- Craft your story supporting the business decision and communicate it to staff and stakeholders
- Implement this new strategy and find the unique partnerships needed for success

8:00 - 9:15 AM

Online Reviews:

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Chad Diller, Landscape Leadership

Hosted by NALP

Online reviews have a huge impact on SEO and are over 80% of consumers' research before reaching out to service providers. Chad Diller will provide insights about which platforms to focus on, how to get more reviews and how to use good ones for more compelling marketing, as well as best practices when you get a bad one. Chad has been an enthusiastic part of the green industry for over 20 years. His experience in operations, sales and marketing offers a unique and fresh perspective on how to practically and tactically grow a business.

9:30 - 10:45 AM

Benchmarks & Critical Numbers for the Landscape Industry

James Huston, J.R. Huston Consulting

Hosted by NALP

Do you know the benchmarks and critical numbers that will guide your business to success? James Huston will explain how to identify and use general benchmarks and critical numbers for all areas of your business, including marketing, estimating, monitoring and improving productivity and risk management. With over 40 years of diverse business management experience, James is one of only two Certified Professional Landscape Estimators in the world.



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- Hundreds of exhibits featuring the newest hardscape products and equipment
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HARDSCAPE NOW

Learn best-practice secrets and construction techniques shared by Frank Bourque and his team of experts.

\$65 Registration Upgrade
includes all six sessions

How to Build for Profits: Tight Quarters and Other Hardscape Sites



Thursday, October 21

10:00 - 11:00 AM

Tools & Equipment for Profits

12:00 - 1:00 PM

Hardscape Installs in Tight
Quarters & Challenging Sites

2:00 - 3:00 PM

Installation Efficiency on Pavers
& Slab Installations

4:00 - 5:00 PM

Installation Efficiency on Raised
Patios & Retaining Wall Installations

Friday, October 22

9:15 - 10:15 AM

Hardscape Features:
Lights and Sound

11:45 AM - 12:45 PM

Hardscape Features:
Fire and Water

EXPANDED IN-TREE TRAINING



Ascend to new heights with professional arborists as they share basic techniques and systems accepted within the industry to safely, efficiently, and effectively perform tree care operations.

Climbing instruction will be provided by arborists while aloft in a 60-ft. tree set up inside Freedom Hall.

Presented by The Davey Tree Expert Company in collaboration with The Women's Tree Climbing Workshop. Tree provided by Cave Hill Cemetery.

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EXPERIENCED OR NOT, THESE SESSIONS ARE FOR YOU.

Free with trade show registration

Wednesday, October 20

3:30 - 4:30 PM

Operation Tie-In Point

Thursday, October 21

10:00 - 11:00 AM

Climbing Systems: What's Best for Me?

12:00 - 1:00 PM

Tools of the Trade

1:30 - 3:30 PM

Working the Tree, Work Positioning,
and Changing Tie-In Points

4:00 - 4:45 PM

Fundamentals of Pruning Cuts
and the Legacy We Leave

Friday, October 22

9:30 - 10:30 AM

Static vs. Dynamic Rigging:
What You Need to Know

11:30 AM - 1:30 PM

Removal Techniques Including,
Dynamic, Static, and Speedline



NEW ARBORIST CLASSROOM \$85/session

Earn International Society of Arboriculture continuing education credits.

Wednesday, October 20

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Gear Inspection for Tree Climbers

Friday, October 22

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Grow your Green Business & Why?

MUTT MADNESS & FOOD TRUCK THURSDAY

**THURSDAY,
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM**
IN FREEDOM HALL

MUTT MADNESS

Take a break from the show floor and visit with puppies. Maybe even take one home.

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with the Kentucky Humane Society*



FOOD TRUCK THURSDAY

Popular Louisville food trucks will pull onto the floor of Freedom Hall, giving attendees the perfect chance to get a taste of the city's eclectic food scene.



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TUES 8:30PM
RESURRECTION
A JOURNEY TRIBUTE BAND

WED 8PM
GRANGER SMITH
FEATURING EARL DIBBLES JR.

THUR 8PM
THE CRASHERS

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GIE+EXPO 2021 DAILY SCHEDULE

All times listed in Eastern Daylight Time

*NOTE: Pre-registration and/or additional fees are required for activities marked with an asterisk. Visit your registration dashboard to add sessions.

Tuesday, October 19

8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

***Remote Pilot Certification Course**

*Mark Patrick Collins, Associate Professor,
Unmanned Systems, at Indiana State University*

8:30 PM **FREE**

**Free Concert: Resurrection – A Journey
Tribute**

*Sponsored by STIHL on the Belgard Stage
Fourth Street Live!*

Wednesday, Oct. 20

8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

***Remote Pilot Certification Course**

*Mark Patrick Collins, Associate Professor,
Unmanned Systems, at Indiana State University*

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

***Technology Summit**

Hosted by NALP

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

***Classroom Arborist Workshop: Gear
Inspection for Tree Climbers**

12:30 – 1:30 PM

***GIE+EXPO Workshop: Irrigation Symposium –
Landscape Irrigation 2021:
Opportunities and Challenges**

Hosted by the Irrigation Association

2:00 - 3:00 PM **FREE**

**Opening Keynote: James Stavridis
Leadership and a New World Order:
The Need for Resilience**

Sponsored by John Deere & OPEI

3:00 - 4:15 PM

***GIE+EXPO Workshop:
The Ins & Outs of Websites**

Hosted by NALP

3:00 - 7:00 PM

Indoor Exhibits open to all industry,
including welcome reception

3:30 - 4:30 PM **FREE**

**In-Tree Arborist Training:
Operation Tie-In Point**

4:30 - 5:45 PM

***GIE+EXPO Workshop: Creating a
Modern Workforce: A 21st Century
Approach to Management**

Hosted by NALP

8:00 PM **FREE**

**Free Concert: Granger Smith
featuring Earl Dibbles Jr.**

*Sponsored by STIHL on the Belgard Stage
Fourth Street Live!*

Thursday, October 21

8:00 - 9:15 AM

***GIE+EXPO Workshop: Michigan State
University's Landscape Services Technology
Journey to Higher Performance**

Hosted by PGMS

8:00 - 9:15 AM

***GIE+EXPO Workshop: Estimating
Hardscape Projects with Confidence**

Hosted by ICPI

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Indoor Exhibits and
Outdoor Demo Area open

9:45 - 11:00 AM

***GIE+EXPO Workshop: Secrets Every
Contractor Ought to Know About the
Hardscape Business**

Hosted by ICPI

10:00 - 11:00 AM

***Hardscape Demo:
Tools & Equipment for Profits**

SHOW HOURS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20

Indoor 3:00 - 7:00 PM – Open to all
Outdoor Closed

(includes reception on trade show floor)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21

Indoor 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Outdoor 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22

Indoor 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Outdoor 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

10:00 – 11:00 AM **FREE**

In-Tree Arborist Training:
Climbing Systems: What's Best for Me?

11:00 AM - 12:15 PM

*GIE+EXPO Workshop: Human
Resources Compliance Best Practices

Hosted by NALP

11:00 AM - 2:00 PM **FREE**

Mutt Madness, TurfMutt Adoption Event

11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Food Truck Thursday

12:00 - 1:00 PM

*Hardscape Demo: Hardscape Installs
in Tight Quarters & Challenging Sites

12:00 - 1:00 PM **FREE**

In-Tree Arborist Training: Tools of the Trade

1:00 - 2:15 PM

*GIE+EXPO Workshop:
How Your Landscaping Company
Can Optimize Google My Business to
Generate a Constant Flow of Leads

Hosted by NALP

1:30 - 3:30 PM **FREE**

In-Tree Arborist Training: Working the Tree,
Work Positioning, and Changing Tie-In Points

2:00 - 3:00 PM

*Hardscape Demo: Installation
Efficiency on Pavers & Slab Installations

2:30 - 3:45 PM

*GIE+EXPO Workshop:
Creating a Five-Star Brand

Hosted by NALP

4:00 - 5:00 PM

*Hardscape Demo: Installation Efficiency on
Raised Patios & Retaining Wall Installations

4:00 - 4:45 PM **FREE**

In-Tree Arborist Training: Fundamentals of
Pruning Cuts and the Legacy We Leave

5:00 - 8:00 PM **FREE**

Pre-Concert Attraction:
Kentucky Derby Museum

Free admission with your show badge

8:00 PM **FREE**

Free Concert: The Crashers

*Sponsored by STIHL on the Belgard Stage
Fourth Street Live!*

Friday, October 22

8:00 - 9:15 AM

*GIE+EXPO Workshop:
Drones in the Green Industry
Hosted by PGMS

8:00 - 9:15 AM

*GIE+EXPO Workshop: Online Reviews:
The Good, the Bad and the Ugly
Hosted by NALP

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Outdoor Demo Area open

9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Indoor Exhibits

9:15 - 10:15 AM

*Hardscape Demo: Hardscape Features:
Lights and Sound

9:30 - 10:45 AM

*GIE+EXPO Workshop: Benchmarks & Critical
Numbers for the Landscape Industry
Hosted by NALP

9:30 - 10:30 AM **FREE**

In-Tree Arborist Training: Static vs. Dynamic
Rigging: What You Need to Know

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

*Classroom Arborist Workshop:
Grow your Green Business & Why?

11:30 AM - 1:30 PM **FREE**

In-Tree Arborist Training:
Removal Techniques Including,
Dynamic, Static, and Speedline

11:45 AM - 12:45 PM

*Hardscape Demo: Hardscape Features:
Fire and Water

12:00 PM **FREE**

\$15,000 UTV Giveaway
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Book your hotel online at www.gie-expo.com and you will automatically be entered in a drawing for prizes ranging from a Louisville gift basket to a complimentary hotel room during your stay.

PRE-CONCERT ATTRACTION

DO DERBY IN OCTOBER

Thursday, October 21
5:00-8:00 PM

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Kentucky Derby Museum

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Churchill Downs is the world's most legendary Thoroughbred racetrack and home to the Kentucky Derby – The Most Exciting Two Minutes in Sports. The Kentucky Derby Museum offers a taste of Derby action year-round.

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- Walking tours of the racetrack grounds
- Two floors of family-friendly interactive exhibits

www.DerbyMuseum.org





STAY THE WEEKEND. EXPLORE BOURBON COUNTRY.

Friday – Spend an evening on the Urban Bourbon Trail®.

This cocktail and culinary experience highlights more than 40 of Louisville's best bourbon bars and restaurants.

Pick up a UBT passport at your first stop, get six stamps and earn an official Urban Bourbon Trail t-shirt. (Note: Any purchase at these establishments will earn you a stamp – you don't have to be a Bourbon drinker!)

For details and a map: <http://bit.ly/GIEE20-UBT>



Saturday – Experience Louisville's Distillery Scene.

Louisville's bourbon history dates back to the late 1700s; explore and sip some of that history with the Bourbon District+ ticket. Save over 40% off regular admission prices and tour these downtown Louisville distilleries:

- Copper & Kings American Brandy Company
- Evan Williams Bourbon Experience
- Kentucky Peerless Distilling Company
- Old Forester Distillery

Purchase tickets:

<http://bit.ly/GIEE20-BourbonDistrict>

GIE+EXPO TRAVEL & REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Hotel Reservations

Louisville Tourism provides the lowest available room rates at event hotels. A list of rates is available at www.gie-expo.com. Click on “Hotels & Travel.”

To make reservations by phone, call the Louisville Housing Bureau. Monday – Friday, 9 AM – 5 PM EST. (800) 743-3100 or (502) 561-3100

Book Online & Win – See page 27 for details.

Shuttle Service

GIE+EXPO will run shuttle buses between select hotels, the airport and the Kentucky Exposition Center.

Airline Discounts

American Airlines – discounted fares available by contacting their Meeting Services Desk, (800) 433-1790. Use authorization number: A78HIDK.

Delta Airlines – up to a 10% discount on flights. Search flights at www.delta.com/meetings, select ‘Book Your Flight’ and use Meeting Code NMUP7. For groups of 10 or more, call (800) 328-1111.

United Airlines – up to 10% discount on flights. Search flights at www.united.com/meetingtravel and enter code: ZIYM496968. Or call United Reservations Meetings at (800) 426-1122.

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Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Pick up a free badge for them onsite. Children 16 and over must register at the adult price. **Must be 16 years or older to enter the demo areas and have a valid driver's license to operate equipment.**

Registration Information

Photocopy the form on page 31 for additional registrations. Print clearly in black ink. After Oct. 15 fees are nonrefundable. See FAQs at www.gie-expo.com for refund policy.

Exhibitors: Please use this form for your customers only.

Editors/Publishers: Please visit www.gie-expo.com and click on “Media” to request media credentials.

Registration Deadlines

Early Bird: Register by Sept. 9, 2021 for \$20 per person.

Sept. 10-Oct. 17, 5 PM EST for \$40 per person. Register onsite for \$80 per person.

Online Registration: www.gie-expo.com. Registrations cannot be taken over the phone.

GIE+EXPO REGISTRATION FORM

ATTENDEE INFORMATION (one form required per attendee)

Name: _____

Title: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () Fax: () _____

Country if outside the U.S.: _____

Email Address: _____

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Check one that best describes your business.

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- ☐ 25 Educational Facility
- ☐ 26 Parks & Rec./Municipality/
Cemetery
- ☐ 27 Forest & Land Management
- ☐ 28 Nursery
- ☐ 31 Sports Turf
- ☐ 33 Arborist

**Through Sept. 9: \$350, Sept. 10-Oct. 17: \$400, onsite: \$450.

EDUCATION & OPTIONAL EVENTS

SESSION	CODE	DAY/TIME	COST	\$
Two-Day Drone Training Course – NEW	147-1	TUES 8-5 PM, WED 8-1 PM	\$175	
Technology Summit – NEW	240-1	WED 10 AM-1 PM	\$129	
Arbor Training: Gear Inspection for Tree Climbers – NEW	145-1	WED 10 AM-1 PM	\$85	
Arbor Training: Grow Your Green Business and Why? – NEW	145-2	FRI 10 AM-1 PM	\$85	
HNA Demonstration Upgrade – 6 sessions	231	THU–FRI	\$65	
Irrigation Symposium: Panel Discussion – NEW	260	WED 12:30-1:30 PM	\$85	
Workshop: The Ins & Outs of Websites	240-2	WED 3-4:15 PM	\$85	
Workshop: Creating a Modern Workforce: A 21st Century Approach to Management	240-3	WED 4:30 – 5:45 PM	\$85	
Workshop: Technology Journey to Higher Performance – NEW	142-1	THU 8-9:15 AM	\$85	
Workshop: Secrets Every Contractor Ought to Know About the Hardscape Business	230-1	THU 8-9:15 AM	\$65	
Workshop: Estimating Hardscape Projects with Confidence	230-2	THU 9:30-10:45 AM	\$65	
Workshop: Human Resources Compliance Best Practices	240-4	THU 11 AM-12:15 PM	\$85	
Workshop: How Your Landscaping Company Can Optimize Google My Business...	240-5	THU 1-2:15 PM	\$85	
Workshop: Creating a Five-Star Brand	240-6	THU 2:30-3:45 PM	\$85	
Workshop: Drones in the Green Industry – NEW	142-2	FRI 8-9:15 AM	\$85	
Workshop: Online Reviews: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly	240-7	FRI 8-9:15 AM	\$85	
Workshop: Benchmarks & Critical Numbers for the Landscape Industry	240-8	FRI 9:30-10:45 AM	\$85	

PAYMENT INFORMATION

TRADESHOW PASS: \$20 ea. – Through 9/9/21 \$40 ea. – Through 10/17/21 \$80 ea. – After 10/17/21 or – Non-exhibiting Manufacturers/Suppliers/Ad Agencies/Media Sales: \$350 ea. – Through 9/9/21 \$400 ea. – Through 10/17/21 \$450 ea. – After 10/17/21		\$
EDUCATIONAL & OPTIONAL EVENTS	Total from above	\$
TOTAL FEES (Checks should be made payable to GIE+EXPO.)		\$

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Signature: _____

Name: _____

Card #: _____

Exp. Date: _____

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BY GREG HERRING

The author is the CEO of The Herring Group and has significant experience in the landscape industry. He can be reached at gherring@herring-group.com.

How to set your landscape business on a path to growth

The Herring Group recently completed its market research of landscape companies with fewer than 500 employees.

The numbers tell a story. As you review the figures in the table below, ponder two questions:

- Why are there so many small companies and so few large companies?
- What is required to grow and continue growing?

One of the great characteristics of the landscape industry is that it displays the principles of capitalism well. The numbers in the table illustrate this truth — more than half of the companies have an annual revenue of less than \$300,000. The barriers to entry are low, enabling competent, ambitious people to start and grow a business quickly and simply. The industry is lightly regulated, which means competence and diligence, rather than connections, are rewarded by the market.

Customers' cost to "switch" landscape maintenance companies is low — usually, it is their time.

In our work at The Herring Group, we find many business owners who are stuck. These owners have built great companies, but they have been frustrated with their companies' lack of growth. Many of these owners are also tired — their companies require more time and energy than they want to give.

Here's an unfortunate truth in growing a business: What got you here won't get you there. It is not that the owner needs to commit more time and energy; the owner's role must change.

PATH TO GROWTH

If an owner starts with a truck and a mower, the focus is on growing and serving customers — just getting the

work done. The owner does it all. As the company grows, the owner adds employees to do the work, and the owner becomes a manager. First, the owner manages one crew and then moves to multiple crews. The focus is no longer doing but managing. A competent owner or manager can achieve revenue of \$1 million.

Growing above \$1 million requires another change. The owner will need to hire a manager to oversee the production activities so the owner can focus on sales and developing leadership skills. The owner needs a manager who can be led, not managed.

By the time a company gets to \$3 million, the owner will need to lead a small team of effective managers.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LEADING AND MANAGING

Management is directing others to do specific tasks. Leadership is hiring managers, communicating values and creating a culture that empowers managers to make good decisions without the owner's direct involvement. Establishing such a culture in a landscape company

requires access to reports that inform decisions and key performance indicators that measure success and create accountability.

Just as growth requires a transition related to people, it also requires a transition in systems and processes. We observe a transition from paper-based systems to Excel-based systems to specific software solutions (e.g., time tracking, estimating) to comprehensive landscape business management software.

In conversations with owners, I find there are typically two types. One type focuses on the value that software delivers. The other focuses on the cost. Great software is expensive. It should be. It produces tremendous value by making your employees much more efficient and effective. Still focused on cost? Here is a simple question: Would you rather recruit and hire more people or buy software?

Some owners have made the changes required for their companies to grow. Some small businesses are small because the owners want to stay small. These owners know that bigger is not always better. Some small businesses are small because the owners think small. As a small business owner, I use that truth to challenge me to think bigger.

I'll leave you with some final questions to ponder: As your company has grown, how have you purposely changed your role? Are you hiring doers who can become managers and managers who can become leaders? How have you embraced more and better software to make your employees more efficient and effective in their work? 📧

Companies with fewer than 500 employees

Annual Revenue		Number
From	To	
\$43,600,000	\$87,300,000	11
\$17,500,000	\$43,600,000	94
\$8,700,000	\$17,500,000	310
\$3,100,000	\$8,700,000	1,803
\$1,300,000	\$3,100,000	4,575
\$900,000	\$1,300,000	3,654
\$500,000	\$900,000	6,272
\$300,000	\$500,000	10,397
\$100,000	\$300,000	17,922
\$-	\$100,000	11,866
		56,904



BY KEN THOMAS

The author is principal of Envisor Consulting. Reach him at kenthomas@envisorco.com.

3 keys to success in commercial maintenance sales

If you want to be successful in winning commercial maintenance market share, you need to up your sales game. So, what are the keys to success in commercial maintenance selling? Let me suggest three tips for successful business-to-business (B2B) selling, whether you are an owner, sales manager or sales professional.

1 Hire the right person.

Let's face it: Not everyone is cut out for B2B sales. We all have an idea of what a salesperson looks and acts like: outgoing, friendly, energetic. Those are great characteristics to have in sales; however, a great personality alone will not lead to increased sales. The truth is there are a lot of nice people who just don't have the killer instinct to ask for the sale. Top salespeople typically fit into the hunter or results-oriented profile.

So, how do you know before you hire someone if he or she fits the mold? Over time, we have come to depend on assessment surveys such as the DiSC assessment and Predictive Index to help us identify people with true sales personalities. Personality profiles offer an objective overview of a person's strengths and weaknesses. Business development is a long game. It may be six months to a year before you realize that your business developer will not make it. Making the wrong hire is not only expensive but may set your sales efforts back a full year.

2 Develop a strategic sales plan.

Any great success starts with planning. In commercial maintenance sales, a great plan starts with a breakdown of key targets, including:

- Properties;
- Management companies;
- Market segments; and
- Geography.

Properties come in all shapes and sizes. To maximize your return on people and assets, focus on properties that will support at least half a day's worth of "green" work during the growing season. If you are in a snow market, layer in hard surfaces such as roads, sidewalks and parking for additional "white" opportunities. Shy away from smaller sites such as banks, convenience stores and sites with small green footprints where mobilization costs can eat up your day and your profits.

In each market, there are top property **management companies** that control a portfolio of desirable accounts. Identify these companies and build an organizational chart that includes the properties and property managers associated with them. Develop a working plan to get to know the decision-makers within each company. Consider offering to sponsor a luncheon where you and your team can introduce your company and offer insights and training to your target prospects.

Not all commercial properties are created equal. Properties can be broken down into **market segments** or verticals. Traditional market segments include commercial, retail, multifamily, hospitality, industrial, municipal, institutional and homeowner associations/property owner associations. Each market segment has its nuances, including how they are managed, the value they place on landscaping and what they expect from a landscape service provider.

Determine which market segments are best for your company and be laser-focused on identifying top targets and offering landscape solutions that meet their specific goals.

Take some time to break your market area into **geographic** sections. Within each section, develop a canvassing plan to identify potential targets. Plan your prospecting time in key areas until they are fully prospected. Sell into targeted areas to develop route density.

3 Follow the sales process.

Hope is not a strategy! At Envisor, we believe that all commercial sales follow a seven-step process from target to close:

1. Develop your target list.
2. Identify and connect with your prospect or decision-maker.
3. Quantify their ability to buy: Are they the decision-maker? Are they ready to make a change?
4. Develop a needs analysis: What are the landscape challenges, and how can you solve them?
5. Present a customized proposal to address their needs.
6. Negotiate based on value and strategy.
7. Close the deal.

By understanding and following the sales process with each opportunity, successful business developers put themselves in a position to win well before getting to the closing table.

Now that you know the keys to successful commercial maintenance sales success, you are ready to win your share of this incredibly satisfying piece of the landscape industry. Now, get out and sell something! 📞

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STRETCH ONE, STRETCH ALL

How one company brought in a physical therapy firm to teach employees the importance of preventive stretching

BY SARAH WEBB | LM MANAGING EDITOR

When Rick Longnecker, owner of Buds & Blades in East Olympia, Wash., threw out his back, he sought out Penrose & Associates Physical Therapy in Olympia to help him recover.

Buds & Blades has about 50 employees and provides 90 percent maintenance and 10 percent irrigation and enhancement services to an 85 percent commercial and 15 percent residential clientele.

As Longnecker went through his sessions, a thought began to form: Many of the injuries his employees endure could be prevented by implementing simple stretching techniques.

"A lot of the injuries were strains and sprains that could've been avoided," Longnecker says. "We knew we should probably do stretching, but in order for the guys to take it seriously, it works best if we have someone else teach us first."

So, in February 2020, the company paid employees their regular hourly wage to attend a two-hour session at Penrose about what stretches employees should do before work. A Penrose employee who speaks Spanish translated the information for employees who are native Spanish speakers.

Penrose then followed up a few weeks later to watch how Buds & Blades employees performed work at a job site. From there, the physical therapy firm made a few additional recommendations on best form and tools to use when performing work.

"The important thing is the therapist had us doing all our muscle groups, which is good so we're not just focusing on the back, but also on the arms and legs," he says. "We've had a couple stretches that we do for each one."

At \$500 for the session and with fewer preventable injuries over the past couple years, Longnecker says he plans to repeat the training every couple of years.


"I think guys are more conscientious about when they're lifting," Longnecker says. "It's also good in the morning because it gets us all circled up together before we head out for the day." 



PHOTO: FRESHSPASH/E+/GETTY IMAGES

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RESOURCES

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We're always looking for great reader projects to feature — including maintenance, hardscape and irrigation jobs. That's why we're asking you to send us some information and photos of the project your company is most proud of, and you may be featured in an upcoming Water World, Big One or Hardscape Solutions story. Email your thoughts and high-resolution photos to LM Editor Christina Herrick at cherrick@northcoastmedia.net.



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BY MARTY GRUNDER

The author is president and CEO of Grunder Landscaping Co. and The Grow Group, based in Dayton, Ohio. Reach him at marty@growgroupinc.com.



Is your business set up to serve your ideal client?

My company, Grunder Landscaping Co., began by serving a specific ideal client: homeowners whose properties were within walking distance of my home. I was 14, and until I got my driver's license, I was limited to serving the little stretch of Wilmington-Dayton Road I grew up on.

Even in those early days, my company was set up to serve our ideal client: We had a tractor mower to quickly manage the large lot sizes on our street, a push mower I bought at a garage sale so my brother and I could work at the same time and a phone answering service (my mom) who knew our clients well and was always neighborly.

As the company grew, and I got my driver's license, our ideal clients expanded, and our company has greatly adapted to better serve them. I learned how to do this from watching many others in our industry successfully do it, and it's something I always admire when I see a company that so clearly understands its ideal customer and wraps all its processes, company culture and truck and equipment setups around that.

One company that does this particularly well is Ruppert Landscape. A giant in the commercial space, Ruppert has been successful by being keenly aware of who its ideal clients are and how to best serve them.

IN SYSTEMS

Ruppert does an incredible job of managing large projects, both for construction and maintenance. For

“Knowing who your ideal clients and team members are and eliminating distractions are keys to a successful organization.”

years, Ruppert maintained Six Flags America's 130 acres, which includes an irrigation system with 46 hydro-zones, 38 acres of turf and thousands of annuals, perennials, trees and containers. Team members must do maintenance work without causing disruptions for park visitors, and they also go through additional training to work in the dangerous zones under and around rides. To best serve this client, Ruppert needed extensive systems in place to train its team and ensure it is creating beautiful spaces for park guests while also operating safely.

IN THE PEOPLE RUPPERT HIRES

The positive company culture at Ruppert is well known in the industry, and the work the company does to create a place where people want to work is impressive. Ruppert understands that its people are its most valuable asset and that the team members doing the work are why clients come back year after year. Ruppert's leaders make sure to show their appreciation for team members through events, internal advancement opportunities and ongoing training to help team members develop their skills.

IN THE TRUCKS AND EQUIPMENT USED

Ruppert's trucks and equipment are designed and purchased to make the team's work easier and to

save the team time while on job sites. Ruppert equips team members well so they can be efficient on the job.

All around, it's clear that Ruppert Landscape greatly values the people who make the business successful: both clients and team members. It's been a key to its success in growing to a \$213 million-plus operation, and it'll no doubt be key to its future success. Everything done is intentional, and I've found what separates good companies from great companies is exactly the intentionality shown so well. Knowing who your ideal clients and team members are and eliminating distractions are keys to a successful organization. 📍

I'm looking forward to going behind the scenes and learning directly from CEO Craig Ruppert, President Phil Key and the rest of the Ruppert team when we visit for the NALP Field Trip: Frank & Marty's Excellent Adventure on Sept. 1-2. If you're interested in joining us, you can sign up online: <https://www.growgroupinc.com/nalp-field-trip>.

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The advertisement features a dramatic landscape with a large lighthouse on the right, shaped like a jug. The lighthouse has red and white horizontal stripes and the word "COASTAL" in large white letters on its red base, with "HERBICIDE" in smaller letters below. A flag at the top reads "EAST COAST". In the background, a smaller version of the lighthouse is visible on a distant shore. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, with bright sunlight breaking through in several places, creating rays of light. Several birds are flying in the sky. The foreground shows a lush green golf course with a winding path and a small house. The overall mood is one of power and protection.

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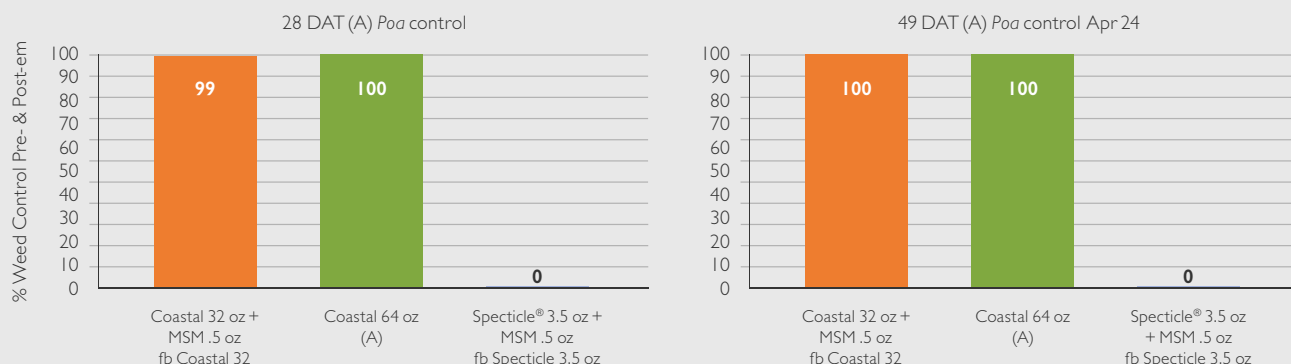
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The trials also evaluated the Coastal programs for turf tolerances in the warm-season transition zone — sequential versus the full 64 oz. program — in addition to testing the efficacy between the two programs, especially on *Poa annua*.

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