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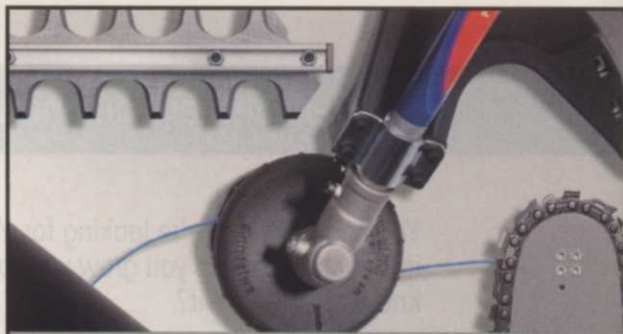
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Growth means knowing when to let go and when to get aggressive.

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS /  
Managing Editor

**G**rowing plants successfully means knowing which environment they like, when and how much to water and when to apply the right fertilizer. Running a business isn't much different.

Tom Heaviland, president of Heaviland Enterprises Inc., has spent two decades cultivating his commercial landscape operation and has built a \$5 million business by knowing when to take on new business and new talent.

"The last couple of years is when we got back on track," Heaviland says. "In 2001, 2002 we had flat years. That's when I made the decision to put somebody into sales and start to get more aggressive. We had grown previously just by referrals and because we were good guys."

Heaviland added a director of sales to his team, someone skilled to handle the tasks he didn't enjoy and, by his own admission, were not his strength. Heaviland does



### Made in the shade.

The Heaviland Enterprises executive team comprises a mix of new and veteran employees.

mostly commercial landscape management, which provides about 70% of the gross revenue. The other 30% is enhancement work on existing contracts – new planting and irrigation upgrades.

"I was looking back and we were losing market share," he says. "You need either to grow or get squeezed out. We're still playing catch up."

Heaviland also added a controller, a human resources specialist and a director of operations. The HR specialist has been particularly helpful when it comes to keeping Heavi-

land's 100 employees happy.

The company does 360-degree reviews. In the process subordinates evaluate superiors. Also, the company has new tools to gauge employee satisfaction

### Surveying the troops

"We do a formal survey once or twice a year," Heaviland says. The survey has led to changes. They're not always big changes but sometimes it is the little things that can make big differences.

"We try to get that feedback from the guys," he says. "That's important. We never knew they preferred carne asada to hot dog barbecues.

Little things like that. Our production workforce is 100% Hispanic here. We're trying to understand that culture."

"We just started self-evaluations this year," he added. "Employees do a self-assessment of their own skills and abilities. Their supervisor will get with them and review that and see if 'Yeah, this is right on' or 'No we need to do a little bit more work here.'"

The benefits of Heaviland's attention to detail are clear. If he is going to make customers happy, he needs to keep employees happy. And more importantly, they need to know what is expected of them.

"We share our vision and mission statement before every company meeting," Heaviland says. "Am I 100% sure that employee No. 98 is delivering on that? No, I'm not. That's the challenge and that's why we come to work every day."

"We drill it up. It's our job to serve them. Everything we do is for the benefit of those guys in the field. That's a challenge to make sure that employee No. 98 does understand that we are trying to deliver the best in landscape services. We're not there yet. We've got work to do to get there." **LM**

►► **Online:** [www.heaviland.net](http://www.heaviland.net) **Locations:** Vista, Poway and Chula Vista, CA **Principal:** Tom Heaviland  
**2006 revenues:** \$5 million **Founded:** 1985



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