

BY SUE GIBSON / EXECUTIVE EDITOR

They don't know you

I like to call them "landscape's stakeholders." They're the interest groups who can make or break this industry, yet many don't have a very good picture of the services you provide, the expertise you apply in your work or the value you bring. These stakeholders are residential and commercial customers, industry suppliers, the general public, the media, the business community and large institutions, current and potential investors, regulators and politicians, students and potential employees.

Individually and with your peers, you need to give these stakeholders a good image of landscape work as an admirable profession providing work of great value. After all, you're trained and skilled. You enhance outdoor spaces. You're environmental stewards. You have a career with unlimited financial potential and creative opportunities. You know that, but many of those stakeholders don't.

If there was an industry-wide public relations program, they'd understand. If there were days when several of you worked together to build the Evergreen Foundation's greenways, renovate veterans' cemeteries, or enhance local public areas, they'd see your professionalism. If there were even modest but coordinated efforts on both the local and national basis, those stakeholders would see you in a different light.

I would love to see one or two enthusiastic people in each of this industry's professional organizations (local and national) encouraging members to support one strong public relations program. I would be so happy to see my media colleagues devise ways we can jointly promote this program within our pages, Web sites and seminars. I would be thrilled if the associations, industry suppliers and educational institutions decided this project is worth their time, energy and dollars.

Finally, I would be proud if landscape organizations from large franchises to institutions to smallest family firms contributed annually to such a program.

The impossible dream?

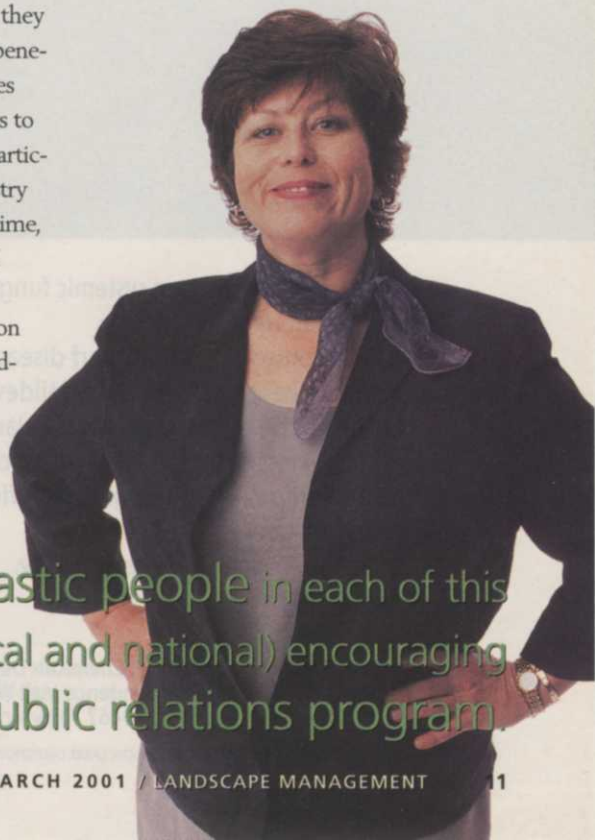
Is this realistic? I've seen the associations coordinate their efforts for the annual Gallup poll of homeowners, so I know they can work together for something that benefits their members. My media colleagues have plenty of wonderful, creative ways to encourage landscape professionals to participate. In the past, many generous industry suppliers and institutions have shared time, energy and money for good causes, so I know it's possible.

And despite tremendous competition and fragmentation, I've seen lots of landscape organizations work together on projects with a lot less direct benefit than this would bring.

It would be fun to see even a

modest and very limited version of the milk lobby's "Got Milk?" campaign for landscape. It could have politicians, movie stars, sports heroes, business leaders, children, even grandparents telling how much they enjoy their landscape service. As an industry, we could have a lot of fun appealing to potential employees, young students, property owners, even regulators. We just need a solid program, a clear plan and a willingness to work together. Can we start soon?

Contact Sue at 440/891-2729 or e-mail at sgibson@advanstar.com



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Circle No. 109 on Reader Inquiry Card

Welcome to our wild and wacky world

Mr. Jonathan P. Ward, congratulations on your selection as the president and chief executive officer of ServiceMaster (NYSE: SVM). Welcome to the services business, particularly to the Green Industry. We think you'll find that the Green Industry, specifically the professional landscape side of it, to be a wild and wacky business. (Where else, for example, can a guy with a pickup truck and a lawnmower declare himself a businessman and start signing up clients immediately?)

Mr. Ward, you come to our industry with impressive credentials. In a 23-year career at R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company, you progressed up management, and in 1997 assumed the title of president and chief operating officer of the largest commercial printing operation in the United States. That firm, based in Chicago, is about the same size as the company whose future you're now directing. ServiceMaster, headquartered in the Chicago suburb of Downers Grove, reported 2000 revenues of about \$6 billion.

We understand you've been extremely busy since taking the helm at ServiceMaster in mid-February. We've been told you've been meeting with ServiceMaster executives and managers, among them the folks guiding the fortunes of TruGreen

ChemLawn and TruGreen Landcare at division headquarters in Memphis, TN. While lawn care and landscaping are just two of many services that ServiceMaster offers, they're vital to its growth and profitability. In fact, the combined revenues of the two services account for one-fourth of ServiceMaster revenues.

New spark needed?

It's no secret to you, or to anybody who has been following the company's quarterly reports, that things didn't go as well as they could have for ServiceMaster's Green Industry operations last year, in particular landscaping. The job of consolidating 100-plus formerly independent landscape operations into a single national company seems to have been more difficult to accomplish than your company expected. At least, that's what it looks like from here.

Perhaps the executives in Memphis thought they could duplicate their success in consolidating the lawn application business where they've gobbled up all but a few of the country's largest and most successful application companies to dominate the marketplace. But there's a big difference between running a lawn application service and operating a landscape business. In the labor and equipment-intensive landscape arena, the competition is even fiercer for accounts and profits.

Too early to call

After just three years, it's too early to predict ServiceMaster's success or failure in landscaping. The Memphis executives may yet turn TruGreen Landcare into a profit powerhouse. Reputations (and big salaries) ride on it.

I'm betting that the message you're delivering to the troops is that ServiceMaster, as its name indicates, is in the business of delivering service. Quality service.

I'm also betting that you'll be implementing programs, starting with improving customer and employee retention, to spark ServiceMaster in the Green Industry again.

Contact Ron at 440/891-2636 or e-mail at rhall@advanstar.com

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AND TRACTORS

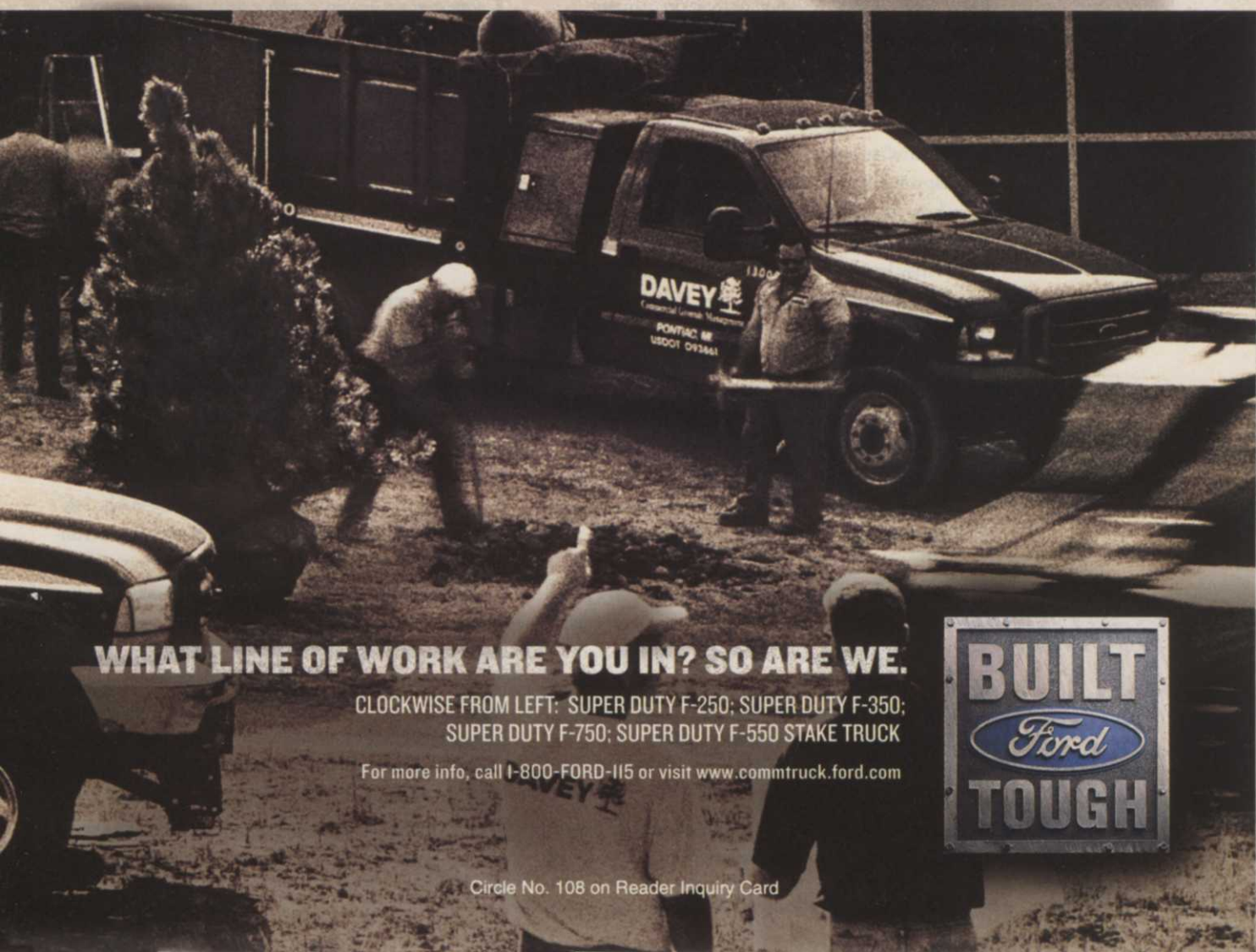


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IT TAKES A LOT OF MEN AND EQUIPMENT TO MAKE THINGS LOOK BEAUTIFUL. AND NATURAL.
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EFFORTS. BUT OUR BIGGEST ASSET IS OUR IRONCLAD COMMITMENT TO *GETTING IT RIGHT.*



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Circle No. 108 on Reader Inquiry Card

We may know more than those above us when it comes to grounds care, but it matters little if we can't communicate our ideas.



Learn to communicate

Many grounds managers across the country tell me how difficult it is to get their point across to their supervisors. Some even feel they must constantly justify their position or their department.

For the most part, grounds managers are a rare group who are dedicated to their profession. They know how to grow turf, plant trees and move snow. The difficulty comes when everyone around them "seems" to know their job better than they do. This may happen because many grounds managers don't know how to present their own ideas and thoughts through memos, reports or careful budget preparation.

We may know more than those above us when it comes to grounds care, but it matters little if we can't communicate our ideas. That's why it's equally important for the grounds manager or supervisor to know how to communicate effectively.

In order to have your supervisors' understanding and support, you need to be as good as they are in writing, speaking and computing skills, budgeting, knowledge of labor laws, gender issues, etc. This won't happen overnight, but here's how you can start to improve those skills.

1. Attend workshops, seminars or classes. Don't just attend something that pertains to the technical aspect of grounds management. Look for a skill you need to improve as a manager or supervisor.

If you have difficulties working with your computer, take courses that will assist you. Most work is done through a computer. Get on top of this to be an effective communicator.

If you have trouble conveying your thoughts or recommendations on paper, look for a class or workshop that will

help in that area. As a grounds manager, it's important to stay current with the laws and regulations that pertain to labor, gender and diversity as well as have a knowledge of the budget procedures at your place of employment.

2. Join and get involved with a professional association. Becoming involved with an association that represents who you are and what you do is a great way to expand your role as a grounds manager. I've found networking and building professional relationships with other grounds managers to be a tremendous asset in dealing with problems and finding solutions. Getting involved means attending national and local meetings and being an active member, not just being a dues payer.

3. Become certified. One of the most important decisions I made in my professional career was to become a Certified Grounds Manager because it showed my administration that I was committed to my job and profession.

I'm convinced certification gives more weight to our requests for funds and equipment, as well as our presentations to the administration. Face it: anyone can call themselves a grounds manager, and John Q. Public has no way of evaluating the reliability of that claim. Certification provides one undeniable barometer for everyone.

The real benefit of certification for grounds managers will come when many more of us become certified and our employees and employers begin recognizing it.

We're in a profession that requires an ever-increasing amount of technical and management ability. We, individually and collectively, must draw attention to that fact.

— *The author is Director of Grounds Operations at the Dwight-Englewood School in Englewood, NJ and current president of the Professional Grounds Management Society. He can be reached at 201/569-9500.*

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industry almanac

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Ell acquires Fullbach

CALABASAS, CA — Environmental Industries, Inc. acquired Fullbach Landscape Services, Inc., a \$10 million landscape maintenance company headquartered in Louisville, KY with branches in Illinois, Missouri and Michigan. Fullbach will operate under Ell's landscape maintenance umbrella as Fullbach/Environmental Care.

Bayer acquires Compass

KANSAS CITY, MO — Bayer Professional Care acquired Compass fungicide (trifloxystrobin) from Novartis. The Bayer group now holds all patents, marketing authorizations, trademarks worldwide, and production and formulation expertise for the strobilurin-based fungicide line.

Profile acquires Wood Recycling

BUFFALO GROVE, IL — Profile Products LLC acquired the hydraulic mulch business of Wood Recycling, Inc., manufacturer of Re-Fiber and Hydroblanket brand products.

Toro nabs Disney

LAKE BUENA VISTA, FL — The Toro Company became the official turf and irrigation company of Walt Disney World Resort. The agreement is an extension and expansion of a previous pact with Disney, and applies to most Walt Disney World properties.

[CLIPPINGS]

Time to raise the H-2B cap?

WASHINGTON D.C. — If your company relies on the H-2B temporary worker program, here's a tip — always get your workers certified as early as possible. Here's why.

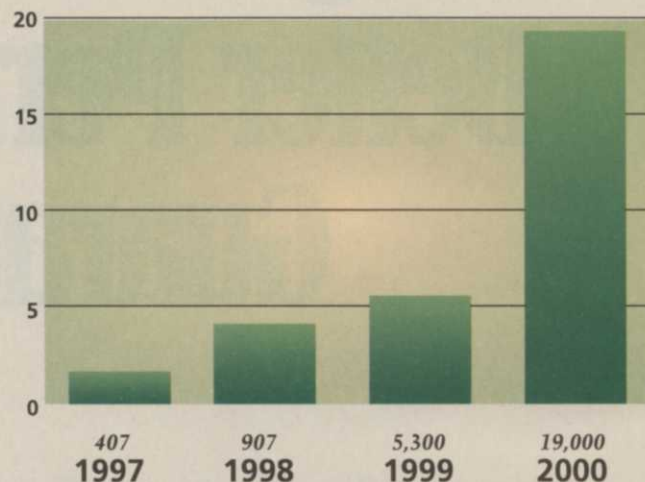
Last year, U.S. demand for H-2B workers exceeded the cap. The program allows for the entry of 66,000 unskilled seasonal foreign workers, but the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) certified 75,300 H-2B workers, reported the American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA). A lot of this extra demand came from the landscape industry.

"In 2001, the H-2B cap could be a problem by mid-year," reports the ANLA. "In 1999-2000, INS (U.S. Immigration and Nat-

uralization Service) did not keep an accurate count of the number of temporary H-2B visas granted. But DOL did certify 75,300 applications for a maximum of 66,000 visas. Once this cap is reached in 2001, the program will be shut down for the year." ANLA said the solution is to raise the cap.

U.S. LANDSCAPERS DISCOVER H-2B

In thousands



■ Number of H-2B class workers certified by landscape contractors

SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

HOW MANY YEARS HAS YOUR ORGANIZATION BEEN IN OPERATION?

	Total	<\$100K*	\$100-500K	>\$500K
< 5 years	11.3%	18.6%	5.6%	6.3%
5-10 years	30.4%	41.9%	33.3%	15.6%
11-20 years	32.2%	18.6%	36.1%	43.8%
>20 years	26.1%	20.9%	25.0%	34.4%

* = revenue

SOURCE: LM READER SURVEY 2000, PENN & ASSOCIATES

continued on page 23

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more power to
the root of your
weed problem?***

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Herbicide



The proof is in the leaf.¹

Monsanto scientists used scanning-electron microscopy to photograph the effects of weeds sprayed with Roundup Pro and an imitator. Taken just one hour after application, these images clearly show more formulation in the leaf sprayed with Roundup Pro.

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In the first two hours, it delivers three times more power to the roots than Glypro Plus[™] herbicide.

The proof is in the roots.²

Scientists also used autoradiography to photograph and measure the amount of herbicide in the roots two hours after application. Time after time, at least three times more herbicide showed up in the weeds sprayed with Roundup Pro. With the imitator, barely any herbicide has moved to the roots.

 **Roundup**
PRO
Herbicide

