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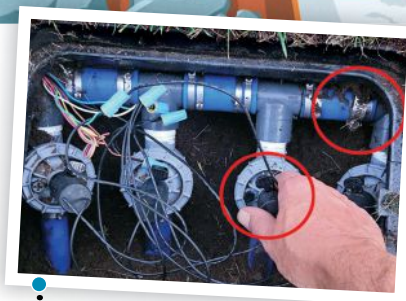
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Are you looking for new ways to help your business save time and money? Flip to **page 45** for our **Profitable Products** and get the inside scoop on more than 20 products that can help make your operation more efficient. Be sure to check out these products and more at the 2024 Equip Exposition.



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SCOTT HOLLISTER
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Strength in numbers

When it comes to household matters, I've never considered myself to be particularly handy. I'm not a complete disaster, mind you.

I've installed a few ceiling fans, done some basic plumbing work, even built a wall of wooden storage shelves in my basement that have stood the test of time. But if you're looking for someone who is going to eagerly dive into a kitchen remodel or try to rewire a bedroom, I'm not your guy.

On the occasions when I have tried something a little more adventurous, I've leaned heavily into the world of crowdsourcing. When I replaced the alternator on my daughter's 2001 Toyota Highlander, for example, I bugged the heck out of a few buddies who do know their way around cars with a few YouTube videos thrown in for good measure. And wouldn't you know it ... that new alternator worked like a charm until that 20-plus-year-old Highlander finally went to that great car lot in the sky.

My faith in the collective and the power of shared knowledge has extended into my professional life and the pages of the magazines I've managed. During my years in the golf course management business (the statute of limitations says I can keep mentioning that for a few more months), I always marveled at how willing superintendents were to share what they knew and what they had learned with their colleagues. I'd see it on social media and at big industry events, and I tried to infuse that same ethos into the pages of my old

“My faith in the collective and the power of shared knowledge has extended into my professional life and the pages of the magazines I've managed.”

magazine by using as many superintendents as authors as I could.

So you can imagine how pumped I was when I started with *Landscape Management* and learned this industry operated with a similar philosophy. It was clear that just like in the golf maintenance world, sharing was caring in landscaping and lawn care.

I've seen folks sharing war stories and tips and tricks at events I've been lucky enough to attend, such as Jeffrey Scott's Summer Growth Summit and Aspire Software's Ignite 2024 event. I've learned about the popularity and value that peer groups can deliver. There are also countless educational and networking opportunities at the industry's big events, including Equip Exposition, which we feature yet again in this issue of *LM*.

I was equally fired up when I discovered my new colleagues here were way ahead of me in following a game plan that leaned heavily upon landscape and lawn care practitioners to guide and participate in the content you find here every month. That's certainly not a revolutionary approach to plotting an editorial course for a magazine such as *LM*, but it's an important one

if your goal is to produce the most relevant, informative magazine that you can every month, so I was psyched that my new colleagues here had the same passion for that approach as I did.

That approach manifests itself every month in popular features such as our Recommender, where we turn to the professionals to tell us about the tools that are helping them get the job done every day. It could be a new feature on a popular line of mowers, an improved fertilizer to hit the market or a technological advance in a compact excavator. This month, for example, we dive into the world of water and share end-user feedback on drip irrigation and its future in the industry.

You'll also see that approach in the cover stories and big features that will dominate future issues. For December *LM*, we're asking for your help in sharing some of your favorite products from 2024 for our Pro's Toolbox feature (you can send those my way at shollister@northcoastmedia.net). And we're hoping you'll take part in a short survey that will hit your inboxes soon for the magazine's annual report on the state of the industry that you'll read about in our January edition.

Just like I rely on others to ensure occasional small victories in the world of car repair and home improvement, we hope you'll continue to rely on *LM* and the professionals we feature in these pages to help your business get the job done better, faster and more profitably. 📧

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EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD



What tips do you have for sharing what you learned at a trade show with your entire team?

“Share the many pictures that you took at the show and any notes and handouts that the speakers give out. Explain why the new equipment that you saw demonstrated will increase your profits and productivity.”



Landscape Professionals

Richard Bare

Arbor-Nomics Turf
Norcross, Ga.

Troy Clogg

Troy Clogg Landscape Associates
Wixom, Mich.

Pam Dooley

Plants Creative Landscapes
Decatur, Ga.

Paul Fraynd

Sun Valley Landscaping
Omaha, Neb.

Mike Haynes

The Loving Companies
Charlotte, N.C.

Luke Henry

ProScape Lawn &
Landscaping Services
Marion, Ohio

Chris Joyce

Joyce Landscaping
Cape Cod, Mass.

Aaron Katerberg

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Grand Rapids, Mich.

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& Garden Center
Southington, Conn.

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Winchel Irrigation
Grandville, Mich.

Industry Consultants

Neal Glatt

Grow the Bench
Boston, Mass.

Marty Grunder

The Grow Group
Dayton, Ohio

Phil Harwood

Tamarisk Business Advisors
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Jeffrey Scott

Jeffrey Scott Consulting
New Orleans, La.



“Start before the show and gather business challenges or ideas your team would like to learn about. I like to have one or two questions I ask people at the trade shows I attend. When I come back with answers and opinions on the topics we discussed previously, it is much more welcome and pertinent to them.”



“Frame your presentation as a brainstorming session and invite feedback on what you learned. This will help team members be open rather than threatened. Listen to their thoughts, even if they are against your ‘new big idea.’”

“Meet before the event and discuss what you want to look for when you’re there. See which sessions would help your team improve, and make sure at least one member of your team is taking notes. Have those who attend present their takeaways to the team the week after. This is a great way to help everyone learn and, maybe more importantly, to develop leaders within your company.”



MORE ONLINE

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



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LM GALLERY

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

1 Reunited During Ignite 2024 — Aspire Software's user conference in Orlando — *Landscape Management* Group Publisher Bill Roddy (left) reconnected with an old friend, Yi Wei with Southern Botanical. The two first met at Ignite 2023 in Las Vegas.

2 Meeting of the minds Following a media luncheon on the first day of Ignite 2024, *LM* Editor-in-Chief Scott Hollister (far left) and Roddy (second from right) spent some quality time with some of Aspires' senior leaders, including (from left) Brian Brinkworth, senior director, product management; Dan Blake, chief technology & strategy officer, and Mark Tipton, co-founder and CEO.

3 Liftoff at Ignite Hollister spent some time with Tipton and his wife, Amy, during the event's Welcome Reception.

4 Singin' the Blues Roddy and Megan Broeckling, Aspire's senior events specialist, during the Ignite the Night party at the House of Blues at Disney Springs.

5 Elevating in Orlando The *LM* team at Ignite 2024 caught up with some folks they'll see plenty of in November at the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Elevate 2024 event. Here's Hollister with Britt Wood, NALP's CEO, and Allegra Bartscherer, the association's senior director, membership.





6 Selfie with Seth *LM* Editorial Director Seth Jones seized another opportunity for a massive selfie, this time during a packed room at the 2024 Summer Growth Summit in Overland Park, Kan., with Hollister (center) and event host Jeffrey Scott — an *LM* columnist.

7 A couple of industry ambassadors Longtime friend of *LM* Chris Senske, acquisitions ambassador, Senske Services, and Roddy catch up at the Summer Growth Summit.

8 Like father, like sons Todd's Service's (Hamburg, Mi.) Owner Kurt LaButte (third from left) with his sons — and future co-owners — Keegan, Mikal and Austin.

9 The nicest man in the industry The *LM* team and Jeffrey Scott had to get a photo with the host company's president — and nicest man in the industry — Larry Ryan of Ryan Lawn & Tree (center.)

10 The platinum sponsor CEO and founder of LMN Mark

Bradley (center) with Jones and Scott. LMN served as the platinum sponsor of the Summer Growth Summit, while *LM* was able to afford the title of exclusive media partner. Hey, we'll take it!

11 That's a wrap! Count on friends Tommy Thornton, president of Southern Eco Scapes, Macon, Ga., and Jones to shut down the bar at any industry event — this time the 2024 Summer Growth Summit. Until next time!

Magic moments light up Ignite 2024

BY SCOTT HOLLISTER | LM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

For the attendees at Ignite 2024 — the annual user conference organized by Aspire Software and FieldRoutes — who experienced one of the packed educational sessions, wandered through the exhibits on the expo floor or caught the main-stage presentations and keynote addresses, the event's modest origins probably wouldn't compute at all.

But Aspire's co-founder and CEO Mark Tipton swears there were indeed humble beginnings to an event that now attracts thousands of customers in the landscaping, lawn care and pest control industries to sprawling spots like this year's host, the Orlando World Center Marriott.

"In the first few years of Aspire's life, we would do a half-day session at GIE (now Equip Expo)," Tipton says. "We'd try to have as many customers as we could get there since we figured they



Justin White (right), the CEO of K&D Landscaping, discussed the role of technology in his company's growth during an educational session at Ignite 2024. He was joined by Aspire's Maggie Wymore.



A panel discussion on autonomous mowing at Ignite 2024 featured (from left) Dan Blake with Aspire, Todd Reinhart with Reinhart Landscaping, Charles Brian Quinn with Greenzie and Clayton McLagan with Husqvarna.

were already going to be there anyway. And it was mainly just open discussions — learning what was working, what wasn't and where we could improve."

SHOWTIME STANDOUTS

This year's version of Ignite had plenty of big moments. On the main stage, the kickoff presentation hosted by Jon Gohl, Aspire's director of customer experience, had a late-night talk show vibe, with "guests" that included Tipton and landscape pros such as Shandra Brannon, the chief operating officer from Heritage Landcare in Gilbert, S.C. and Britt Wood, CEO of the National Association of Landscape Professionals.

A pair of product roadmap sessions also attracted big crowds as developers showed off the latest enhancements to the Aspire and FieldRoutes platforms and what those teams will be working on in the future.

Individual educational sessions allowed attendees to explore various software features offered by Aspire

and FieldRoutes, broken down into industry-specific sessions.

For example, Justin White, CEO of K&D Landscaping in Watsonville, Calif., explored the vision that helped his company grow from \$1 million in revenues to over \$18 million in just a few years in his presentation.

To drive home his point on the importance of vision and a shared purpose in pursuing business success, White pointed to Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes.

"You all know what his goal is at the start of every season ... the Super Bowl," White said. "None of us play in the NFL or work for a professional sports franchise, but we all know what Patrick Mahomes' goal is at the start of every season. So, the questions you need to answer for your company are, 'What is your Super Bowl?' and 'Does the rest of your team know what that No. 1 goal is?' When that vision is aligned, good things can really start happening."

To read a full recap of Ignite 2024, visit LandscapeManagement.net.

Grunder Landscaping expands to Cincinnati with new facility

BY NATHAN MADER | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Grunder Landscaping Co., based in Miamisburg, Ohio, has strengthened its outreach in the Cincinnati market with a new 10,000-square-foot facility in Loveland.

Renovations and operations in the facility started Sept. 16. Seth Pflum, president and COO of Grunder Landscaping (GLC), says the team will slowly grow into their new location as renovations are completed through November.

Pflum says GLC strategically identified expanding into the Cincinnati market roughly four years ago to keep up with growth projections. Since then, the company has acquired residential, commercial and municipal contracts in the area.

"We also believe in our slogan, 'where service is always in season' — service to our clients, service to our team and service to our community," Pflum says. "Putting roots down in place, such as the city of


Loveland — which has been great to work with — it shows a commitment to the region and the area as well."

Grunder Landscaping already had teams traveling from Miamisburg to Cincinnati three to four days per week, so this new facility can allow for more permanent access through transfers, company promotions and new jobs created in the Loveland area.

"We have a great team, and we have a team that wants to grow, a team that wants more responsibility. And to do this, we have to be an organization that goes after growth," Pflum says. "We have to be creating new positions, and we'll see our team members grow into new positions, which is a big step toward that."



Pflum (right) and Marty Grunder (left) say they're excited to have more solid footing in Cincinnati to better showcase the services they offer in the area.

Looking forward, Pflum says the goal is to have 80 people operating out of the new facility within the next five years. Plus, while Loveland and Cincinnati remain top priorities, Pflum says future expansion plans are in the works. 

Equip Expo adds Meecha as show director

Chris Meecha, previously general manager of Fern Expo in Louisville, Ky., is the new show director of Equip Exposition, the international landscape, outdoor living and equipment exposition. Meecha joins the show three years into its rebranding and continued expansion under the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI)'s full ownership and management.

"Chris is well known in the show management world as a leader and innovator and will help take Equip to the next level," said Kris Kiser, president and CEO of OPEI. "We're building a world-class event, and it was the perfect time to have him join the team three years into Equip's rebranding."

Meecha spent 14 years at Fern, one of the country's leading trade show and exposition service providers. He served as general manager of the firm's Louisville office, one of its principal locations. He brings 30 years of trade show industry experience and was a show director before joining Fern.

DOL recovers \$103K in back wages for Texas landscapers

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) recovered \$103,665 in back wages for 38 workers employed by a Southlake, Texas, landscaping company that denied overtime pay after misclassifying them as independent contractors.

The department's Wage and Hour Division determined J.P. Above & Beyond Landscaping's violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act included not keeping accurate records and failing to pay overtime at time and one-half an employee's rate of pay for hours over 40 in a work week.

"Misclassifying employees as independent contractors is a serious problem that deprives workers of their hard-earned wages, benefits and protections," said Wage and Hour Division district director Jesus Valdez in Dallas. "J.P. Above & Beyond Landscaping has learned there are costly consequences for their violations. We encourage all employers to use our online tools or contact us to better understand laws governing their pay practices."



And... **THEY'RE OFF!**

The post positions are set. The exciting new thoroughbreds and the riders who will guide them are ready to race. And when the fanfare plays and the starting gates swing open on the 2024 Equip Exposition Oct. 15-18, the most exciting four days in the landscape industry will be off and running.

That all might be stretching the metaphor just a bit, but it does seem appropriate considering the biggest gathering in the landscape and lawn care industry takes place in the shadow of Churchill Downs, the storied venue of the biggest event in horse racing. Heck, the two are practically joined at the hip, at least this year — Equip Expo's Welcome Reception takes place at Churchill Downs on Tuesday, Oct. 15.

Once the gates swing open for the indoor and outdoor exhibition areas, the focus will shift to the latest and greatest equipment available to landscapers and lawn care operators. From trusted companies and products that are staples in the industry to the up-and-comers and cutting-edge technology that is moving the industry forward, Equip Expo will have something for everyone.

That's in addition to the countless live demos, world-class education and networking opportunities that will also be part of this year's events in Louisville, Ky., all of which combine to make the event a must-attend for professionals from around the country.

To help prepare racers ... er, attendees for some of the equipment that will be on display in Louisville, *LM* reached out to exhibitors to learn about the "showstoppers" they'll be showing off at Equip Expo. There are mowers, utility vehicles, handheld equipment, software and products for your team to learn about, so settle in and get yourself ready for the Run for the (landscape industry's) Roses!

This year's Equip Expo Showstoppers are ready for the stretch run. Here's our roundup of the products to see on the trade show floor and outdoor exhibition area

John Deere

Deere.com

Indoor Booth No. 1110

Outdoor Booth No. 7834D

The new John Deere Z900 Electronic Fuel Injection (EFI) zero-turn mowers, including the Z955M/R, Z965M/R, Z975M and Z985R models, offer smoother operation as the fuel injection system and ignition work together to maintain performance. These new models boast various efficiency-boosting features, including electronic fuel-sending units, which display the mower's fuel level. Additionally, the digital display showcases vehicle hours, engine speed and battery state, as well as indicators for power take-off, operator presence control, oil pressure and the parking brake.



Takeuchi

Takeuchi-US.com

Indoor Booth No. 11146

Outdoor Booth No. 7734

Takeuchi's new TCR50-2 crawler dumper can carry heavy loads over unstable or rough terrain, even in confined spaces, reducing the time and labor required for landscaping tasks. Weighing 14,440 lbs. with a 118-horsepower engine, the TCR50-2 offers a 65-degree dumping angle and 8,157 lbs. maximum loading weight. It allows operators to carry up to 2.7 cu. yds. of material while rotating and dumping it in a single cycle. The TCR50-2 can also access areas that larger, heavier equipment cannot reach, such as steep inclines, dense vegetation or areas with limited access, allowing landscapers to work on challenging projects without compromising efficiency.

HYgreen Tool

HYgreenTool.com

Indoor Booth No. 42227

The GoMow is a robotic lawn mower that uses virtual boundary technology.

The automatic, solar-powered lawn mower is eco-friendly, has RTK (Real-time Kinematic) positioning GPS and has a GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite Systems) antenna. Available for pre-purchase via its crowdfunding site, GoMow will be ready for sale nationwide in early February 2025 via the company's website. Other product features include an adjustable cutting height, a large battery capacity that can mow a lawn the size of three basketball courts on a single charge, a self-developed app for ease of use and unique floating bumpers and sensors to ensure safety around children and pets.



Develon na.Develon-ce.com/en

Indoor Booth No. 42841

Outdoor Booth No. 6360D

The DTL35 compact track loader will be among the products Develon will display during its first appearance as an exhibitor at Equip Expo. Introduced earlier this year, the DTL35 is a large-frame compact track loader with 115.3 horsepower and a rated operating capacity of 3,807 lbs. An around-view monitor (AVM) camera system that provides up to 270 degrees of visibility for enhanced operator productivity and safety is available as an option for the DTL35. In Develon's indoor booth, the DTL35 will be fitted with a 78-inch brush cutter attachment, while the unit available for demos in the outdoor area will be paired with a bucket attachment. The company will also display a trio of mini excavators in Louisville — the zero tail swing DX35Z-7, the conventional tail swing DX42-7 and the reduced tail swing DX62R-7.



Blue Thumb ShopBlueThumb.com

Indoor Booth No. 23010

The Blue Thumb fountain kit is uniquely designed to create an eye-catching water feature that the company says will captivate onlookers as water gracefully glides over the acrylic surface of a sphere, creating an enchanting effect where the world appears upside down. This fountain kit offers landscapers the opportunity to create a distinctive focal point with high client appeal that is versatile, low maintenance and can increase property values.

Arborjet | Ecogel Arborjet.com

Indoor Booth No. 264

Redefining battery-powered trunk injection technology, the Inteli-jet is a rechargeable micro-injection system with an eight-hour battery life and a durable carbon-fiber body weighing less than two pounds. Smart injection technology and patented pulse modes work with the tree to enhance uptake speeds, and the device displays injection pressure, milliliters applied and the dose count directly on the screen. By optimizing uptake based on each tree's condition, tracking the progress of treatments on screen and holding its charge throughout the day, the company says Inteli-jet will save considerable time and labor.



Kioti Kioti.com

Indoor Booth No. 3212

Outdoor Booth No. 7528

Kioti says the TL750 compact track loader leverages years of experience to deliver unparalleled power and performance without sacrificing comfort. Featuring a 74-horsepower engine, the TL750's ergonomic design, including a wide cabin and roll-up-style door, enhances operator comfort, while the durable build

ensures reliability in any conditions. Built to lift, push and power through rigorous demands, the loader boasts an impressive 10.8-foot height-to-hinge pin and vertical lift path. Among the top of the class in lift height, operators can easily dump materials into trucks and high-sided hoppers. Hydraulic pilot joystick controls offer ultimate maneuverability, delivering superior "featherability" and finite control. As a result, the machine feels like an extension of the operator, enabling efficient, precise work — even in tight spaces or during complex tasks.



Bobcat Bobcat.com/na/en

Indoor Booth No. 3052

Outdoor Booth No. 7506D and 7700D

What Bobcat says is the world's first all-electric compact track loader, the T7X will be the centerpiece of the company's display at Equip Expo. Now commercially available at select Bobcat dealers and available to rent through specific Sunbelt Rental locations, the T7X was featured at prior trade shows, but this will be the first time attendees can operate the loader as part of Bobcat's exhibit. Bobcat will also display its new line of utility tractors, which debuted in June, including the UT6573. The utility tractors feature 12x12 power shuttle transmissions, delivering smooth shifting without stepping on a clutch pedal. Powered by turbocharged, Tier 4 diesel engines, these tractors offer robust performance, low-end torque and an efficient fuel system. Bobcat's



Continued on page 16

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turf renovation equipment — including aerators, sod cutters, dethatchers and overseeders — which joined the company's product offerings earlier this year following a brand transition from Ryan, the ZT5000 zero-turn mower and the AT450 articulating tractor will also be a part of the company's display in Louisville.



Lawnline Marketing

Lawnline.marketing

Indoor Booth No. 21080

Lawnline's recent partnership with SiteOne Landscape Supply will be front and center at the company's booth at Equip Expo. As a part of this partnership, all SiteOne Partner Members now receive an exclusive 10-percent discount on Lawnline Marketing's services for one year. Members also receive access to a library of free resources that include educational articles, insights, benchmarking and templates to maximize DIY marketing efforts. Additionally, SiteOne and Lawnline now produce and distribute new educational content about marketing weekly to address the challenge of poor information online for those handling their own marketing. This includes insights into Lawnline's data, the most effective strategies, how-tos and pre-built templates.

Exmark

Exmark.com

Indoor Booth No. 7080

Outdoor Booth No. 7444

To mark the 30th anniversary of Exmark's Lazer Z commercial zero-turn mower, the company is unveiling not one, but three redesigned



Lazer Z models. With new features, refinements and options, the company says the new Lazer Z models will set the new standard for cut quality, productivity and durability for commercial zero-turn mowers. The new Lazer Z line gives contractors a wide range of options to build the perfect mower — or mowers — for their operation. Designed for zero-in-season maintenance, the new Lazer Z models give landscape professionals the right tool to finish every job quickly and efficiently all season long.

Mulch Mate

MulchMateUSA.com

Indoor Booth No. 1088

Outdoor Booth No. 5231

Mulch Mate will unveil the all-new DS2000 at Equip Expo, which the company says is the industry's leading bulk material dispenser. Mulch Mate's low-maintenance products let teams lay mulch, rock, sand, compost and dirt faster and safer, allowing companies to double their output while keeping or reducing labor costs and liability. The DS2000s are also all-electric, meaning they are safe for the environment. Their quiet operation allows teams to work in a more enjoyable environment and reduces noise disruptions for property owners.

Backslope

Backslopeinc.com

Indoor Booth No. 42300

Outdoor Booth No. 5111

Backslope produces four models of stand-on spreaders/sprayers designed to be stable on hills and slopes. All the company's machines are commercial grade with 100-percent stainless steel frames, Honda engines and heavy-duty drive systems. Backslope says its machines feature simple and intuitive controls,



making the machine less complex and more reliable in the field, unlike many spreaders/sprayers on the market today which have very complex controls for spreading and spraying.

Foamstream

WeedingTech.com

Indoor Booth No. 22082

Foamstream from Weedingtech is an eco-friendly weeding solution that utilizes a biodegradable foam to effectively manage weeds without using harmful chemicals, making it a sustainable choice for ground-keeping. The company says Foamstream addresses several challenges faced by landscapers and ground-keepers. It provides an environmentally friendly alternative to traditional chemical herbicides, reducing the ecological impact of weed management. Additionally, it offers a safe solution for use in public spaces, minimizing health risks to humans and animals. Foamstream's effectiveness in various weather conditions and on different surfaces ensures reliable weed control.



Brown Equipment Co.

BrownEquipment.net/mulch-mule

Indoor Booth No. 29078

Brown Equipment Co. will showcase the Mulch Mule, which it says is the ultimate solution for efficient and precise mulch delivery. The machine features a powerful conveyor system that saves time and labor while ensuring consistent material application. Perfect for landscaping professionals, the Mulch Mule is designed to boost productivity and simplify large-scale projects. It solves the challenge of time-consuming manual mulch distribution and application by providing a streamlined, automated solution. It reduces labor costs and boosts efficiency, allowing landscapers to complete large projects faster with minimal effort, according to the company.

Pro Landscape Design Software

ProLandscape.com

Indoor Booth No. 10186

Pro Landscape+ is the ultimate landscape design software package, according to the company, combining cutting-edge photo imaging, intuitive and precise CAD, stunning 3D renderings and comprehensive, professional proposals — all in one seamless solution. The software is ideal for professionals looking to elevate their landscape design capabilities and wow clients with visually compelling presentations. PRO Landscape+ streamlines the design process for landscape professionals, allowing designers, contractors, architects and garden centers to quickly create polished, professional designs that clients can easily visualize. The company says it saves time, improves client communication and is now more affordable than ever, making high-quality design accessible for all levels of expertise.



LaunchPad

LaunchPad.bot

Indoor Booth No. 4015

LaunchPad Chat is designed to automate lead channels, allowing new or existing clients to receive high-quality customer service 24/7. LaunchPad Chat creates an AI agent for contractors, which can pick up the phone or talk to clients on their behalf.

Contractors can ensure clients never go to voicemail and can always get their questions answered. Business owners and their team can spend less time on the phone or answering emails and instead can focus on qualified leads and other strategic activities. As the software grows, businesses will be able to leverage the AI agent internally to answer questions about the business and assist the employees with their work.



Leaf Burrito

LeafBurrito.com

Indoor Booth No. 276

Leaf Burrito is a reusable, ergonomic, durable mesh yard bag with zippers and handles that start flat and zip closed. The company says these handmade bags eliminate expensive short-lived tarps and single-use bags, making them a more sustainable solution for landscapers. Leaf Burritos cut job times in half, and thanks to the ergonomic handles, it is much safer for workers. The bags can be custom branded, giving landscapers that professional and sustainable message to customers.

Heritage Landscape Supply Group

www.HeritageLandscapeSupply-Group.com/en

Indoor Booth No. 22063

Artimuss turf seed features Gravity PGS, a plant growth stimulator used on the seeds as a pretreatment to boost growth and development for faster spread, higher density and greener color. Because it's developed with cultivars using lateral spread technology, which improves strand density under stress, Artimuss is resistant to drought, heat, traffic and fungal diseases such as gray leaf spot and brown patch. The company says Artimuss is an excellent choice for those looking for a high-performing tall fescue variety that combines beauty and durability with some of the fastest germination of any turf seed on the market.



Case Construction Equipment

CaseCE.com

Indoor Booth No. 7216

Outdoor Booth No. 7546

The new Case SL27 is a 50-horsepower articulated loader that brings con-

struction-grade capabilities to jobs big and small. The compact size, articulated configuration and more than 70 available attachments give contractors a flexible, highly maneuverable machine for working in tight spaces like backyards or residential sites. With over three tons of straight tipping load, the company says the SL27 is powerful enough to take on all kinds of work but compact and nimble enough to get in and out of tight spaces and on and off the trailer easily. Features include a standard Z bar loader, an SSL-compatible attachment coupler and a standard 14-pin electrical auxiliary connector, giving contractors more flexibility to hook up big-time attachments and tackle more jobs.



SynkedUP

SynkedUP.com

Indoor Booth No. 20064

The SynkedUp app is designed to assist contractors with estimating and tracking jobs, which can be profit-killing tasks for many companies. The company says jobs can be priced correctly while automatically recovering overhead expenses in estimates. Overruns on labor and materials can be reduced by automatically job costing every job, which can position companies to hit profit goals more consistently.



Kress Commercial

Kress.com

Indoor Booth No. 1054

Outdoor Booth No. 7650

The new Kress Commercial Cyber-Tank Lite DC-DC battery charging system pairs the new CyberLite Charger with the CyberCapsule battery

Continued on page 18

PERFECTING
the Art of
WEED CONTROL

IYKYK



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SPECIALTY PRODUCTS

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And ...
**THEY'RE
OFF!**

Continued from page 17
to deliver unmatched flexibility and efficiency, giving landscapers rapid, on-the-go charging to ensure their tools are ready anytime, anywhere. The company says that the CyberTank Lite DC-DC allows professional landscapers to reap the benefits of the Kress Commercial CyberTank with the added advantage of increased portability due to the Cyber-Lite Charger's smaller size and weight. The CyberTank Lite DC-DC facilitates charging with the CyberLite Charger, which transfers power from the new 1.5kWh CyberCap-sule battery to 240Wh CyberPacks on the go. The charger weighs just over 25 lbs. and is about the size of a small backpack, meaning it is portable enough to go where it is needed most for fast, easy and mess-free recharging.



DeWitt DeWittCompany.com

Indoor Booth No. 27048

DeWitt's Contractor's Select Plus 2.5 landscape fabric is a spunbond fabric that is 50 percent stronger than Contractor's Select for under pavers and gravel. This tough and durable fabric allows air, water and nutrients to pass through and reduces the need for herbicide applications. Contractor's Select Plus 2.5 is available in grey and black.



Harrell's Harrells.com

Polygon controlled-release fertilizer uses a proprietary polymer coating to deliver consistent, predictable nutrient release for optimal plant growth. With Harrell's advanced coating and Polygraph technology for mapping nutrient release, lawn care operators get precise control over nutrient delivery, improving efficiency and results with every application. The company also says Polygon controlled-release fertilizers can help reduce environmental impacts, labor and disease potential and are not affected by moisture.

Earth & Turf Products EarthandTurf.com

Indoor Booth No. 480

Outdoor Booth No. 6368

With Earth & Turf Products' topdressers, operators carry a full load of sand or compost, up to 800 lbs., and apply from as little as 1/8 up to 1/2 inch for heavy leveling. According to the company, its small topdressers are designed for tight



areas and require extensive walking on open areas, while the model 410-SP brings a four-wheel drive quad-steer model that carries the operator along to save steps on large jobs.

Kubota

KubotaUSA.com

Indoor Booth No. 5084

Outdoor Booth No. 7400D

Kubota will showcase the ZD1611 at Equip Expo, which replaces the ZD1511 in the company's ZD Series of commercial zero-turn mowers. It features a

30.8-horsepower

Kubota Common Rail System (CRS)

diesel engine that the company says delivers exceptional levels of power, torque and reliable performance. Designed for commercial landscapers, the ZD1611 is available in three deck configurations — a 72-inch side-discharge mower and 60- and 72-inch rear-discharge mowers. The ZD1611 also features an air-ride suspension seat with adjustable reclining and lumbar support and a 12-volt power outlet conveniently placed in the cup holder that allows for the charging of electronic devices. Trailing is made easy with a tie-down point on the front axle to provide extra security when transporting the mower, Kubota says.



BOSS Snowplow

BOSSPlow.com

Indoor Booth No. 11212

According to BOSS Snowplow, the VBX+ spreader is packed with smart features that allow for precise material distribution and jobsite tracking. The VBX+ is designed to be a smart-connected spreader for BOSS's next phase of technology. The VBX+ from BOSS provides an intelligent solution to the



challenge of using too much material, with its advanced spreader technology putting the user in control.

Greene County Fertilizer Company

GreeneCountyFert.com

Indoor Booth No. 4004

N-Ext Air-8 PRO liquid aeration offers improved nutrient efficiency, greater water penetration and even more root mass for any fertility program, according to the company. Use as a stand-alone application or as an alternative to mechanical aeration. N-Ext Air-8 PRO is designed to loosen topsoil and encourage deeper rooting, allowing for greater root zone oxygenation. N-Ext Air-8 PRO is safe for use on all turf and soil types. The company says its products are flexible additions to any existing fertility program as a way to add biostimulants, fill in missing components, address existing problems or environmental conditions, reduce nitrogen inputs and improve overall results.



Hannay Reels

Hannay.com

Indoor Booth No. 3040

Hannay's Spray Non-Corrosive (SNC) Series reels are made primarily of 304-grade stainless steel. They are designed to accommodate single hoses with internal diameters from 3/8 to 5/8 inches. The reels are available with manual crank or electric rewind options. Additional features include 4-way roller guides and stacking kits for up to two reels made of 304-grade stainless steel. The stainless steel construction provides durability in corrosive environments. The SNC series can be used with various liquids, including water, pesticides and fertilizer mixtures.



ACE PEER GROUPS

LEADER SPOTLIGHT



JOSH SCHMIEDER

President - JOSH Landscape Co.

THEN

At 17, Josh Schmieder began his landscape business out of his parents' garage, mowing lawns before school. By 2011 his business was generating \$1-2 million in revenue, but Josh felt stuck. After meeting Marty Grunder, he joined ACE Peer Groups and began to unlock his business's true potential. One key challenge he tackled with his peer group was developing a strong company culture and core values while building sustainable financial processes.

NOW

Today, JOSH Landscape is a \$20 million company, growth Josh attributes to placing the right people in key roles. Peer connections and one-on-one coaching have honed his leadership skills and offered fresh growth insights. As they expand, JOSH focuses on adapting its values and processes to meet the demands of a more complex business.

Growth is about staying true to your values while adapting to new challenges.

JOSH SCHMIEDER

JOSH'S 3 STEPS TO SUCCESS:

1. **Back to Basics:** Laser in on the fundamentals that helped you grow
2. **Stay True:** Never stray from the core values that define your company
3. **Ensure Alignment:** Every process should reflect and reinforce the values at the heart of your business



McFARLINSTANFORD.COM

EQUIP EXPO 2024 NEW PRODUCT SHOWCASE

If you're in a race to learn more about the newest, most innovative landscaping and lawn care products, then the New Product Showcase at Equip Exposition 2024, Oct. 15-18 in Louisville, Ky., is for you.

The following companies will display their wares in the New Product Showcase area in the West Wing of the Kentucky Exposition Center. Check it out to take your company over the finish line!

Agri-Fab

ZT Electric Spreader
Indoor Booth No. 11184

Anderson Power Products

Six Pole Mini SPEC Pak
Indoor Booth No. 10008

Arborjet | Ecologel

Inteli-jet
Indoor Booth No. 264

Backslope

Pursuit 120 Spreader/
Sprayer
Indoor Booth No. 42300

Berlon Industries

Gravel Spoon
Indoor Booth No. 9218

Botaniworld/Soil Wand

Soil Wand Adjustable Ultra
Gardening Multi-Tool
Indoor Booth No. 26075

Bucket Bunker

Auger Lite-Mini
Indoor Booth No. 27075

Canycom USA

SC30EV
SC75EV
Indoor Booth No. 11170

Cube Tracker

Cube GPS Tracker
Indoor Booth No. 42129

DAE Systems

SM88 Subsoil Mulcher
Indoor Booth No. 42043

Felco

Felco 834
Wildhorn 40
Indoor Booth No. 4010

Geodnet

Ready Verde AI Autono-
mous Mower
Indoor Booth No. 9195

Great Circle Machinery

SuperHandy Gas Stump
Grinder
Indoor Booth No. 24098

Honda Power Sports & Products

Product to be introduced
at Equip Expo
Indoor Booth No. 3134

Hunter FX/Luminaire

Wireless Valve Link
Indoor Booth No. 26056

Isuzu Commercial Truck of America

FVR DeRate Snow Truck
Indoor Booth No. 5194

Jutland Truck Bodies

60-Series Service Body
Indoor Booth No. 42629

Kage Innovation

SnowStorm Blast
SnowDozer Wing
Grass Deflector
Indoor Booth No. 8172

KJ Ketterling Enterprises

Kmultifit-IR
Indoor Booth No. 26112

Konig

Mohawk Mowers
Indoor Booth No. 42243

Kress Commercial

60-volt 22N Handheld
Blower
60-volt 14-inch Top-Handle
Chainsaw
Four-port Extended
Charging Case
60-volt CyberLite Charger
Indoor Booth No. 1054

Lawn Crack

GroundKeeper
Indoor Booth No. 42143

LeafBoss

32-inch Sweep-n-Vac
Indoor Booth No. 9189

Linxup

Linxup Tool Tracking
Indoor Booth No. 23101

McLane Manufacturing

Stand Alone Dustpan
Indoor Booth No. 26069

New Peco

PTO Drive on Pro 22DFS
and PTO 3B
Indoor Booth No. 384

Norton Clipper

CTR1042L Tile Rail Saw
Indoor Booth No. 26082

Orec America

Stand-on Zero-Turn Track
Flail Mower
Indoor Booth No. 10061

Oregon Tool

TerraMax Trimmer
Indoor Booth No. 3164

OTR Engineered Solutions

Grass Master XT
Indoor Booth No. 9120

Performance Advantage Co.

Ten-pound Extinguisher/
SCBA Mount
Indoor Booth No. 369

Reach Right

Reach Right Rotator Collar
Indoor Booth No. 42636

Reemo Innovation

Mowrator S1 Lawn Mower
Indoor Booth No. 374

Samsara

Samsara Asset Tag
Indoor Booth No. 42238

Scepter

Powered Fueling Station
Indoor Booth No. 10030

Sno Power

V11
Indoor Booth No. 27062

Spectronics

LeafTracker Complete Kit
LeafTracker Mini Cordless
UV LED Lamp
Indoor Booth No. 29103

Staple Wasp

Staple Wasp Staple Gun
Indoor Booth No. 42107

Stihl

KMA 200 R Battery-
Powered Kombi System
BRA 600 Battery-Powered
Backpack Blower
Indoor Booth No. 5068

SVEA (HK) Limited

Sveaverkn Blix Robotic
Lawn Mower
Indoor Booth No. 42667

Takeuchi Manufacturing

TCR50-2 Crawler Dumper
Indoor Booth No. 11146

The Toro Co.

Dingo TX 1000 Turbo
Indoor Booth No. 7148

Tuxedo Distributor

iDEAL SC-2K-UTV-X
Indoor Booth No. 42216

Tufx-Fort Manufacturing

Eight Cubic Ft. Poly
Wheelbarrow
Indoor Booth No. 514

UV Skinz

UPF 50-Plus Performance
Sun Hoodie
UPF 50-Plus Neck & Face
Covering
UPF 50-Plus Sun Shade Hat
Indoor Booth No. 42207

Valley Industries

VIpower 56-volt DC Elec-
tric Motors
Indoor Booth No. 42645

Ventrac

Ventrac 45RC
Indoor Booth No. 3112

A WALK THROUGH HARDSCAPE HEAVEN

Co-located with Equip Expo, Hardscape North America will offer education, hands-on experiences and more

BY LM STAFF

After a record-breaking 2023, Hardscape North America and the Equip Exposition return to Louisville, Ky., from Oct. 15-18, with even more education and networking opportunities for contractors.

"We're building on the energy from last year to bring an even more incredible experience for attendees in 2024," says Bob Thomas, president and CEO of the Concrete Masonry & Hardscapes Association. "There's no other place where you can come together with so many of your hardscape and landscape peers to discuss business and have a blast while doing it."

Registration for HNA is included with registration to Equip Expo — and vice versa. To register, visit bit.ly/3Tyqjiw.

Hands-on education

Alongside Equip Expo's expansive outdoor demo space, HNA will feature live equipment and installation demos.

Exclusive to HNA, the Hardscape House is an outdoor pavilion that features hands-on testing and the Installer Championship, where teams from across North America race against the clock for cash and prizes. Defending champions Pavers by Porter from Reno, Nev., and 11 other teams will compete in the preliminary rounds on Oct. 17.

Like Equip Expo, which provides education classes and discussions

alongside *Landscape Management* (see more on page 22), HNA will offer several new educational opportunities for hardscape contractors at the 2024 show.

In addition to sessions on estimating, marketing and other business strategies, attendees can get hands-on experience with Patrick Murray and Kenneth Deemer of Local Roots Landscaping in Pittsburgh, Pa., who will lead six demos on installation techniques and best practices for attendees, including:

Wednesday, October 16

• Segmental Retaining Walls

In this hands-on session, attendees will learn essential techniques, including proper excavation, base preparation, block installation and coping.

• Paver Installations

Attendees will learn how to prep base, lay pavers, cut and fit and sand joints.

Thursday, October 17

• Modern Tools of the Trade

Attendees will get hands-on experience with the latest hardscape construction tools, equipment and technology.

• Lighting and Software

Attendees will participate in interactive sessions focused on integrating simple lighting solutions and software applications into hardscape design.

• Water and Fire Features

Attendees will learn the basics of design and installation of water and fire features with hands-on demonstrations.



Friday, October 18

• Outdoor Kitchens and Other Enhancements

The Local Roots team will build and install outdoor kitchens and other enhancements in an interactive session.

To access all six sessions from Local Roots, attendees can upgrade their registration for \$85, which includes all six sessions, or purchase a VIP Pass to attend the six demos, 15 education sessions, two workshops and a free industry session on lighting.

More to see

Along with educational offerings, HNA will feature a keynote from Kevin O'Connor, host of *This Old House*, a free concert from Trace Adkins, a welcome reception at Churchill Downs and more networking opportunities.

Other new features at HNA include:

- Expanded hours for the West Wing exhibits, including the Drone Zone and Cornhole Tournament. This area will open on Wednesday at 9 a.m.
- A new happy hour event at the expo center with music by The Crashers after the show floor closes on Wednesday.
- A Thursday evening Women's Leadership Reception 🍷



YEAR THREE, BIGGER THAN EVER

Landscape Management brings presenters and panelists for its largest slate of educational seminars yet

BY SETH JONES | LM EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Landscape Management is entering year three of its partnership with Equip Exposition with no signs of slowing down. This year, LM offers 15 classes — the most yet — to attendees of the conference in Louisville, Ky., Oct. 15-18. Topics of these seminars run across the board and include panels on mergers and acquisitions, hiring the best talent, company culture, what to know when considering selling your business and the value of strong branding.

For a complete list of all 15 classes offered by *Landscape Management*,

visit LandscapeManagement.net or EquipExposition.com. To sign up for the classes, first, register for Equip Exposition as an attendee and then peruse the various classes offered in their education tab.

Beyond LM's 15 classes, attendees can also sign up for classes taught in Spanish, classes hosted by Hard-scape North America, the Irrigation Association and the Pool and Hot Tub Alliance, among others.

As a further sneak peek at Equip Exposition 2024, here are three classes we're hosting for the first time.

Get your employees in the game

For the first time, *Landscape Management* is partnering with McFarlin Stanford to share their seminar **Gamify Your Company Culture: Competition Creates Engagement**. We first saw this class presented at Grow! 2024 in Des Moines, and we knew it would make a great addition to our seminars.

This class, presented by McFarlin Stanford's Jason New, founding principal, and Barrett Chow, executive coach, will show business owners a new way to motivate a younger generation: by 'gamifying' the job at hand. These 'minigames' at the workplace encourage employees to achieve goals by making work a game that can be won. Mediocre employees can become top performers while workplace turnover is lowered.

New says employees can also create and choose the minigames they want to play, ultimately building an experience that is uniquely enjoyable to your business and keeping people invested in showing up to work every day with a positive, helpful attitude.

"Through (this method) and through these opportunities, we as an organization will win, and we will be successful," New says.

The **Gamify Your Company Culture: Competition Creates Engagement** class will be held on Wednesday, Oct. 16, from noon to 1 p.m.



A DOUBLEHEADER FOR BEN AND KEN. Along with Start Clean, Finish Clean, Ken Thomas and Ben Gandy of Enviro Consulting will also host Keying in on Key Performance Indicators from 10:00-11:30 a.m. on Friday, Oct. 18.



YOUR CULTURE, YOUR COMPANY. One class not new to Equip Exposition is Your Company, Your Culture. *LM* has offered this class all three years, and it has sold out every year so far. Panelists in 2024 include Larry Ryan, president, Ryan Lawn & Tree (center, with company CFO Roy Heinbach and COO Phillip Fisher) along with Taylor Milliken, CEO, Milosi, Inc., and Justin White, CEO, K&D Landscaping. The panel discussion, moderated by *LM*'s Seth Jones, takes place from 12:30-2:00 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 16.

Are you tired of the chaos?

"We do anything for anybody" is not a strategy for success, says Ben Gandy of Envisor Consulting.

Nothing in a company should be done *without* a signature... *without* a Docusign...

But how do companies make this change? At Equip Exposition 2024, veteran industry consultants Ken Thomas and Gandy of Envisor Consulting will show you with their seminar, **Start Clean, Finish Clean.**

LM first saw this class presented at Envision 2024 in Chicago and wanted to add it to our Equip lineup of classes. Thomas and Gandy, longtime partners of the magazine, were happy to accept our invitation.

The key is to start clean, Thomas says. A stress-free project starts with a clean job package.

Much of the bewildering elements of the workplace are brought upon by the business itself not having a clear system for processing work. Ben and Ken, the driving forces from Envisor Consulting, outline the keys to mastering workflow within your organization.

If you're tired of the chaos — and aren't we all? — then sign up for **Start Clean, Finish Clean.** The class will be held from 12:30-2:00 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 17.

Turning good ideas into great realities

Join Judith Guido, a Green Industry Hall of Famer and thought leader, for a transformative session where she'll show attendees how to turn ideas into profitable business strategies that generate sustainable revenue and create differentiation while increasing your company's reputation, market-share and valuation.

As a landscape industry professional, this talk will equip you with easy-to-execute and practical tools to refine and validate your business ideas through a four-step process, ensuring you're investing time and resources in initiatives with the highest potential for success.

Whether you're looking to launch a new service or product, streamline operations or explore a growth strategy, the ROI for attending this session is clear:

- Increased revenue and profits
- Reduced risk
- Market differentiation
- Efficient decision-making
- Attract A+ talent

Walk away with actionable insights, confidence and the skills needed to lead your company through innovation and easy-to-execute experiments. This is an essential session for anyone looking to increase profitability, drive growth and create lasting value in the landscape industry. **Turning Good Ideas into Great Realities** will be presented from 2:30-3:30 on Thursday, Oct. 17. 



JUDITH GUIDO

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> DID YOU KNOW

Breaking down the PPE needs for LCOs

Experts say it's essential to understand what products you're working with before making an application **BY LM STAFF**

When applying herbicides, insecticides, fungicides or fertilizers, lawn care operators (LCOs) and technicians should consider apparel and personal protective equipment (PPE) a necessary part of the job.

Sam Steel, Ed.D., safety advisor with the National Association of Landscape Professionals, says PPE requirements change depending on the application. Steel offers some insights into proper PPE for turf and ornamental spray applications.

READ THE LABELS

Steel emphasizes the importance of applicators reading product labels. Under precautionary statements, all the information necessary for the proper application is on the label.

"We tell everyone that even if this person has used the chemical before, labels change," he says. "They need to know

what personal protective equipment is required for the product they're applying."

Look for signal words on product labels that describe short-term toxicity; words like "warning," "caution" or "danger" help LCOs understand the product's toxicity and can lower the risk of potential personal exposure.

WHAT TO WEAR

Tim Fernald, agronomic training manager for SiteOne, says the point of PPE is to minimize chemical exposures through all potential routes of entry into the body. These routes include inhalation, ingestion and skin and eye absorption.

LCOs and applicators must regularly inspect PPE for contamination, leaks, cracks and holes. Pay close attention to gloves and remind people to always wash their hands with soap and water after handling chemicals.

"The biggest mistake is not wearing PPE," says Fernald. "The applicator is

legally responsible for following all personal protective clothing and equipment guidelines listed on the chemical label."

Steel suggests LCOs and applicators wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, socks and chemical-resistant gloves when applying fungicides, pesticides and herbicides. Although it might sound obvious, he says applicators should avoid wearing sandals, flip-flops and cloth or canvas shoes.

"One day, I was looking out the window and saw my neighbor using a commercial applicator," says Steel. "This gentleman was in the front yard applying a product with a hose and off a tank on the back of his truck. While he did have gloves on, he had a short-sleeve T-shirt on. It is important to wear proper PPE when you're applying because most chemicals' primary route of entry is through the skin."

ADDED PROTECTION

Steel also suggests applicators wear chemical-resistant boots when working with toxic liquid products or for prolonged exposure. In addition, when mixing and loading liquid concentrates, especially highly toxic ones, LCOs should wear chemical-resistant aprons.

Applicators also can opt for chemical-resistant body suits when mixing or applying products for added protection. Depending on the toxicity of the product, applicators may need special eye protection, such as safety glasses, goggles or face shields.

Steel says respirators are also an essential piece of PPE. Even if the product doesn't require a respirator, he suggests applicators still consider protecting themselves from inhaling airborne chemicals or dust. LCOs with facial hair also need to remember respirator fit.

"When there are those that have a beard or mustache, it can create a higher level of awareness about how that can impact the type of respirator you are using and the protection you are getting," says Steel. 🧐

SAFETY FIRST

Prioritize safety by wearing proper PPE, including gloves and long sleeves, when applying lawn care chemicals.



TIPSHEET

Maximizing spray rig performance

Regular inspection, cleaning and calibration are essential for lawn care professionals to optimize spray equipment efficiency and prevent costly breakdowns and downtime **BY MIKE ZAWACKI | CONTRIBUTOR**

There's a popular saying among professionals that "proper care prevents wear and tear," and this adage is relevant when maintaining spray equipment in the landscape and lawn care industry.

PREVENT DEFENSE

An aggressive maintenance strategy is often the best approach for spray equip-

ment. As a lawn care pro who applies multiple rounds of liquid fertilizers and pesticides throughout a season, Pat O'Bryan has his crews inspect and recalibrate their equipment regularly.

"The biggest (preventive maintenance practice) for us is our weekly calibration checks and wear inspections," says O'Bryan, owner of Jamison Pest and Lawn in Cordova, Tenn. "As part of this

process, the supervisor spends time with each guy and his truck going through it together."



Pat O'Bryan

This process involves a five-gallon bucket and a stopwatch to determine gallons per minute. In addition, rigs are broken down, and every spray component is inspected for signs of potential failure, which are addressed immediately, while minimal wear is noted and addressed during rainy days, O'Bryan says.

"Addressing these issues immediately or on rainy days — even if they seem small — saves us a lot of hassle and headaches down the road," he says.

Continued on page 28



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TIPSHEET

Continued from page 27

KEEP IT CLEAN

Applying a coat of wax to new fiberglass spray tanks to protect them from the chemicals they carry is crucial, says Donny Pitts, general manager of Graham Spray Equipment in Douglasville, Ga.

“Any time you’re filling or mixing chemicals, there’s a risk of dripping on the outside of the tank, which can stain if not rinsed off immediately,” Pitts says. “Applying a coat of good car wax — about once a month — helps protect that exterior and is a best practice for keeping it clean.”

NOZZLES

Crews must bucket-check their spray nozzles, screens and strainers every

day before deploying to their routes. This task ensures each sprayer applies the correct rate of liquid and is the first line of defense against clogs in suction lines and strainers.

“It saves the life of your spray rig and prevents your crews from returning to the shop (in the middle of the day) to address what should be a routine maintenance issue,” Pitts says.


RESIDUE BUILDUP

Every offseason, O’Bryan has his crews drain each spray tank completely. While most of the solid chemical residue comes out in the process, some stubborn sludge is left behind, which can cause issues if not completely removed and disposed of properly.

“Getting that gunk out of the bottom of a tank can be tough, but it’s vital that it’s done,” he says. “We want to start each season with those (spray) tanks fresh, and we don’t want that residue gumming up (spray) components.”

FITTINGS

According to Pitts, another critical maintenance technique is regularly greasing the spray rigs’ fittings.

“If it’s a mechanical agitation, (crews) must grease the fittings at least once a week,” he recommends. “Reels and swivels with grease fittings should be greased as soon as they see a drip come out of that swivel.” 

Mike Zawacki is a Cleveland-based writer who has covered various aspects of the landscape and lawn care industries for the last 20 years.

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FERTILE GROUND

More than meets the eye

Mulch is more than just a pretty face, with benefits digging down deep into the soil

BY ROB DIFRANCO | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

As a landscape professional, you're more than likely familiar with mulch and its core benefits for a landscape. But could there be more going on under the surface when you put mulch down on a property?

Experts from Colorbiotics and North Carolina State University share the underlying environmental benefits that mulch offers landscape contractors and the soil they manage.

BASICS OF MULCH

On the surface, mulch acts as a barrier, blocking light and reducing weed germination. It also moderates soil temperature, keeping it cooler in summer and warmer in winter. This temperature regulation helps save water and protects roots from extreme conditions.

Mulch also helps water retention, saving your customers on irrigation and watering bills.

"There's just as much benefit from the spaces between those pieces of mulch," says Bill Fonteno, professor emeritus at North Carolina State University. "With the pore space, you exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide for the soil. That helps to keep the critters that are in there. Plus, you get water infiltration benefits because it helps slow down water loss from the surface."

SOIL BENEFITS

But beyond these surface-level benefits, mulch can significantly improve your soil's health without having to put in any extra effort.

"You can take (mulch), spread it out about three to four inches deep and not touch it," says Fonteno. "If you pull that back after a while, you'll see an inch or two of actual topsoil formed all by itself, and it's done that because of the breakdown of these materials in the mulch."

"The more it breaks down, the better off you are, the better off the plants will be and the better action you'll get in the soil itself."

According to Fonteno, mulch's effects on soil are even more precious in urban settings. So-called "urban soil" can vary from property to property, Fonteno says, depending on what the site used to be.

For example, a new home built on what used to be farmland will have better soil than a home in a more urban environment. Mulch can help even that playing field, according to Fonteno.

"You have to construct and build things with all kinds of organic matter to replenish that soil," he says. "It takes diligence in putting mulch down because as it breaks down, it actually begins to feed the soil as well."

"The worse your soil is to begin with, the longer it's going to take. But the more you plant in the same area and use these organics, the better off you're going to be."


COLORANT CONSIDERATIONS

Kent Rotert, vice president of Colorbiotics, a mulch producer that offers more than a dozen colors of mulch for landscape purposes, says one of the more traditional uses of mulch is to add color to a plant bed.

"I think from a colorant side, the biggest factor is the beautification," he says. "I think what's critical for us in manufacturing that process is that we need to ensure that that colorant is safe."

FINDING A PRODUCER

When it comes to finding the right mulch producer, Rotert says that landscape contractors should keep several things in mind, from the material used to create the mulch to how they purchase the mulch (i.e., in a bag or in bulk).

"I always recommend looking for producers that are part of the Mulch and Soil (Council)," says Rotert. "Look for that seal on the back of that bag that shows that they're a Mulch and Soil certified member. That probably will give you the best choice of products in the marketplace today. Without that seal, it's harder to find people that are qualified and using good practices in their manufacturing process." 

PICK A COLOR

Different colors of mulch can add beauty to a landscape, but the further benefits of mulch run much deeper.

PHOTO: COLORBIOTICS

SPOT THIS PROBLEM EARLY

The season is almost over, but gray leaf spot isn't

BY NATHAN MADER | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Unfortunately for the landscaping industry, as the season starts cooling down, certain turf problems can heat up. Gray leaf spot, caused by the *Pyricularia grisea* fungus, is a disease that affects mostly annual and perennial ryegrass, tall fescue, St. Augustinegrass and a few other susceptible turfgrasses.

The disease can sprout up nearly wherever susceptible turfgrasses are grown, but Craig Zeigler, president and owner of Agronomic Lawn Management, says it can be most often found in the central transition zones of the U.S., such as North Carolina or Virginia, where he lives.

SPORADIC START

Gray leaf spot is dangerous for lawns and landscapes because of the large portion of the year where it can be a threat, especially for warmer climates. The disease can start and spread as early as the beginning of summer, and Zeigler says damage can start appearing even in the fall months of September and October.

Temperature, humidity and moisture are key factors for disease susceptibility in turf, and Zeigler says warm evening or night temperatures with newly seeded grass can sometimes be a recipe for disaster.

"If you're overseeding, which a lot of people overseed tall fescue, one of the big things you need to keep an eye on are the evening temperatures," Zeigler says. "When we get in a weather pattern where evening temperatures are 70, 75 degrees F at night, that's when the red flag comes out."

And while the disease can become less damaging as the turf matures, that doesn't make it any less dangerous when it appears. As a fungal disease caused through warm temperatures and extended periods of leaf wetness, Zeigler says it can produce enormous amounts of spores, making it extremely easy for the disease to spread via the wind, rain and even through mowing and other equipment usage.

SPOT THE PROBLEM

Like many other turf pests, identification is key, as the issue can often be mistaken for other common problems like brown patch disease or *Pythium* blight.

"Look for splotches on the actual leaf blade itself. It almost looks like a cigarette butt — it's touching the leaf blade of the plant," Zeigler says. "That's the initial signs of it, and it's like an outer smoke ring, is the way it's described."

Due to the large amounts of spores it can produce, Zeigler recommends getting aggressive with gray leaf spot once it's identified. Plus, he says monitoring temperatures and how often watering happens is a great way to be proactive before damage starts.

"As it gets more severe and the plant starts to die, the dead plant kind of has a hook at the end of the leaf blade," Zeigler says. "It kind of hooks over, where a lot of



people will get it confused with *Pythium* blight."

FUNGAL FIGHTERS

For Zeigler, one of the best ways to prevent gray leaf spot is through proper turf care. Practices such as not seeding too early, avoiding excessive irrigation, removing wet grass clippings and watering earlier in the day can all create an environment that is difficult for gray leaf spot to handle.

However, if the disease does root itself onto host grass, Zeigler says his recommended way to deal with it is thiophanate-methyl (T-meth).

"T-meth is the best. We do a mixture of azoxystrobin, or 'strobe,' and T-meth," he says. "Especially if the disease is prevalent."

And, as you might expect, Zeigler's biggest tip when you see gray leaf spot is to back off on the watering to slow the germination process. 🌱

FROM GREEN TO GRAY

Gray leaf spot produces spores that can be spread by the weather, lawn equipment or even just walking on it.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF QUALI-PRO; GETTY IMAGES/DNY59 / E+; BOSCHETTI/PHOTOGRAPHY / ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS

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THE BIG ONE

Hospital hospitality

BY NATHAN MADER | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

LOCATION Toledo, Ohio

COMPANY Yellowstone Landscape

DETAILS When disaster strikes, sometimes it's the little things in life that can make all the difference.

That's why at this medical facility in northwest Ohio, Yellowstone Landscape tries going the extra mile to ensure top-notch landscaping care and maintenance.

"Nobody is happy to be at a hospital," says Rob Ponn, branch manager for Yellowstone Landscape. "When we first pick these places up, our main focuses are main entrances. What are they seeing when they're walking in, is there color there, is something going to pop to brighten someone's day?"

Chris Redli, production manager for Yellowstone, says they applied that mindset immediately when starting maintenance in 2022, spending the first summer cutting all the overgrown vegetation down until it had a nice, manicured look.

From there, Redli says they worked with the client to bring their vision to life, adding vibrant colors and carefully maintained beds with a variety of vegetation such as daylilies, hydrangeas, hostas and more.

Plus, with Yellowstone being responsible for snow and ice removal at the hospital, there's a necessity to keep the property free of any potential slip hazards.

"We want absolutely zero refreeze when we're working with a hospital," Ponn says. "The way we look at it is no snowflake left behind."

Yellowstone Landscape won a silver award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program for this project.

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



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF YELLOWSTONE LANDSCAPE



Captions | **1.** Redli says similar vegetation is lumped together to keep beds consistent and to give the property a park-like feel for guests. **2.** Keeping the entrances clean and tidy with bursts of color is a big goal for Yellowstone to hopefully lighten the mood for those entering the hospital. **3.** With the many walkways and paths at the hospital, ensuring everything is free of ice and any slipping hazards in the winter is a top safety priority. **4.** Yellowstone focuses on using environmentally-responsible products for maintenance such as EcoGuard and Peladow. **5.** Redli says vibrant colors through wildflowers were used to cheer up visitors and those in the children's center while promoting pollinators. **6.** Irrigated planters are changed out with annual and perennial plantings each season to make outdoor dining and break areas pop. **7.** The hospital has nearly 800 beds and serves 27 counties in northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan, meaning consistent upkeep is critical for the heavy visitor traffic. **8.** The client was focused on clean lines to match the property's architecture, which is reflected in the beds and mowing.



PRODUCTS THAT WORK

Turf Tires



MICHELIN X TWEEL AIRLESS RADIAL TIRE

COMPANY: Michelin

URL: MichelinMan.com

Designed to perform like pneumatic tires, the Michelin X Tweel airless radial tire line replaces the current tire-and-wheel assembly, removes the need for complex mounting equipment and eliminates any costly downtime due to flat tires. The tire features a 750-lb. load capacity, which can be used with or without a bagger system. It also incorporates a hubless design, which uses either a 5-bolt configuration to attach a retrofit replacement for existing mowers or a 10-bolt standard OE configuration for new production mowers.



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OTR REAPER

COMPANY: OTR Engineered Solutions

URL: OTRWheel.com

This tire features a turf-specific design that enhances traction, stability and control. Its wider footprint ensures better surface contact, while the wrap-over grip edge improves traction on uneven terrain. The Reaper is sold as a complete assembly, including tire and wheel, allowing for easy bolt-on installation. Available in various sizes, it aims to enhance performance in diverse turf environments while providing an attractive appearance for OEM equipment.

TITAN SOFT-TURF



COMPANY: Titan

URL: Titan-intl.com

The Titan Soft-Turf tire is specifically engineered for turf care equipment, including zero-turns. The tire offers a larger footprint to distribute weight more evenly and reduce soil compaction. Soft-Turf tires are designed to deliver a smooth ride and improved stability, enhancing operator comfort and machine performance. They are available in various sizes to fit different equipment models, catering to residential and commercial lawn care needs.



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**KIRSTIN MAINS**

VICE PRESIDENT,
BRILLIANT BORDERS
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"This isn't really high-tech, but we've added accessories to our trimmers that have gone over pretty well with our team. In particular, the ergonomic double handles help the operator hold the trimmer more comfortably, saving them from straining and not gripping the traditional handles too much. Not all our operators have embraced them, but overall, it's been very positive from our team members."

**MAX GROEN**

OWNER, CUTTING EDGE
LAWN AND LANDSCAPE
ST. JOHN, IND.

"There are a couple of smaller machines that have helped to improve our efficiency. One is our Vermeer mini skid-steer. It's super maneuverable, very helpful in getting us into smaller backyards and basically our new wheelbarrow. The other is a mulch-blowing machine that we run out of our trailers. We do a lot of mulching work, and it saves us a lot of labor, especially on bigger sites."

**MASON
MCMURPHY**

GROUPS SUPERVISOR,
SPORTS TURF, BLUE
VALLEY SCHOOL
DISTRICT

OVERLAND PARK, KAN.

"We've been experimenting and demoing the Wright and Greenzie autonomous mower. It's definitely something to look out for in the future ... It's not high-tech, but the dual-blade system from Ballard has made a real difference for us. I wish I had the staff and time to reel mow everything, but we rotary mow everything. Being able to take a 72-inch mower from one blade per spindle to two is big time."

**MICHAEL BEDELL**

OWNER, BEDELL
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
MILFORD, MICH.

"A few years ago, Echo sent me the 58-volt push mower to try out, and it did a really nice job replacing the gas push mowers we had been using for a long, long time. I was working with some of the production team this past spring, and they were surprised I hadn't tried out their 56-volt push mower. They said, 'You have to try it.' I noticed some improvements: the battery runs longer, it's a little bit higher quality of cut and it's smoother to push."

PHOTO: LM STAFF

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HARDSCAPE SOLUTIONS

A group effort

BY LM STAFF

LOCATION Washington, D.C.


COMPANY Ruppert Landscape

DETAILS Ruppert Landscape, No. 12 on the 2024 LM150 list, worked alongside several other contractors on this multi-use 10-acre property in the heart of Washington, D.C.

Most of Ruppert's work took place over a three-level parking structure, making soil and drainage crucial aspects of the build. As a result, Ruppert crews laid down more than 90,000 sq. ft. of filter fabric and more than 12,000 cubic yards of a specially engineered soil mix to reduce weight while leaving a usable planting area.

Sustainability was a priority for Ruppert Landscape on this project, with an emphasis on using native plants and materials. The site features more than 45,000 perennials, 3,600 shrubs and 400 trees, along with 64,500 sq. ft. of pavers.

Since Ruppert also had to share space with others working on the site, close coordination and occasional weekend work to stay out of each other's way was necessary. Despite those challenges and more than 130 change orders during construction, Ruppert completed most of the landscaping work in just four months.

Ruppert Landscape won a gold award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program for this project. 

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



PHOTOS: RUPPERT LANDSCAPE



1. In addition to an NALP Award of Excellence, this project won Ruppert Landscape a People's Choice Award from the U.S. Green Building Council's Capital Region. **2.** Ruppert used reclaimed cobblestone to fit the new grade on this site. According to the contractor, crews spent more than 600 hours cleaning and resetting them. **3.** In addition to landscape work, Ruppert Landscape installed nearly \$25,000 of amenities, including benches, trash cans, fire pits and more. **4.** Green spaces across the site help reduce heat while also providing areas for residents and employees to enjoy. **5.** The owner of the site brought in a soil consultant to ensure the needs of the plantings were met. **6.** Crews spent more than 500 hours stacking and securing boulders in this play area. **7.** During the course of construction, Ruppert had more than 24 separate deliveries of hardscape and concrete materials due to space constraints. **8.** Ruppert used skid-steers to bring in more than 480 tons of boulders to this courtyard area early in the project's lifecycle. Crews also used a gantry crane and mini-excavator to move them where they sit now.

FROM THE SOURCE

Better results with less labor

Optimized concrete pavers can help increase customer satisfaction and grow your business

BY DANIEL CARRERO | CONTRIBUTOR

Homeowners value their outdoor spaces. Data from the National Association of Home Builders indicates that the share of homes with patios has reached record-breaking highs in the last seven years.

And homeowners who are selling in today's expensive housing market find outdoor updates to be a good strategy for standing apart, with research from the National Association of Realtors identifying new patios as top outdoor projects seeing the most increased demand.

Recent technological advances in concrete pavers mean they're a popular choice for all those new patios and other outdoor living projects thanks to their durability, affordability and an increasingly broad range of design options.

Specifically, premium pavers with Optimized Paver Technology (OPT), which my company produces, provide new opportunities to increase customer satisfaction and build a reputation for delivering high-value projects with high-performance pavers — all while requiring less time and labor.

ANOTHER SATISFIED CUSTOMER

Aesthetics are fundamental when it comes to hardscaping. Homeowners invest in outdoor living projects to add beauty to their property. The contractor's ability to deliver the look the customer wants is key.

Optimized pavers are designed for beauty. They feature a factory-integrated surface treatment applied during manufacturing. This treatment is cured into the concrete matrix, becoming permanently bonded to the paver, changing how light reflects off the paver's surface, enabling a broader range of vibrant color choices that will last for years. These pavers better mimic natural stone, highlight architectural details and help patterns pop, elevating the appearance of everything from simple pathways to elaborate poolside patios.

In addition, factory-integrated coatings protect against all manner of stains — from dirt, leaves and lawn debris to everyday food and beverage spills.

Moreover, many homeowners find that the slight increase in the upfront price point is offset by the higher quality and low maintenance of premium concrete pavers. That may raise eyebrows among hardscape contractors who generate a percentage of their revenue from applying post-installation sealants. However, contractors are finding that focusing on installing premium products instead enables them to expand the value of their projects overall.

THINKING BIG

Michael Tous, founder of Grass Masters in Lumberton, N.J., acknowledges that the introduction of optimized pavers brought mixed feelings among hardscaping

contractors. "A lot of us also clean and seal pavers as a different avenue of income, especially in the summer when installations slow down," he explains.

While performing this yearly maintenance generates revenue for hardscaping contractors, it brings in slimmer profit margins compared to new hardscape installations. And as Tous recognizes, taking on these maintenance jobs also means allocating sometimes hard-to-find labor to complete the work.


Because of those challenges, Tous decided to invest more into optimized pavers, realizing that factory-treated pavers offered more than a new product line. "This is an opportunity to up-sell, offer a better paver and separate my business from the other guys out there," he says.

And for Tous, focusing on higher-value installations with premium products shows customers that a contractor is focused on excelling in their area of specialization.

"As an experienced contractor, I'm selling my reputation, and I'm only going to offer my customers the best," he says.

MAKING THE SWITCH

Homeowners are constantly proving that they are willing to pay more for quality products that reduce the time spent on maintenance. In fact, the Home Improvement Research Institute (HIRI) identified the switch to low-maintenance products among the top drivers of home improvement activities in 2024.

And while optimized pavers may not be right for every homeowner, the data clearly shows that there's a sizable market hungry for the advantages these premium pavers offer. 

Daniel Carrero is the inline treatments program manager for ACM Chemistries, a manufacturer of concrete products based in Norcross, Ga.



OPTIMIZED PAVER TECHNOLOGY: ELEVATING HARDSCAPE PERFORMANCE IN COLD CLIMATES

Discover how OPT Saves Time, Cuts Costs and Ensures Durability

Dean Jurik, a seasoned veteran with 40 years of experience in the concrete paver industry, is a strong advocate of Optimized Paver Technology (OPT). As Vice President of Sales and Marketing at ACM Chemistries, his mission is to educate landscape contractors on the benefits of using OPT-treated pavers in their hardscape jobs.

"OPT-treated pavers are not just a product, they are a revolution in the landscape industry," Jurik says. "One of their standout features is their exceptional performance in cold weather. Designed to withstand the rigors of freeze-thaw cycles, these pavers significantly reduce the risk of cracking and surface deterioration that often plagues traditional concrete in harsh winter conditions." The technology applied in the manufacturing process becomes part of the concrete product, creating a barrier that minimizes water absorption, which is critical to preventing internal damage caused by freezing water expansion. This resilience is especially

valuable in areas that experience heavy snow and ice conditions and fluctuating temperatures.

OPT-treated pavers are also highly resistant to the corrosive effects of de-icing salts commonly used in cold climates.

This protection ensures that the pavers' structural integrity and aesthetic appeal are maintained, even under the stress of winter maintenance practices.

"Magnesium chloride found in many de-icing products is problematic for concrete," Jurik adds. "De-icing products degrade concrete patios and

walkways. Using OPT-treated pavers will alleviate this issue and save contractors time from having to go back to seal or address an unhappy customer."

"The advantage of OPT-treated pavers far outweighs the minimal additional cost," says Michael Tous, retired contractor and founder of Grass Masters of Lumberton, N.J. "We can offer a product protected from the weather, wine and chemicals, and the color is enhanced. It's a no-brainer for us. We use OPT-treated pavers exclusively."

The benefits of OPT extend beyond cold weather performance. Contractors save significant time and resources by reducing the need for field sealing. Long-term maintenance costs are also significantly lowered as OPT becomes integral to the concrete and does not require reapplication over time. And, OPT enhances and

preserves the color and appearance of pavers, addressing the common issue of dullness in traditional concrete products over time. "This aesthetic longevity is crucial for contractors aiming to deliver visually appealing hardscapes to their clients," adds Jurik.

"ACM Chemistries has launched a comprehensive initiative to educate contractors about the many benefits of OPT-treated pavers. This program provides valuable insights into how OPT can enhance operations, improve project timelines and reduce costs," Jurik assures. "It even includes materials to help contractors up-sell premium OPT-treated pavers to homeowners."

"OPT-treated pavers are setting a new standard in the industry. More than 13 million square feet of OPT pavers have been installed in North America. Our mission is to share all their benefits and let contractors know they can confidently install OPT pavers, knowing they will perform exceptionally in all climates."



LEARN MORE:



BUSINESS BOOSTERS

Taking the plunge with pools

A pool manufacturer shares the ins and outs of how to start adding pool installation to your business

BY ROB DIFRANCO | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

As landscape contractors continue to look for new lines of revenue, adding pool installations has been an enticing idea. But how do you start? Who are the right people and companies to speak with?

LM sat down with Gail Conroy, vice president of marketing at Latham, to discuss how landscape contractors can work with pool manufacturers to get a leg up when adding pool installation services to their business.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT:

WHAT CAN YOU TELL OUR READERS ABOUT LATHAM, AND HOW CAN CONTRACTORS WORK WITH MANUFACTURERS LIKE LATHAM?

GAIL CONROY: (Latham) manufactures fiberglass and vinyl liner pools, auto safety covers and manual mesh safety covers. Typically, we work directly with builders and offer our products through distributors. Suppose you're a landscaper looking to get into the pool installation business or want to subcontract out to a pool builder.

In that case, the best thing to do is get a list of authorized builders in a particular region from a manufacturer like Latham.

(The manufacturer) can give them a referral and put them in touch with the recommended builders, and then they can work directly with those builders.

LM: WHILE A CONTRACTOR LOOKING TO ADD POOL INSTALLS IS PROBABLY FAMILIAR WITH THE BASICS OF THE EQUIPMENT THEY'LL NEED, WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE FOR THEM TO LEARN THE BASICS OF POOL BUILDING AND INSTALLATION?

CONROY: Latham has a boot camp program at our headquarters in Zephyrhills, Fla., where our new builders are required to attend both classroom and hands-on training. We want to ensure that builders know how to install the product properly.

(For interested contractors) there's a lot of education out there. The PHTA (Pool and Hot Tub Alliance) offers its Genesis program which provides tons of different training and certification programs. If you're a landscape contractor who wants to get into the pool business, we highly recommend you take the time to seek out the education and the training.

(Latham's boot camp) is a multi-day class with a lot of in-classroom training that touches on all the technical aspects of pool building. We also have separate installation rooms where contractors get hands-on training on how to install a liner in a vinyl liner pool, how to measure for a safety cover, how to install an automatic safety cover and more. Also, outside, we have a dig site where they can get hands-

on and learn exactly how to put a fiberglass pool into the ground.

← FUN SIZE
Plunge pools continue to grow in popularity among homeowners.




It's important to become a member of the PHTA and get involved. You'll just have so much

access to education and training and even environmental and governmental policy — things that affect our industry.

LM: WHAT SHOULD CONTRACTORS KNOW ABOUT EMERGING TRENDS IN THE POOL MARKET?

CONROY: Plunge pools are incredibly popular and have grown exponentially over the past few years. They used to be called small swimming pools, but now they're in their own category. So, we see tremendous consumer interest in small or plunge pools and a couple of things drive that, including lot sizes for homes getting smaller and smaller so people don't have as much room for a larger pool in the backyard.

Contractors can install plunge pools quickly. They're less expensive because they're smaller, more cost-effective to heat and many people, even if they have a large piece of property, don't want to take up the entire property with a pool. People want outdoor kitchens, fire pits and play areas.

The other thing that we're seeing grow is connected spas. We're seeing a lot of consumers requesting that particularly in some of the southern states. 



PHOTOS: LATHAM

BUSINESS BOOSTERS

Where drip irrigation rules ... and where it's ruled out

These water-savvy experts know the value of dispersing the right amount of irrigation at the right time BY SETH JONES | LM EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

By now, cooler temperatures are the rule, and lawn care and landscape professionals are happy to have them.

This was another scorching summer (aren't they all?), as well as a dry summer for much of the U.S. According to the National Centers for Environmental Information, about 30 percent of the contiguous U.S. was in drought by the beginning of September, up a little over 10 percent from the end of July.

LM asked a few friends of the magazine about the usefulness of drip irrigation in hot summers like the this one in 2024. We learned that it's both beloved and bemoaned.

WHERE IT RULES

Mike McCarron, owner of Image Works Landscape Management in Fairfax, Va., says installing drip irrigation in certain circumstances has “exploded” in the area over the last three to five years. The reason, he says, is because it saves labor while also delivering consistent results.

“It's become really popular where you have floral displays that are elevated,” McCarron says. “In front of a big HOA, a condo association, in front of a country club and even on the residential side — they have herb gardens or a vegetable garden, and they want to make sure it's watered evenly and consistently.”

McCarron says the systems his company installs are easy because they are tied to the local irrigation system.



Mike McCarron

His employees “spike” the plant and then control the amount of water by a timer. This eliminates the need for an employee to water these raised plants.

“Almost all our commercial clients who have good floral display budgets are using this now because the consistency and the quality of having perfectly timed water is huge,” McCarron says. “Virginia was scorching hot this summer, and we had 22 days over the 106-degree heat index. And the flower displays looked good through that whole peak time.”

McCarron says he rotates what brands he uses, but Rain Bird, Toro and K-Rain and are his most popular.

WHERE IT'S RULED OUT

Some say Kansas City is the soccer capital of America. Curt Waddle, manager of outdoor living for Ryan Lawn & Tree, doesn't have a stance on that, but he will tell you that Kansas City is the squirrel capital of America.

“Kansas City, and especially Mission Hills, is the absolute worst with squirrels,” he says. “If you put lights in the ground there, they chew through the lights. You can literally see the teeth marks on every landscape light.”

For this reason, Waddle advises his customers against drip irrigation. It's a bigger headache than it's worth, he says.

“You're constantly repairing (drip irrigation), and then you have to charge the customers because it's animal

predation, and we don't cover animal predation,” he says. “The customer gets frustrated and asks, ‘Why did you sell me this system?’”

His preferred — and squirrel-proof — way to effectively irrigate is to install smart controllers with a Hunter MP rotator head.

“We feel like you actually save water over the drip irrigation system using these in the right location and not over-watering,” he says. “Use a smart controller that doesn't just measure rain totals, but also humidity and soil moisture.”

Sean Baxter, president at Lawn and Landscape Solutions, Overland Park, Kan., agrees

with his fellow Kansas Citian about both the squirrels and the best way to keep landscapes irrigated.



Sean Baxter

“(With drip irrigation), you don't even know when the line is broken,” he says. “You get leaks, and the pressure down the line is bad, and then things are dying over here and too wet over there.”

Baxter says the system he prefers is Hydrawise because Lawn and Landscape Solutions is a big proponent of FX Luminaire and Hunter, and the companies are all related. Waddle also says Hydrawise is his favorite, but they'll also use Rachio from time to time.

“We're a Hunter company too. They're quality, top-notch,” he says. “The value of the Rachio is that a first grader could program them. That's why people like them — because they're really simple.”

IRRIGATION TECH

Seeing is believing

The eye-catching technology that could revolutionize on-site training

BY NATHAN MADER | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The newest technology in communication and training is here, and it may not be a surprise to some. After all, it was right *over* our noses this whole time.

Conserva Irrigation, No. 85 on the 2024 LM150 list and founded by Russ Jundt and Tom Olson in 2010 with the goal of saving water in the irrigation business, is working through an exciting pilot program using augmented reality glasses — lenses that superimpose computer-generated texts, images and videos into the user's field of view.

Jundt, president of Conserva, says the glasses come equipped with a variety of tools that allow technicians in the field to stream their point of view to a franchise business coach (FBC) or industry expert in real time. From there, the coach can work with the technician remotely, talking through the problem, circling or highlighting areas that need attention, overlaying relevant documents and images into the technician's vision and more.

"Imagine having the knowledge and expertise of a 40-year veteran readily available behind the lens of AR glasses," says Jundt. "This is the future of how Conserva will support its technicians throughout the U.S. The franchise business coach sees what the technician sees, communicates and directs, interfaces through voice and illustrative measures in the field of view of the technician and ultimately solves the problem."

⬇ SNEAK PEAK
The point of view of an on-site technician receiving text and graphic overlays through AR glasses.

Jundt says Conserva prides itself on never being satisfied with the status quo, and AR glasses (which he now calls

smart glasses as the technology and pilot program advances) push forward Conserva's core values of innovation, responsibility and professionalism.

"Innovation, that's our topic today — always being on the vanguard of new technology in a way that can improve efficiencies, can improve production and can improve the final product for the consumer," Jundt says.

With smart glasses, technicians can also have their hands free to work through problems while receiving help, and time and money is saved by eliminating the need for experts to travel to worksites.


Another key feature is recording interactions through the glasses and using them to create, categorize and disperse homogeneous training videos throughout the many company locations.

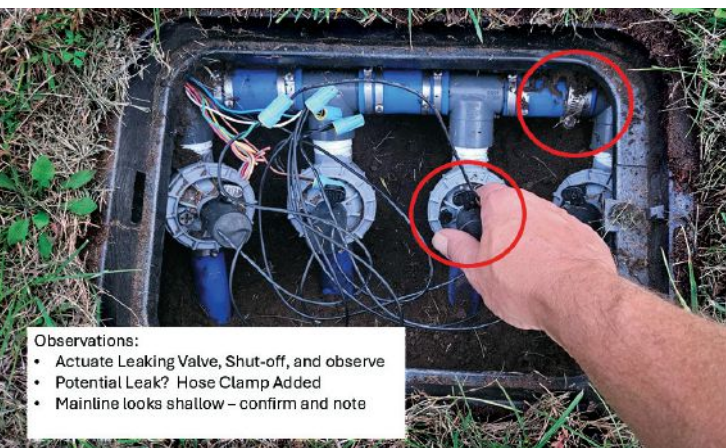
"Many of us learn by seeing — learn by illustrative ways," Jundt says. "Here's a one-on-one scenario where this FBC is training that technician directly, but also at the same time recording the event, taking that, categorizing it and putting it into our repository of training videos on our learning management software system so others then learn from that exact scenario, and it cascades across the system."

Jundt describes Conserva as a collection of ideas from various franchise owners and team members in its network, and the idea to use smart glasses came from a franchise owner, Troy Fey, who previously worked in the aerospace and defense industry and utilized remote support capabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the lockdowns at the time, Fey needed a way to work collaboratively while being remote, ultimately bringing AR glasses to his previous industry and, eventually, Conserva.

Conserva's smart glasses are planned to become an official program in February 2025 at the company's annual meeting in Austin, Texas, where it will cascade to regional tech training in March and April.

Jundt says he's sharing the enthusiasm many others in the company have expressed at the new technology, and he hopes it'll be something that can trickle down and really impact the industry as a whole.

"We think that we're going to continue to evolve and impact the entire industry by coming up with these creative ideas and group thinking, if you will, within the Conserva way and cascading the change across the U.S. or across the world." 



Observations:

- Actuate Leaking Valve, Shut-off, and observe
- Potential Leak? Hose Clamp Added
- Mainline looks shallow — confirm and note



PROFITABLE PRODUCTS

**CHECK OUT THESE SOLUTIONS TO
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PROFITABLE PRODUCTS



3M

Q+A

with **Jason Lunn**

Application Engineering Specialist

Introducing a Revolutionary Light-Powered Hearing Protector

Many people are familiar with 3M's iconic WorkTunes™ Hearing Protectors that have been around for years. These products help protect your hearing while allowing you to listen to your favorite music, podcast, or even the radio while you're working on a jobsite or doing a DIY project. This year, we've taken that concept to a whole new level with the launch of the groundbreaking new 3M™ WorkTunes™ Connect + Solar Hearing Protectors.

Incorporated into the headband of this product is a PowerFoyle™ Solar Cell that can harness the power of both sunlight and indoor light to charge the battery. On sunny days, you will generate more charge than you use. Imagine working outdoors and never worrying about your hearing protector running out of power.

If you stored these in light (sunlight or indoor light), they can continuously charge without having to be plugged in. However, for those times that you are not able to achieve sufficient lighting to charge the product, the hearing protector still has an impressive 40+ hours of battery reserve,

meaning they will still be good to go for an entire work week without having to recharge.

The product also boasts a Noise Reduction Rating of 26 decibels, which is 2 dB higher than previous 3M™ WorkTunes™ products, meaning it can help block out even more noise. This is great from a safety standpoint, but it also has the added benefit of allowing you to hear your music even better.

The device also features Safe Volume Control technology that limits the volume to a safe level. It offers fantastic sound quality, thanks to the use of the Harman Target Curve, helping you enjoy clear and balanced audio. This hearing protector also helps you stay connected with its ability to take phone calls. The new Intelligent Background Noise Reduction feature monitors and reduces background noise while on calls, so the person on the other end can hear you clearly, even in noisy environments.

In addition, this product helps save you time by eliminating the



need for frequent battery replacement and downtime for charging (or searching for batteries), and helps you stay connected with customers and potential clients by allowing you to take phone calls without taking the headset off, even in louder environments.

The 3M™ WorkTunes™ Connect + Solar light-powered Hearing Protector is a significant change in the market. With its light-charging capability, great noise reduction, excellent sound quality, and seamless communication features, it offers unparalleled convenience and efficiency. Stay productive, protected and connected with this revolutionary device.



WORKS AS LONG AS YOU DO.



3M™ WORKTUNES™ CONNECT + SOLAR HEARING PROTECTOR

Introducing wireless hearing protection that makes worrying about battery life a thing of the past. Featuring Powerfoyle™ solar technology, this hearing protector charges continuously in outdoor or indoor light. Stream your favorite audio entertainment on the job. Make or take calls as you work. Stay protected from hazardous noises. All day long.



Helps protect
your hearing



Continuously
charges



Premium
sound quality



Water- and
sweat-resistant



Bluetooth®
wireless
technology



Available on Amazon

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PROFITABLE PRODUCTS

EQUIP INDOOR BOOTH #1170



Aspire Software

Q+A with **Mark Tipton**
Founder and CEO

How can Aspire save you time and help control costs?

Today, landscape companies face many challenges: labor shortages, rising costs, increasing competition, and complex project management needs. If you're still relying on multiple software systems or manual processes, you're letting time and money slip away. But Aspire is here to change that.

As an end-to-end business management software, Aspire streamlines and automates core processes across all landscape operations—from maintenance and enhancements to design-build and bid-build construction projects—while putting everything you need at your fingertips.

With your operations and data in one place, your teams will align around defined processes and workflows to not only reduce friction but also improve accountability and teamwork, accomplishing more each day.

Centralized customer and property records let you better identify potential new opportunities and grow existing accounts. Precise estimating and job costing ensures accurate and profitable bids, while preventing underestimated costs and minimizing change orders.

For construction-specific work, recently enhanced features like flexible SOV management and change order tracking free up time by automating time-consuming processes. Real-time inventory, vendor management, and material substitutions prevent misordering and waste, while optimizing resource allocation. And advanced crew and equipment scheduling improves utilization to reduce costs across all services.

Robust project management tools, including Aspire's expanded Gantt chart, improve planning and resource allocation across long-term, large-scale projects, preventing delays and potential overtime.

Aspire's connectivity and real-time data informs proactive adjustments to drive efficiency and control costs at every level, setting your business up for long-term success in an increasingly tough market.

How does Aspire help drive new revenue and greater profits?

Aspire doesn't just save you money, it actively helps you make more. With the tools to accurately—and competitively—bid all types of landscaping projects, Aspire increases your chances of winning new business.



Recently enhanced construction-specific capabilities like SOV management provide greater flexibility in bidding and invoicing, enabling you to take on more jobs and improve cash flow.

Aspire's reimagined client portal keeps your clients informed and engaged throughout the entire project lifecycle to drive greater satisfaction, repeat business, and word-of-mouth referrals.

With a real-time view of your business's performance at every level, you can uncover ways to work more efficiently and take on more projects without necessarily increasing your costs—to not only survive **but thrive** in this competitive market.

Aspire won't leave you simply hoping for growth... it lets you make it happen.

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back-office operations

"I've seen our gross margins increase 18% since using Aspire. On our bottom line, we've seen a 2-3x improvement. That's a night-and-day difference."

- Aric Budden, President & Founder | DBL Landscaping


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** Results are illustrative of certain customers' success; your individual results may vary*



PROFITABLE PRODUCTS

EQUIP INDOOR BOOTH #1134



EGO Commercial



with **Tim Baker**

Director of Product Management – OPE

As professional landscape contractors (PLCs) shift from gas to battery-operated equipment, managing this new fuel source is essential. Tim Baker, Director of Product Management for EGO Commercial, offers guidance on making the transition.

What are common misconceptions about the transition from gas to cordless?

That an overwhelming amount of batteries are needed on OPE trailers to last the day, and that charging many batteries requires numerous chargers to be plugged in and organized.

What solutions does EGO Commercial offer to address these?

With the PGX™ Commercial Charging 1600W Hub, one standard 15-amp circuit is all you need—no expensive electrical upgrades are required. The 1600W Hub is also flexible: it can be mounted in a garage, vehicle, or mobile trailer to connect to any standard 120V outlet. And it's scalable: each 1600W Hub connects to PGX™ Commercial



Charging 3-Port Docks to charge up to three batteries at the same time and up to 70 2.5Ah batteries overnight. So as PLCs scale their PGX™ system, they can do it for a much lower cost than the competition.

We've also designed an off-the-grid solution to recharge up to eight 5.0Ah batteries in the field, without cables or special connections.

How does a PLC calculate how many batteries they need?

New industry jargon can be daunting, but at its most basic: the more energy a battery contains, the more work it can do. For example, a 12Ah battery is an option for several voltage platforms, but not all 12Ah batteries are equal. Let's use a

real-world example comparing 12Ah batteries on 18V and 56V platforms:

18V battery:

18V x 12Ah = 216Wh
(Watt-hours)

56V battery:

56V x 12Ah = 672Wh
(Watt-hours)

Watt-hours is the battery equivalent to gas tank capacity. So in the example above, the 56V battery is more powerful and has more than three times the energy. That means three times more 18V batteries would be needed to harness the same amount of energy.

How is EGO Commercial simplifying the process of calculating PLC energy requirements?

EGO Commercial Power Manager is a web-based tool designed to help PLCs begin to answer the most important questions when converting to cordless: "Where do I begin and how?"

In a few steps, it provides battery and charger recommendations based on your crew size, tools, equipment, workday length, and estimated trigger times, ensuring you have the run time needed to complete your typical workday.



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PROFITABLE PRODUCTS



First Editions Shrubs & Trees



with **Rachel Prescott**

Retail & Landscape Program Coordinator

Based in Minnesota, Bailey is known for cold hardy genetics. With the growth of its First Editions® brand, how has the offering expanded for warmer climates?

We have been intentional about expanding regional genetics with improvements on best-selling species, as well as exciting new and under-represented plants. In addition to collaborating with breeders around the world, our breeding operation Bailey Innovations™ is based in Athens, Georgia, which allows us the ability to develop, trial, and grow warm climate genetics in a USDA Hardiness Zone 8. Some of our favorite varieties that have proven to have high performance in warmer climates include Vintage Jade Distylium, Flip Side® Chastetree, Crimson Fire™ Fringe Flower, and the new introduction FlowerFull™ Smooth Hydrangea.

What makes FlowerFull™ Smooth Hydrangea unique compared to the established industry standards?

We understand that introducing a new hydrangea comes with some skepticism. It's a crowded marketplace, so we only would make this first foray into the native smooth hydrangea species if our cultivar

truly was an improvement. And, over the 8 years of trials and testing, FlowerFull™ Smooth Hydrangea continued to check every box. Its hard-working genetics produce more than double the blooms than other *Hydrangea arborescens* that stand tall on sturdier upright stems that stand up against heavy rain fall and blowing winds. And the lush foliage beautifully accents the hundreds of blooms all the way through the season. Strong stems, double the blooms, and lush foliage make for a more impactful landscape display with less maintenance.

How do you help landscapers efficiently understand plants' performance in the landscape and how they pair together?

Our goal is to make your jobs easier. We work to provide easy-to-access tools to better understand new cultivars and how they work together. Feel free to scan the QR code to access all the tools. Included in that resource kit are charts that showcase practical application of each shrub



and tree in the collection, seasonal color charts, and plant pairing suggestions for commercial and home garden settings across climate zones. We call those plant pairings our Best Buds. It's like the buddy system of gardening!

In what ways do your products make landscape companies profitable?

First Editions® is dedicated to providing hard-working and high-quality plants to the landscape market. The best outcome in a landscape starts with the best possible input, and the First Editions® line is constantly trialing, testing, and evolving to provide superior plant genetics for the landscape. We have great confidence that any shrub or tree from this line is a unique choice for designs and has greater performance than similar varieties on the market.



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EDITIONS**
SHRUBS & TREES

FIRST[®]
EDITIONS
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SMOOTH HYDRANGEA

Hydrangea arborescens 'BAIful' PP35,613 CPBRAf

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BLOOMS PER SEASON**

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PROFITABLE PRODUCTS



FX Luminaire



with **Bryce Carnehl**

Specification Support Manager

How does your product save time?

The FX Luminaire Lighting Design Service provides customized low-voltage landscape lighting designs for professional contractors. These high-quality designs eliminate the guesswork in landscape lighting by providing correct product placement parameters, accurate ordering information and finishes, required material quantities, and detailed installation instructions. These deliverables allow contractors to present designs succinctly to their customers, accurately order required products and materials, and quickly install lighting components, maximizing cost and time savings.

How does your product save labor?

Since the FX Luminaire Lighting Design Service provides complete low-voltage landscape lighting plans, customers can maximize labor savings on both the front and back ends of the project. On the front end, labor is saved by efficiently managing the design process. Landscape professionals can rely on the FX Luminaire Lighting Design Service, freeing up labor-intensive design work. On the back end, the service takes the guesswork out of ordering quantities,

installation methods, and transformer/controller programming, creating efficiencies in installation labor.

How does your product save materials or fuel?

The FX Luminaire Lighting Design Service provides complete low-voltage lighting design plans, specifications, product lists, cost estimates, and installation details. Delivering this vital information prior to construction allows a contractor to efficiently plan for the full scope of installation, which eliminates the need to take multiple trips to supply warehouses and make return trips to the job site.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape companies?

Professionally designed low-voltage landscape lighting installations maximize the value of all outdoor living spaces. The FX Luminaire Lighting Design Service allows landscape and lawn care companies to add a valuable opportunity to their offerings. We work with companies as an extension of their business to produce and provide complete



low-voltage landscape lighting plans. These deliverables are available at no cost to customers, who can use this service to upsell and make additional proposals to both new and existing customers.

In what other ways does your product make landscape companies profitable?

Complete, customized low-voltage landscape lighting design plans are available for free from the FX Luminaire Lighting Design Service. Landscape companies take advantage of the service to grow business through expanded offerings. It provides accurate material lists for easy ordering and communicates clear product locations and installation practices to complete the project. Contractors can also use the plans to engage their customers with beautiful, high-quality presentations. These deliverables allow companies to focus on new business opportunities, expand their existing services, and create new efficiencies with their installation crews — all of which increase profitability.

FXLuminaire

We'd try it on a taller tree if there was one.
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PROFITABLE PRODUCTS

EQUIP INDOOR BOOTH #9136



Grasshopper Mowers

Q+A with **Michael Simmon**
Marketing Specialist



Grasshopper 525V-42 FrontMount™ Mower

The newest addition to Grasshopper Mowers' storied FrontMount lineup, the 525V-42 is one of the fastest, most economical out-front mowers in its class. Its out-front design allows the deck to float independently from the tractor, hugging every curve and contour of the ground for the smoothest cut possible.

Featuring a 25-hp Briggs & Stratton CXi V-Twin engine and True ZeroTurn™ maneuverability, the 525V is loaded with power

and performance. The low-profile 42-inch deck is ideal for reaching under low-hanging obstacles, and the narrow cutting width allows it to fit through tight gates, making it perfect for professional mowing crews.

The 525V is equipped with the PowerFold® Electric Deck Lift, a

standard feature on all FrontMount Grasshopper mowers, which raises the deck to a near-vertical position for space-saving storage and easier blade maintenance. Additionally, when paired with the PowerVac™ Collection System, this mower transforms into the most powerful and maneuverable piece of grass-catching, leaf-collecting equipment on the market.

For more information about the 525V-42 and the full line of gasoline- and diesel-powered Grasshopper zero-turn mowers, visit grasshoppermower.com.



Committed to the Cut.®

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**DEMO: 7542D
VISIT: 9136**



PROFITABLE PRODUCTS



Horizon Distributors

Q+A with **Mary Martinez**
Director, Marketing

All New HorizonOnline.com

Launched in February this year, the all new HorizonOnline.com platform makes it easy to securely manage your Horizon account, place orders, check pricing and check product availability. The descriptions and images help you find just the right product, and most contain additional tools such as product information flyers or SDS sheets. And with tools like “lists” and “reorders,” it’s easy to oversee consumables and frequently purchased products.

How does HorizonOnline save time?

Have you ever noticed how much time you and your employees spend driving to your supplier, picking up products, and loading your truck? HorizonOnline allows you to place orders ahead of time for pickup or delivery, minimizing the time you spend in the branch. It allows you to see availability ahead of time and know what needs to be special ordered, making it easier to plan your employees’ daily activities. And most importantly, it helps you manage everyday purchases and minimize



unnecessary expenditures by duplicating common orders.

How does HorizonOnline save labor costs?

If a crew of five at an average hourly wage of \$20 spend 30 minutes at the supplier branch five times a week, that stop costs \$250 weekly. If that stop happens every day, that’s \$12,500/year. What if it’s just you? If your hourly rate is \$40, and you spend 30 minutes at the supplier three times a week, that’s \$3,000 a year in labor costs. If HorizonOnline can reduce your time spent on supplies by just 20 percent, that’s a \$2,500 savings.

How does HorizonOnline make landscape companies more profitable?

What could your crew be doing if they weren’t in a supplier branch?

Probably earning you money with profitable activities like enhancements, or even booking an extra job or two this quarter.

In addition, HorizonOnline helps protect the security of your business. One of the things that sets HorizonOnline.com apart is its consideration for the security of your account and personal information. By offering “layers” of accessibility, the tool allows you to protect certain information such as price or account limits from other registered users. There’s even a feature that allows you as an administrator to approve any orders before sending them to the branch for fulfillment. Our “token” procedure for storing credit card information keeps the information encrypted, minimizing any fraud. And requiring a web registration key to register your account ensures your Horizon account isn’t vulnerable to imitation.

Check out the all new Horizon Account Management Platform at HorizonOnline.com today.





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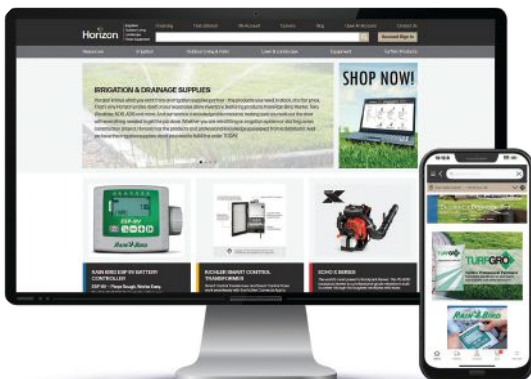
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PROFITABLE PRODUCTS

EQUIP INDOOR BOOTH #26056



Hunter Industries

Q+A with **Dave Shoup**
Category Manager

How do your products save time?

The WVL Wireless Valve Link allows system installation and expansion at any time without underground wiring from the controller to the valves. They also allow connection of valves across hardscapes, pavement, roads and other infrastructure without trenching, plowing or other wiring, and associated construction costs.

How do your products save labor?

The ability to build or expand existing control systems without running wire through the landscape and/or hardscape is a huge labor saver.

Installation of the wireless valve output module (WVOM) in an ICC2 or HCC controller requires only fingers. Installation of the wireless valve links at valve locations requires only a 1.5" hole in the valve box lid, and the hole saw for this is supplied with the product.

Valve connections are then easily made in the field to DC-latching solenoids with typical landscape waterproof connectors.

Wireless valve links also save future operators and maintenance personnel from having to cross busy

streets just to program or update individual battery controllers in median strips, roundabouts, and other landscape subject to vehicle traffic. After initial installation, all adjustments to programming can be done at the controller, quickly and safely.

How do your products save materials or fuel?

WVL links do not require long runs of expensive copper wire, or earth grounding hardware. Wireless valve links are physically isolated from the controller and other links in the system, and eliminate the risk of lightning surges following underground wires to damage other equipment. The optional solar-powered repeater can double the coverage of the wireless system, again without any additional wiring.

Solar power options are available for all wireless valve links to prevent changing the two 9V batteries every season.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

WVL installations convert expensive earth-moving operations and related permits into profitable



wireless equipment sales, while reducing costs to the owner.

A simple wireless output module in the controller, and truly wireless battery-operated valve controls in the field, allow construction and expansion without the cost and risk of disruptive underground wiring.

There are no service fees or ongoing costs to operate the WVL system.

In what other ways do your products make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

Wireless valve links can also be used in vertical applications, for green roof and balcony control, without routing wiring through multiple floors of apartments or office buildings.

Hunter®



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6' to 12'



MP-815
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15' to 24'

Go the distance with the new MP Rotator® MP-820 Nozzle! This longer-range nozzle reaches 22' at the recommended 40 PSI with a precipitation of 0.8 in/hr matching the MP-800SR and MP-815. For heavier water application, the complete MP800 Family delivers all the uniformity and flexibility you need to simplify your irrigation design, scheduling, and management.





PROFITABLE PRODUCTS



Isuzu Commercial Truck of America



with **Brian Tabel**

Assistant Vice-President, Marketing



How do your products save time?

Our trucks offer the ease of storing all the equipment in a locked body for added security. Our commercial vehicles are engineered with two axles to avoid the need for trailers or additional items which could add expenses and time.

How do your products save labor?

Our trucks allow for easy access to all the equipment by storing them in the body, making it easier for the team.

How do your products save materials or fuel?

By allowing for all the equipment in one truck without a trailer eliminates additional costs and maintenance. Having gas or diesel

options allows the team to decide which option is the best fit for their business.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

Keeping all the equipment in one place reduces prep or clean up time. The easy-to-drive low cab forward design will help with those tight, hard-to-maneuver locations.

ISUZU

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SCAN QR



PROFITABLE PRODUCTS

EQUIP INDOOR BOOTH #1054 | OUTDOOR BOOTH #7650D



Kress Commercial



with **Todd Zimmerman**

Vice President of Product Development

How do your products save time, labor, fuel and make landscape companies more profitable?

The Kress 8-Minute CyberSystem was engineered to meet the needs of commercial landscapers. Featuring 240Ah and 660Ah batteries — called CyberPacks — with the ability to fully charge in eight minutes or less, the Kress 8-minute CyberSystem is the fastest commercial battery system available. Due to its proprietary battery cell technology which keeps batteries cooler longer, each 60V CyberPack is not only able to charge faster than any other battery on the market, they also have a longer lifespan and are capable of producing as much or more power than gas-powered equipment.

Because Kress Commercial CyberPacks will charge in the time it takes for a water break, Kress has alleviated the need for crews to carry dozens of batteries on-site to complete a full day's work and downtime caused by waiting for batteries to charge or refilling at the gas pump.

Quick charge times mean the Kress 8-minute CyberSystem translates directly to cost savings for landscape crews, who save an aver-



age of \$2,000 per year per crew.

The Kress 8-minute CyberSystem powers a full line of professional outdoor equipment that is California CORE eligible and American Green Zone Alliance certified. Each of these tools is backed by a three-year warranty and Kress Commercial batteries and chargers are covered for six years — an industry leading offer.

In addition to the revolutionary lineup of commercial-grade power equipment and CyberSystem, Kress recently introduced a new rapid charging solution for professional landscapers — the Kress

Commercial CyberTank Lite DC-DC charging system. Charging with the CyberTank Lite DC-DC charging system is facilitated by the Cyber-Lite charger, which transfers power from the new 1.5kWh CyberCapsule battery to 240Wh CyberPacks on-the-go. With this new system, landscapers have access to Kress Commercial's revolutionary rapid charging system with more portability than ever before.



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Mows like you, without you – daily

Enjoy the freedom of satellite-guided, pinpoint-precision mowing with the Kress RTKn robotic mower.

Powered by advanced technology for worry-free navigation, Kress RTKn delivers perfect stripes every time - down to the inch - without the need for boundary wire installation or onsite satellite antennas. Quiet, programmable operation means you can automate mowing and save time - about three hours per week¹ - for detail work or other tasks around the home.

With zero operational emissions and immediate savings from minimal maintenance and labor costs, Kress is redefining commercial and residential lawn care worldwide.

Visit indoor booth 1054 and outdoor booth 7650D at Equip Expo to learn more.

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DEALER**



Kress 

**The only choice for commercial
landscapers to replace gas**

¹"Among Robotic Mower Owners," My Take, 2023.



PROFITABLE PRODUCTS



Landscape Products Inc.



with **Manny Castro**

Regional Sales Manager, Mountain West

How do your products save time?

The Landscape Products EZ-ID-CV Dripline is designed to save landscape professionals significant time through its easy installation and low-maintenance features. With pre-installed, built-in emitters, the dripline eliminates the need for manually adding components, allowing for quicker setup on both large commercial landscapes and smaller residential gardens. The dual-stripe color-coding system, specific to each flow rate, makes identification in the field simple, ensuring that crews spend less time on site planning and more time executing. This results in faster installations and more projects completed in less time.

How do your products save labor?

Our dripline's efficiency extends to labor savings as well. The EZ-ID-CV Dripline's check valve emitters automatically stop water flow when pressure drops, reducing the need for manual adjustments and frequent site visits. Additionally, the system's clog-resistant dual inlet filters ensure consistent water flow, even



in challenging environments with debris or undulating terrain. This reliability minimizes maintenance calls, freeing up workers to focus on new installations or other tasks. With fewer labor hours spent on upkeep, companies can reallocate their workforce more effectively.

How do your products save materials or fuel?

The advanced design of our dripline minimizes waste and conserves resources. By delivering water directly to plant roots with precision, our system reduces water usage by up to 50%, mak-

ing it far more efficient than traditional irrigation methods like sprinklers. With water flow regulation built into the emitters, there's no need for complex additional control systems, cutting down on the number of materials required. Plus, by reducing the need for frequent trips to adjust or repair systems, companies save on fuel and transportation costs, contributing to both environmental sustainability and cost savings.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape companies?

The EZ-ID-CV Dripline allows landscape companies to offer premium irrigation solutions that stand out from competitors. By incorporating high-efficiency, low-maintenance systems, companies can upsell clients on the long-term benefits of water conservation and reduced maintenance costs. The reliability of our product also builds client trust, leading to repeat business and referrals. As the demand for sustainable and eco-friendly solutions continues to grow, offering our dripline can help companies tap into new markets and increase their revenue streams.



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PROFITABLE PRODUCTS



Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show

Q+A with **Vanessa A. Finney**
Executive Vice President

What unique value does MANTS bring to the horticulture industry?

MANTS has established itself as a cornerstone in the horticulture sector, offering a comprehensive show where industry professionals can find everything from plants and shrubs to the latest technology and equipment. Its central location in the mid-Atlantic region makes it easily accessible, drawing a wide range of exhibitors and attendees. MANTS isn't just a trade show—it's where business gets done, with a focus on meaningful connections and tangible outcomes that drive the industry forward.

How does MANTS cater to the diverse needs of landscape professionals?

MANTS is widely known as "the plant show" - the premier green industry trade show. If it grows, you can expect to find it here. Annuals, perennials, ornamentals, trees and shrubs, vegetable plants and herbs, aquatic plants - they are all exhibited here. Plus, all the equipment, tools, and other industry products that a landscaper could ever need are also on display. MANTS is designed to foster networking and business opportunities, allowing landscape

professionals to discover new suppliers, see new products, forge partnerships, and stay ahead of industry trends. In fact, over two-thirds of MANTS attendees are associated with the landscape industry.

What does the phrase "MANTS Means Business" convey about the event?

"MANTS Means Business" emphasizes the serious, results-driven atmosphere of the show. Attendees are decision-makers and influencers who come to MANTS ready to make purchasing decisions. The event is structured to maximize business opportunities, with exhibitors showcasing products to a targeted, motivated audience. MANTS is more than just a trade show—it's a platform for year-round business development.

In what ways does MANTS foster innovation and knowledge sharing?

At MANTS, innovation and education are integral to the experience. The event facilitates organic learning through interactions on the show floor, where industry veterans and



newcomers alike share insights and discuss emerging trends. Attendees leave MANTS with actionable ideas and strategies, making it a vital resource for anyone looking to stay competitive in the green industry.

What should potential attendees know about participating in MANTS 2025?

MANTS 2025 is set to take place from January 8-10 at the Baltimore Convention Center. Those interested in attending or exhibiting should visit MANTS.com for detailed information on registration and event logistics, ensuring they don't miss out on this essential industry gathering.





MANTS 2025

JANUARY 8-10

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PROFITABLE PRODUCTS

EQUIP INDOOR BOOTH #42243



Mowhawk Mowers

Q+A with **Patrick Busler**
Sales Manager

How do your products save time?

- High mowing speeds with a Kohler 38.5hp EFI Engine and Parker HTG 16cc transmissions
- Quick deck release
- Dial height adjustment for quick, easy changes
- Easy-to-find tie-down points on all four corners for quick secure loading

How do your products save labor?

- Predictable controlled handling helps you get closer to edges without making contact
- Easy-to-access components with the technician in mind

How do your products save materials or fuel?

- Mowhawk saves fuel by using EFI throughout the range
- Innovative deck design reduces the number of passes that need to be made on tall and overgrown grass

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape companies?

- Less down time with maintenance
- Great feature/cost benefits
- The ability to load more machines on the trailer with the compact design of the mowers



What else sets Mowhawk apart?

- 70+ years of engineering experience in mowers
- 120 years in total manufacturing from owner group
- Sister company (Iron Bull) with top 5 national open trailer brands
- Sister company with top truck bed manufacturer (Norstar) in U.S.
- Experienced nationwide dealer network and distribution experience
- Multiple dealer opportunities across the U.S.



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PROFITABLE PRODUCTS

EQUIP INDOOR BOOTH #29078



Mulch Mule provided by Brown Equipment Co.

Q+A with **Andrew Maillis**
*Equipment Consultant
- Landscape Specialist*

How do your products save time?

The Mulch Mule is a game-changer, significantly cutting down labor hours and streamlining the mulching and material installation process. By eliminating one of the most challenging, time-consuming and hazardous steps, the Mulch Mule has transformed how crews work. No longer do workers need to laboriously pitch barrels from the back of a dump trailer. Instead, they simply approach the side of the Mulch Mule, where it efficiently fills a standard barrel in just three to five seconds. This innovation not only cuts labor time by up to two-thirds but also enhances safety and reduces job site congestion.

How do your products save labor?

In an industry where finding and retaining skilled labor is increasingly challenging, it's crucial to invest in tools that reduce labor demands and support employee retention. The Mulch Mule accomplishes this by effectively replacing the need for up to two laborers on a typical mulch or material installation job. Without the need to place crewmembers in the back of a dump trailer, where they risk falls and injuries, the Mulch Mule enhances safety. Laborers no longer

dread mulch season and appreciate that their employer is committed to their well-being.

How do your products save materials or fuel?

The Mulch Mule is designed to save both materials and fuel. Equipped with two conditioners, it fluffs, conditions and aerates mulch as it's dispensed, allowing each cubic yard of mulch to cover more ground and reducing material costs. Fuel savings are achieved with the Mulch Mule's Honda engine, featuring auto-choke and auto-throttle. The engine automatically throttles up when in use and down to a quiet, efficient idle when not, conserving fuel. Additionally, an e-stop conveniently located at the control box allows for the complete shutdown of the engine when needed, such as during mulch spreading.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape companies?



The Mulch Mule unlocks new revenue opportunities by making it feasible to take on larger, more profitable jobs that might have been out of reach with their existing labor force. This versatile, multi-seasonal equipment allows landscapers to accomplish more with fewer workers, increasing their job turnover rate and ultimately driving higher overall revenue.

In what other ways do your products make landscape companies profitable?

In addition to saving time, labor and materials, and enhancing safety, the Mulch Mule is reliable, built for durability and easy to maintain, ensuring low long-term maintenance costs and minimal downtime. The Mulch Mule doesn't call off, allowing landscape companies to focus on running and growing their business without the hassle of equipment issues.



**mulch
mule**

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PROFITABLE PRODUCTS

EQUIP BOOTH #3164



Oregon Tool

with **Carissa Gingras***Director, North American Marketing*

How do your products save time?

Oregon Tool, Inc. has been manufacturing products for more than 75 years and our legacy is built on decades of relentless innovation, precision engineering, and a passion for excellence. Our full range of string trimmer heads and lines offer solutions for all types of trimmers — no matter what your cutting condition is. Ease of use and durability provides more time to get the job done and less time repairing equipment.

How do your products save labor?

The extended pitch and helical shape of TerraMax™ trimmer line delivers outstanding stability to maximize user efficiency and makes cutting easier and faster. These unique features allow landscapers and professionals to make the most of their time onsite.

How do your products save materials or fuel?

The high-grade copolymers were designed with strength and durability in mind. This technology helps the trimmer line resist abrasion and fraying, absorb shocks and reduce

breakage in the line. Landscapers can use fewer feet of TerraMax™ trimmer line in various vegetations and exceed expectations of quality in getting the job done.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape companies?

Landscapers and professionals using TerraMax™ will see the trimmer line's ease of cutting through dense and robust vegetation, harsh, dry and rocky terrain, as well as low to high grass and weeds. Its multi-functional purpose eliminates the need for different lines with various types of terrain. Additionally, TerraMax™ performs well at high temperatures and resists welding and gluing in head spools.



In what other ways do your products make landscape companies profitable?

In addition to TerraMax™ trimmer line, Oregon offers one of the widest assortments of trimmer line in the industry. Our different trimmer line families are designed for professionals with different features that excel in the toughest conditions of repetitive use. For more information on Oregon branded trimmer line visit oregonproducts.com.

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PROFITABLE PRODUCTS

EQUIP INDOOR BOOTH #9208 | OUTDOOR BOOTH #7434D



Steel Green Manufacturing



with **Mike Floyd**

Cofounder and Senior Product Specialist

How do your products save time?

Our machines save time with their speed and maneuverability, being a zero-turn platform and capable of covering up to 240,000 sq ft per fill while spraying and even more with optional attachments.

How do your products save labor?

Our machines save labor by allowing an operator to cover much more ground than they could if pulling a spray hose on a lawn, giving them the ability to finish more lawns in a day than the old way of doing things.

How do your products save materials or fuel?

Our machines can help save product that is being applied by using our optional pressure control system to keep application pressure on target while you are spraying, and our foam markers keep you on track, so you don't overlap too far and waste product.



How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

With a growing set of optional attachments like our snow plow and lift system, these units can be used all year to keep producing for the company instead of sitting idle.

In what other ways do your products make landscape companies profitable?

With their speed and ease of getting around on the lawn, our units allow the operator to get more jobs done in a day, and our units' ability to carry multiple products ensures they have everything they need on the lawn to reduce trips back to the truck.



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SG36

SPECIFICATIONS

Spray Capacity: 30 gal
Spray Width: Up to 8'
Hopper Capacity: 120 lbs.
Fertilizer Tray Capacity: 100 lbs.
Variable Spread Width: Up to 25'
Fuel Capacity: 5 gal
Transport Speed: Up to 10 mph
Rate Production: 120,000 sq. ft. per fill, based on 1/4-gal nozzles

SG42

SPECIFICATIONS

Spray Capacity: 30 gal
Spray Width: Up to 8'
Hopper Capacity: 120 lbs.
Fertilizer Tray Capacity: 100 lbs.
Variable Spread Width: Up to 25'
Fuel Capacity: 5 gal
Transport Speed: Up to 10 mph
Rate Production: 120,000 sq. ft. per fill, based on 1/4-gal nozzles

SG46

SPECIFICATIONS

Spray Capacity: 50 gal
Spray Width: Up to 8'
Hopper Capacity: 220 lbs.
Fertilizer Tray Capacity: 100 lbs.
Variable Spread Width: Up to 25'
Fuel Capacity: 5 gal
Transport Speed: Up to 10 mph
Rate Production: 200,000 sq. ft. per fill, based on 1/4-gal nozzles

SG52

SPECIFICATIONS

Spray Capacity: 60 gal
Spray Width: Up to 10'
Hopper Capacity: 220 lbs.
Fertilizer Tray Capacity: 100 lbs.
Variable Spread Width: Up to 25'
Fuel Capacity: 5 gal
Transport Speed: Up to 10 mph
Rate Production: 240,000 sq. ft. per fill, based on 1/4-gal nozzles



SG54

SPECIFICATIONS

Spray Capacity: 100 gal
Spray Width: Up to 12'
Fuel Capacity: 5 gal
Transport Speed: Up to 8 mph
Rate Production: 400,000 sq. ft. per fill, based on 1/4-gal nozzles

SGXL

SPECIFICATIONS

Spray Capacity: 120 gal
Spray Width: Up to 14'
Fuel Capacity: 8 gal
Transport Speed: Up to 9 mph
Rate Production: 480,000 sq. ft. per fill, based on 1/4-gal nozzles

SGXL ALL-GRANULAR

SPECIFICATIONS

Hopper Capacity: 350 lbs.
Fertilizer Tray Capacity: 500 lbs.
Variable Spread Width: Up to 25'
Fuel Capacity: 8 gal
Transport Speed: Up to 9 mph



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PROFITABLE PRODUCTS

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Sunseeker



with **Matt Moore**

*Director of Robotic Sales,
Sunseeker US*

How do your products save time?

With its dual-cutting blades and innovative floating cutting design, the Orion X7 guarantees superior mowing efficiency. This single mower can effectively handle the needs of vast lawns that would traditionally require hours of manual labor. Furthermore, operators can remotely oversee and coordinate multiple mowers across various locations, effectively doubling the output and drastically reducing the time required for maintenance tasks.

How do your products save labor?

The Orion X7 offers significant savings on labor costs as it requires only one person to install and set up the mower, along with configuring the working schedule. Once set up, the mower operates automatically based on the predefined settings. This is a stark contrast to the traditional approach of hiring multiple staff members to work on the lawn. Additionally, maintenance tasks such as blade repairs are streamlined, requiring minimal intervention. All operational adjustments can be conveniently managed through the dedicated app, enabling remote monitoring and control.



How do your products reduce environment impact?

Conventional mowers require gas, oil changes and produce emissions that can contribute to air and noise pollution. Not to mention, the physical effort involved in mowing can be exhausting and time-consuming. However, the Sunseeker Orion X7 is wire-free and it's electric, it can recharge when the battery is running out. Additionally, the Orion X7's low noise level of 68 decibels in night mode makes it perfect for overnight mowing without disturbing your

family or neighbors. This feature also helps reduce overheating and provides relief from the sun, as the machine can operate efficiently even at temperatures up to 115 degrees Fahrenheit. The electric operation also means zero harmful emissions, contributing to cleaner air and a healthier planet.



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PROFITABLE PRODUCTS

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SynkedUP Q+A with **Weston Zimmerman** CEO

How do your products save time?

Any time you take something that only a skilled or experienced person can do, and turn it into a repeatable process that someone less experienced can also do, you save time. Even the original experienced person who built the process benefits in time savings and reduced human error. SynkedUP saves time on contractors' daily tasks, such as building estimates and sending proposals, scheduling, job costing and invoicing.

An example is SynkedUP's estimating tool with templates and production rates. You can take what used to be an hours long process and turn it into mere minutes. The best part? Even your office admin can now create estimates. It's documented into a repeatable process.

"I can turn around a \$250,000 pool job estimate in two minutes," says Steve Kidwell of Prime Outdoor in Ohio.



How do your products save labor?

An hour of planning saves eight hours in the field. One of the most effective ways to save labor is proper planning, and getting the right information to the right people at the right time. Not having to run back to the shop or wait on materials that someone forgot to order is a biggie.

With SynkedUP's communication tools from back office to frontline field workers, you cut out all the waste generated by lack of timely information. Having all the job details — such as address, photos, material and equipment lists, estimated hours and notes — is invaluable.

How do your products generate additional revenue for landscape companies?

If your pricing is set up incorrectly, doing more work will just dig a bigger hole in your profits. The first thing SynkedUP does is ensure you're charging the correct pricing that your

business needs to charge based on your business costs.

There are two profit killers for contractors: 1). the math for markups and overhead recovery in estimates, 2). not having the correct amounts of resources (labor, materials, etc.) in estimates.

SynkedUP solves both of those profit killers by automatically calculating your pricing based on your company's expenses. And with job costing, you can see how many resources (labor, materials, etc.) you had estimated vs. how many you actually used to complete the job. Only make a mistake once.

In what other ways do your products make landscape companies profitable?

Many contractors struggle with setting up solid business systems and processes, which causes them to be the bottleneck. Using software for core business functions, such as estimating, tracking time, job costing, invoicing and more is like taking plug-and-play systems and processes curated by thousands of others before you and plugging them into your business.

Change is hard, but doing things the old way is hard. Choose your hard.



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*“Doing things the old way is hard.
Doing things the new way is hard.
Choose your hard.”*

- Weston Zimmerman
CEO, SynkedUP



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PROFITABLE PRODUCTS



Takeuchi-US



with **Lee Padgett**

National Product Manager

How do your products save time?

At Takeuchi, we know that time is money. Our compact track loaders and excavators are engineered for quick and efficient maneuverability in tight spaces, reducing the time spent on tasks like grading, digging, trenching and material handling. Because our powerful equipment is compatible with a wide range of attachments, contractors can often use a single machine to accomplish multiple tasks.

How do your products save labor?

Finding enough labor continues to challenge today's lawn and landscape business owners. Takeuchi equipment is easy to operate and highly efficient, helping contractors save labor with features such as advanced hydraulic systems, intuitive controls and quick attachment changes that reduce the physical effort required for tasks. The durability and reliability of Takeuchi machines also minimize maintenance needs and breakdowns, allowing

contractors to focus on their work rather than repairs.

How do your products save materials or fuel?

Our compact track loaders and excavators are designed to perform demanding tasks while using less power, which directly contributes to lower fuel usage over time. Features like auto idle and ECO mode reduce fuel consumption by automatically lowering engine speed when not in use. Our first electric excavator, the TB20e, offers zero exhaust emissions and reduced noise/vibration levels, making it an environmentally friendly, sustainable choice. Featuring a diesel engine and an electric motor, our TB216H hybrid excavator provides the same powerful performance regardless of operating mode.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape companies?

Takeuchi machines are versatile tool carriers that are performance-matched to our full-featured attachments, allowing contractors to add new services and expand their revenue opportunities. From augers to brush cutters and pallet forks to snow blades, our attachments can help contractors get even more from



their machine investments. Standard configurations include bolt-on cutting edges, heavy-duty cylinders and optimized controls. On hydraulic attachments, connections are easy thanks to optimized hose lengths with connect-under-pressure couplers.

In what other ways do your products make landscape companies profitable?

Takeuchi Fleet Management (TFM) is available on most track loader and excavator models. TFM machine performance and health alerts include location, utilization, performance and maintenance data for valuable insight into where and how equipment is being operated. With TFM, contractors get remote machine monitoring that helps them better manage their fleets and keep costs down for less downtime, greater profitability and better ROI.





MEET THE TCR50-2

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PROFITABLE PRODUCTS



TOWA Tools

Q+A with **Richard Ogawa**
CEO & Co-Founder
of Towa Industries, Inc.

How do your products save time?

TOWA's Power Distribution Manager (PDM™) allows landscapers and operation managers to efficiently charge multiple batteries from a single outlet, keeping extra batteries readily available for crews. Unlike traditional sequential chargers that charge one battery at a time, our PDM™ utilizes proprietary active load balancing technology to effectively manage multiple battery loads from a dedicated outlet. Our PDM™ also prevents you from tripping the breaker because of its ability to read and monitor load demand.

Combined with TOWA's Battery Power Station (BPS™) Systems, landscapers can charge equipment on the go with portable power solutions that scale up to 18kWh. This eliminates the need for transporting tools back and forth between the trailer and shop, reducing downtime and streamlining operations for maximum efficiency.

How do your products save labor?

Our PDM™ power management devices automate the battery rotation process, allowing you to charge a fleet of batteries overnight or on-site without manual intervention. Its user-friendly, intuitive design stream-

lines training and operations, reducing the need for fuel management, maintenance, and parts ordering. This simplicity translates to less labor and easier day-to-day management.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape companies?

TOWA's Universal Power Head (UPH™) Kits enable you to convert your existing gas-powered trimmers and pole pruners to fully electric. With quieter battery-powered tools and a way to charge them, you can extend working hours into noise-sensitive areas like residential neighborhoods and corporate campuses. This capability opens up new business opportunities and gives you a competitive edge by accommodating clients who prefer these types of solutions.

In what other ways do your products make landscape companies profitable?

TOWA's Suite of Universal Charging



and Power Solutions offers significant advantages by being brand-agnostic allowing diversification of brands and equipment. This flexibility allows landscapers to select the best tools for their specific needs without being restricted to one battery platform.

Additionally, TOWA's PDM™ smart charging technologies can provide valuable insights into your energy usage. You can better track operational costs and optimize charging schedules by monitoring and managing energy consumption. The energy dashboard available with the PDM™ Master Unit lets you identify peak and off-peak usage times, helping you schedule power use more efficiently and reduce costs. This comprehensive energy management leads to more cost-effective operations and increased profitability.



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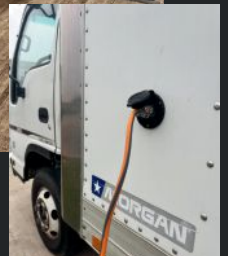
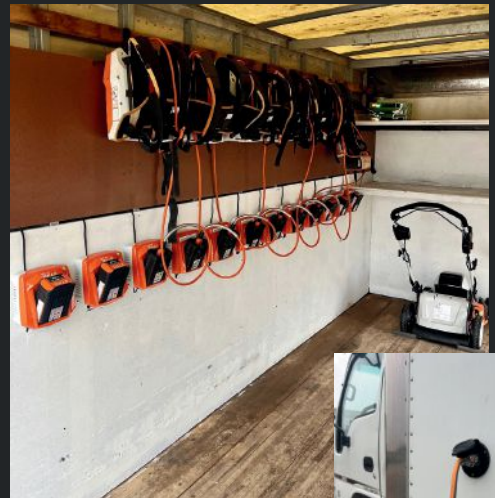
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Turfco

Q+A

with

Scott Kinkead

Executive Vice President



T3200 Spreader Sprayer



T5000 Spreader Sprayer

How do Turfco Applicators help to save time?

Turfco offers a family of Ride-On Applicators designed to save landscapers time and boost efficiency. Our units significantly reduce the training time required for new employees to operate them efficiently and profitably. With innovative features like the T-Flex15 Tank, which allows operators to spread two different liquids simultaneously or independently, our

applicators stand out. Additionally, our highly maneuverable and uniquely designed units eliminate turf tear, enabling operators to focus on application rather than on the applicator.

How do Turfco Applicators help with labor challenges?

Turfco's Ride-On Applicators are engineered to boost landscaping crew efficiency far beyond what traditional walk-behind methods can achieve. By enabling simultaneous application of dry fertilizers and spray products, our applicators dramatically reduce labor costs and increase productivity. These versatile machines streamline operations, allowing crews to cover more

ground in less time while delivering precise and consistent results.

How do Turfco Applicators help with the bottom line?

Turfco Products are designed to boost landscapers' profitability. Our applicators, equipped with the T-Flex15 Tank, provide the T3200 and T5000 models with an additional 15-gallon spray capacity. This added capacity translates up to an extra 60,000 square feet of coverage, enhancing efficiency and reducing downtime. The T3200 stands out as the highest-capacity spreader sprayer available on the market under 36 inches wide, making it a powerful yet compact solution for any landscaping operation.



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FIVE QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW BY SETH JONES | LM EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Curtis Atkinson

CEO
SUNLINE LANDSCAPES
SALT LAKE CITY

1 How did you get into the industry?

Like a lot of us in the industry, it started with mowing lawns. In a roundabout way, that was my start. I knew at a young age that I would have a business of my own. I really loved being outdoors. I really loved the equipment and building stuff, and it morphed into what it is today: Sunline Landscapes. I love seeing our clients enjoying their outdoor living spaces and landscapes that our team helped create. It's pretty amazing.

2 How has your 2024 been?

Things are going quite well. We're actually ahead of budget and quite a bit over where we were at this point last year. The only thing I'll say that isn't as positive is it feels like calls have leveled off a little bit. Our pipeline is super strong, but our backlog is not quite as strong as it was last year. Through the second quarter, it's been great, but the last half of the year is going to be interesting, but next year looks awesome!

3 Are there any tools you've been using that you're excited about?

Industry-backed software has been a game changer for us. We're on Aspire. A lot of the plug-ins they use help us track and measure projects, properties and equipment. This is all software I didn't have five or six years ago — I was predominantly using QuickBooks and Excel spreadsheets. Having that software is a total game changer for us to know what our numbers are. It gives us benchmarks of where we need to be.

We're making sure that how we're estimating is setting us up to be profitable, and we're measuring our team and how we're doing, how our production is doing and where we need to improve.

4 Do you have a day in your career that stands out as especially memorable?

For me, there are a couple of moments, but one that really stands out to me was when I started the company. I was single, so there was not much risk, more just having fun. When I got married and we started a family, I was like, "I have to care for and provide for my family." This isn't just a job, it's a career and a lot more is at stake. Plus, I started realizing — you know ... a lot of my team have families too. We've got to take this a little more seriously. We all have careers, we all have families. We're all having fun, but let's see what we can do together.

5 Tell me about your family. What do you all do for fun?

We basically chase our kids around to whatever sporting events or cheer events they're doing. They're my life. I love my children. I love my wife. We've been married 18 years now. I would say our getaway right now is spending time at the lake with the family — we love being on the water. Our kids are very active in soccer, cheer, mountain biking, golf and skiing. We're just at a busy age right now. Sometimes, we're just high-fiving in the hall because we're just passing by each other on the way to different games or events. It's kind of a 'divide and conquer' thing with my wife and me, but that's my 'why.' My oldest is Ethan, he's 15 and a soccer player. Rikki just turned 13, and she's in competitive cheer. Ryder is our youngest — he's 10 and into golf, mountain biking and skiing. We also have a daughter that we lost four years ago. She would be 17 this year. Her name is Ellie, and she's our angel, watching over us. 🙏

BEST ADVICE

"Know your numbers and be humble enough to ask for help. Everyone says they know their numbers. I thought I knew my numbers. I just realized I didn't know the exact critical numbers that I should've been watching and measuring. A lot of that clarity and information came from getting involved with peer groups, getting with good industry coaches and consultants and getting straightforward feedback and some really good advice."



Strategic partnerships drive Fairwood Brands forward

#39

BY LAUREN DOWDLE | CONTRIBUTOR

Created to acquire existing landscape companies and help them grow, Fairwood Brands invests in established outdoor living businesses across the country. This business model helped the company reach No. 39 on the 2024 LM150 list, and they experienced a 96-percent increase in revenue from 2022 to 2023.

Headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, Fairwood Brands is comprised of eight companies located throughout the country that provide premium residential design/build and maintenance services, according to CEO Mike McRae.

Founded in 2022 as a parent company to help five established landscape companies thrive, Fairwood Brands was developed by Crane Group, a Columbus-based investment company. McRae says Crane Group acquired the five landscape companies in distinct geographic markets from across the country, choosing companies that fit within their specialized space of luxury outdoor living services.

"We have since grown to a family of eight brands, creating and maintaining premium outdoor spaces with gold-standard customer service," McRae says.

Fairwood looks for existing landscape companies that have consistently delivered results with revenue of \$10 million to \$30 million, have a solid local presence, are known for designing and building luxury outdoor living

spaces and have management teams that want to stay in the business.

"We partner closely with them to provide back-end support, including systems, financial and operational

process improvement, upgraded employee benefits, legal support and marketing capabilities," McRae says. "My job is to provide the brands with strategic direction and unwavering support."

McRae says the company's overall growth has come from a balanced blend of acquisitions and organic growth. The individual companies also focus on organic growth, and this roster includes Bear Creek Landscaping and Construction in Redmond, Wash.; Bruss Landscaping in Wheaton, Ill.; Enchanted Garden Landscape in Phoenix; Executive Landscaping in Cape Cod, Mass.; Fine Landscapes in Sterling, Va.; Kuppe's Landscape Services in Clinton Township, Mich.; LML Estate Management in Fort Wayne and Indianapolis, Ind.; and Signature Landscape Contractors in Maitland, Fla.

"Each brand has employed different strategies to drive organic growth in their respective markets," McRae says.

These landscape companies benefit from building peer-to-peer relationships with others within Fairwood Brands, McRae says. They are also partnering with a family-owned company in Crane that has 75 years of operating experience, which provides them with access to flexible capital and extensive business expertise.

While Fairwood Brands has experienced large-scale growth since the company started, McRae says it all comes back to the small things, like honing in on their services and people. Investing in people and offerings has paid dividends, and McRae encourages other professionals to do the same within their companies.

"I would advise them to find a niche within this large and broad industry and focus intensely on people — your employees and customers," McRae says. "Growth will follow."

Looking ahead, McRae says the support Fairwood Brands receives from Crane Group and the working relationships the companies have developed will continue to play a large role in their success.

"The demographics, housing market and overall wealth position of our country should offer tailwinds for some time," McRae says. 🍷



Mike McRae

Fairwood Brands made its LM150 debut in 2024 with 96-percent revenue growth from 2022 to 2023





BY BOB MANN

The author is the director of state and local government relations for the National Association of Landscape Professionals. Reach him at Bob@landscapeprofessionals.org.

The green industry goes 'on tour'

I get to do some cool things in my job, things that would have been unimaginable to me seven years ago when I left the day to day of the lawn care industry for the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP).

When I made the leap, I had been a certified pesticide applicator for 30-plus years, but I was shocked at the breadth and depth of the pesticide world that I had no idea existed. I was instructed to go to this meeting over here and that conference over there, all of which was very new to me and, quite frankly, very intimidating.

You know that feeling when you don't know what you don't know? That was me in 2017.

I was a member of one of NALP's legacy associations, the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA). For most of its existence, PLCAA was led by Tom Delaney, an accomplished advocate for the lawn care industry. If your company enjoys state preemption of pesticide regulations, it is due in no small measure to the tireless work of Tom and other industry advocates.

Once the merger of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America

and PLCAA formed the Professional Landscape Network (or PLANET, which would later be rebranded as NALP), and Tom departed in 2016, all his institutional knowledge left with him. And that is where I found myself when I started with NALP. I knew no one, and no one knew anything about our association. And that, my friends, is a huge problem.

When the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) performs its risk assessments for the pesticides used in our industry, it uses the same models used for agriculture. Picture

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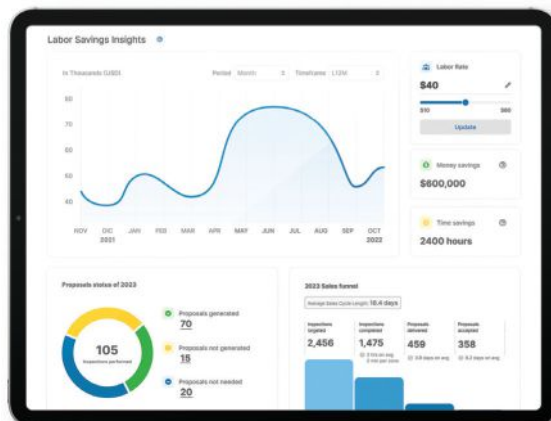
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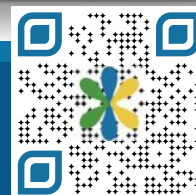
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in your mind a 100-acre cornfield in Iowa. If Farmer Brown wants to spray his field, it's fair to assume he is going to cover every inch of that 100 acres.

But you run into trouble when that same model is used for nonagricultural uses such as professional lawn care. For instance, if your customer's parcel is one acre, the EPA assumes that you spray the entire acre, including the area covered by the house, the driveway, the garage, etc. In other words, officials overestimate our uses quite substantially. And that, my friends, is another huge problem.

So, how have we gone about educating regulators about our industry? One way is by hosting crop tours for the EPA and any other regulatory agency that touches upon our interests. Through crop tours, the EPA can get scientists out of their labs to visit the places where the pesticides they evaluate and register are actually used.

That is precisely what we did in August when we loaded a bus full of scientists at EPA headquarters in Washington and headed out into rural Virginia. Our first stop was the Manassas branch office of Virginia Green where we were treated to a demonstration of their state-of-the-art mixing and loading system. From there, we headed further west to the Northern Fauquier Community Park where we were joined by NALP-member volunteers from Weed Man, King Green, TruGreen, Lawn Doctor, SteelGreen Manufacturing, OptiX Technologies, Senske Services and Advanced Turf Solutions for demonstrations explaining the nuts and bolts of how we service our customers.

EPA is under court order to quickly comply with provisions of the Endangered Species Act to show that using a particular pesticide will not jeopardize endangered and threatened species or their habitats. To do this, the EPA is developing strategies for herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and rodenticides as groups to facilitate quicker review by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and/or the National Marine Fisheries Service. Unless we are front and center in advocating for our uses of these active ingredients, we could well lose them.

Long before government agencies were concerned about pesticide drift or runoff, the lawn care industry self-adopted our own mitigation techniques. You were in big trouble if you were spraying for dandelions and mistakenly hit your customer's rose bush, so we strictly follow label directions and ensure that the pesticides we apply stay put and do not escape the turfgrass system.

It's just one man's opinion, but based on the questions we fielded from our guests, we are making progress. 🍷

“Officials overestimate our uses quite substantially. And that, my friends, is another huge problem.”



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Marathon lessons for business growth and longevity

Running a marathon or a business requires planning, patience and a relentless commitment to continuous improvement. The reward in both situations is longevity, one of the most celebrated measures of success.

In the last five years, I've completed 10 marathons and learned valuable lessons from each one. Running has its challenges, but it also connects you to

like-minded people who become competitive partners who help you grow.

Did you know that Apple, Google and Facebook are among one another's largest customers? They compete, just as we do in marathons, but they have discovered over time that working together advances their respective goals.

Running marathons teaches you to think strategically. That measured

approach positions you for readiness when circumstances arise to achieve your goals.

If you have a clear vision and goals for your business, these marathon lessons will help you capitalize on the growth opportunities that come your way.

MULTIPLE PATHS TO VICTORY

Experienced marathoners build on their success. They know almost anything can happen during a race that can translate into a setback or an unexpected advantage. The trick



BY JEFF KORHAN

The author is the owner of True Nature Marketing, a Naples, Fla.-based company helping entrepreneurs grow. Reach him at jeff@truenature.com.

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is anticipating every scenario to give yourself a chance.

Readiness, not hope, is always your greatest strength, so build a strategy based on the conditions necessary to achieve your company's goals. List and study those conditions to understand what could undermine them.

Establish milestones that will inform your progress. Use them to move quickly from plan A to plan B and plan C and so on. A marathon is finite, and so is your business budget and other resources. Yet, there are always multiple paths to success if you strategically plan for them.

WORKING IN FOCUSED CYCLES

The process of training for a marathon is typically divided into six- to eight-week training cycles. The conclusion

of each cycle provides a checkpoint for analysis, celebration and a reset before moving on to the next cycle.

Working in cycles keeps teams focused and motivated on what matters most. This leads to more effective time and energy management to consistently achieve peak performance.


Running a marathon or a business is hard work. Take time between cycles to reset and absorb the lessons learned to refine your systems and improve future projects.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Injuries are an athlete's greatest fear. Strength and mobility training will greatly minimize them, but the problem is supplemental training competes with the rigors of daily running workouts.

The solution is microdosing strength training to make small but consistent gains. I'll personally perform one or two strength or mobility routines on light days throughout the week and more if I'm feeling fresh.

Every microdose is an investment in the future. It may take months for the gains to be noticeable, but those gains make the habit hard to break. In business, anything you should do regularly — such as checking in with former clients — can become a unique strength with microdosing.

If you've never run a marathon, I can assure you the hours pass like minutes when you find your flow. I'm confident these lessons will help you find that flow in your business by minimizing the doubts and stress that hold owners back from the growth they deserve. 

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BY PHIL HARWOOD

The author is a senior advisor with Tamarisk Business Advisors. Reach him at phil.harwood@tamariskadvisors.com

People are your greatest asset ... so what's next?

Many business owners would agree that their greatest asset is their people because each person is unique and has the potential to do great things. Unlike other assets, people cannot be duplicated. While we may use the same business management software and trucks as our competitors, our people are what truly make us different. But how do we leverage the uniqueness of our people to create a sustainable competitive advantage? How do we unlock the potential of our people to win in the marketplace?

First, we need to involve each of our people in a career development process regardless of their position in the company, education level or any other factor. This sounds like a simple thing to do. However, this threshold step is a difficult hurdle for many businesses because it raises many questions that often don't have easy answers. For example, if we crack open this door, how do we manage expectations regarding promotions and pay increases? How much is the company willing to invest in career development across the board?

What does career development even mean, especially if we're not growing rapidly? These types of questions will need to be answered, but they shouldn't create paralysis by analysis.

Engage your people by starting a conversation about their thoughts about their careers. Incorporate your observations into the discussion about the person's strengths. Utilize resources such as Clifton-Strengths to gain insight into the person's natural talents that may or may not have been developed into strengths. Each person is unique and was born with an individualized set of skills, often just waiting to be unlocked. With focused effort, we can help unlock these talents.

Second, identify high-potential employees who seek career advancement and are willing to invest in themselves. The best way to identify these high-potential employees is to look for a track record of someone who has done just that and invested in themselves. These people go above and beyond to equip themselves. They may read everything they can get their hands on. They may listen to podcasts. They may attend webinars. They may follow thought leaders on social media. They may have a second job on the weekends doing something that develops their knowledge and skills.

And — this is important — they have been doing this all along without compulsion or hope of reward. They are self-motivated and unstoppable. For this reason, they are easy to pick out of a crowd. They stand out. If you ask high-potential employees what they did over the weekend, you'll be amazed at what you hear. Instead of, "I watched football," it will be something like,

"I enrolled in a continuing education course on graphic design," or "My brother and I are rebuilding a classic car from the ground up." Again, these people stand out.

Third, while continuing to offer career development support to all your people, investing heavily in your high-potential employees is essential. These overachievers are a restless bunch. If they don't feel invested, they don't stick around for long. The good news is your investments, if thoughtfully made, will be greatly multiplied in your organization.

I had the opportunity to earn an Executive Master of Business Administration from Michigan State University several years ago. My company paid the tuition bill, for which I was extremely grateful, but I spent every weekend and most evenings away from my family for two years. We both made an investment and a sacrifice. And we both reaped the benefits. It was truly a win-win, as it should be.

So, you say your people are your greatest asset. Does the level of investment in career development reflect that statement? Are you engaging each of your people in a thoughtful way to help them explore their full potential? Are you taking good care of your high performers by making significant investments to accelerate their careers?

According to Gallup, the No. 1 reason employees leave their employers is a lack of career development. As you map out your strategic plans for 2025 and beyond, perhaps your people need to be part of the plan. After all, they are your greatest asset.

Now go forth. 📌



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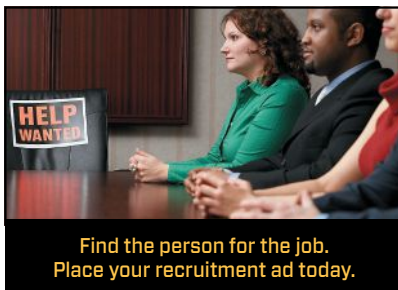
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Email Editor-in-Chief Scott Hollister (shollister@northcoastmedia.net) or Associate Editor Rob DiFranco (rdifranco@northcoastmedia.net), and you could be featured in an upcoming issue of LM.



GROW WITH GRUNDER

BY MARTY GRUNDER

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



Why managing up matters

Working with me isn't always a walk in the park. The personality traits that have made me successful can also make

me a challenge to work with. I'm passionate about the work we do, and I know I can be too intense. Strengths can be weaknesses, after all.

I also know I'm not the only owner like this and that for companies to be successful, it takes all kinds. It takes people with intensity and passion; it also takes people with patience and level heads. The best teams are able to work well together so that each person can bring their unique strengths to the table.

I'm so excited that at GROW! 2025 in Columbus, Ohio on Feb. 24-26, Grow Group vice president and my right-hand man, Vince Torchia, will lead a session titled "Stop the Madness! Managing Up for Success."

Vince and I have worked together for almost 15 years, and he's also worked with and coached other owners and their teams as a facilitator in our ACE Peer Group program. He's skilled at managing up and teaching others how to do it effectively. He'll share five strategies during his session at GROW!, but I wanted to give you a preview of three that I think can help anyone reading this month.

CONTROLS VERSUS CONTROL

Key leaders need a certain amount of autonomy to succeed, but balancing an owner's need for information with this autonomy can be challenging. It's especially hard when leaders

“The best teams are able to work well together so that each person can bring their unique strengths to the table.”

take over tasks that the owners used to handle themselves.

What's critical here is to establish *controls* or metrics that can give a quick pulse on performance without requiring a manager to be *controlling*. Industry-specific software is an excellent tool for creating the visibility needed for this.

CLARIFY ROLES

When something is the responsibility of two people, it's the responsibility of no one. It's easy to drop the ball if we assume someone else is handling it, so managing up (and down ... and peer to peer) requires clear roles, responsibilities and ownership. If roles are unclear in your company, a great strategy is to restate what you heard.

A statement like, "So what I'm hearing you say is that we need to keep the crew on the Smith job two days longer, and Brian will rearrange the schedule while I communicate the change with the Smiths. Is that

right?" can go a long way in clarifying roles and tasks.

CREATING A UNITED FRONT

Teams that undermine each other don't succeed. Especially among the leadership team or with clients, the team must present a united front externally, even if there are differing opinions internally.

Here's the secret: We handle disagreements civilly and try to do it privately. We're all adults and have different opinions, and we can debate the options until we reach some sort of consensus. And sometimes the consensus is, "I still don't like it, but let's go with your approach," and that's OK.

SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

These skills help successful team members manage both up and down in their organizations, a key for leading within landscaping companies. Vince will dive into more practical insights and strategies for managing your relationship with your boss during this breakout session at GROW! 2025.

We'll have a host of other breakout session offerings and will also learn directly from the talented team at Hidden Creek Landscaping when we tour their Columbus facility. Early-bird pricing ends on Nov. 1, so sign up at growgroupinc.com/grow-2025 before then to lock in the best price. I hope to see you in February! 🐦



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