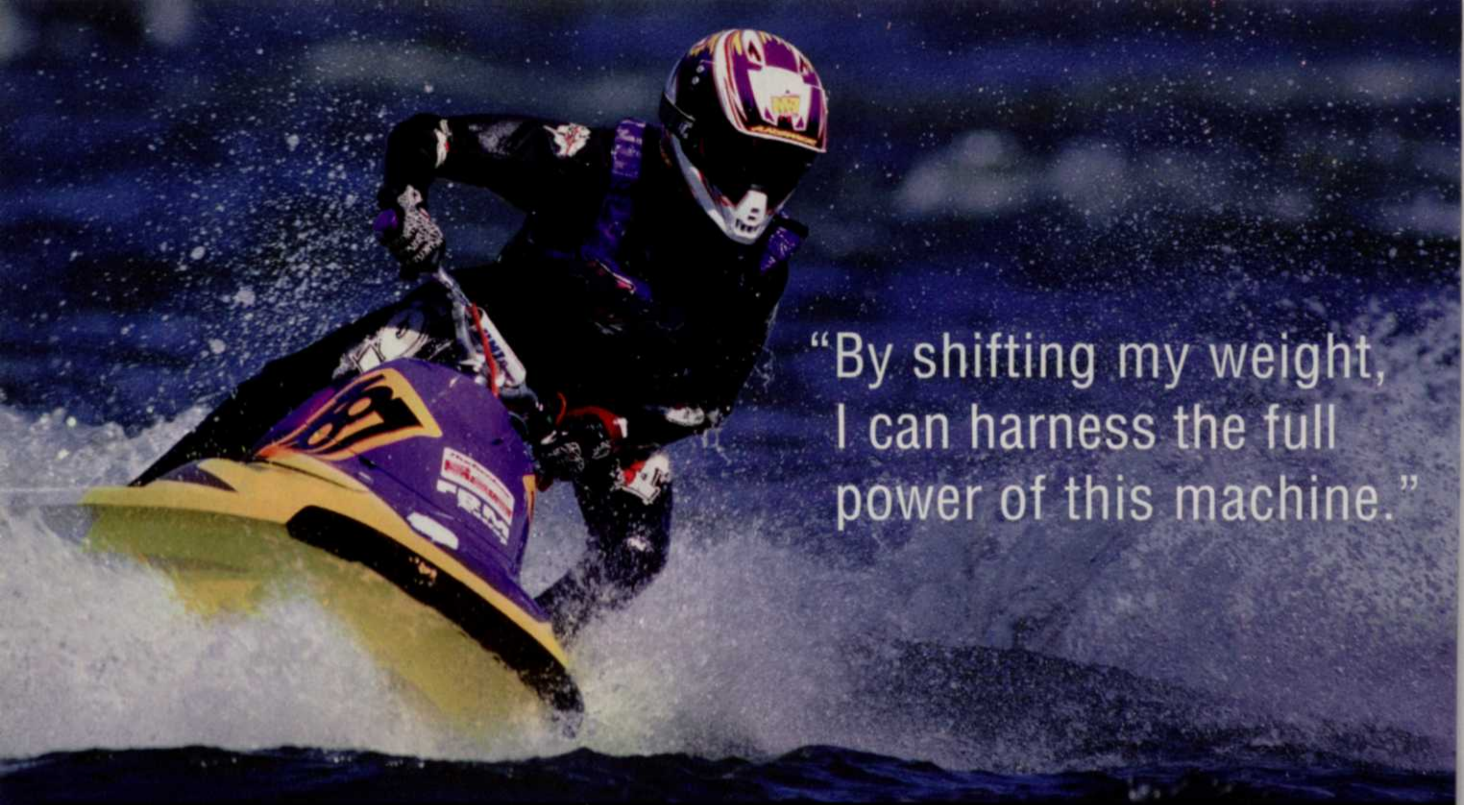

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A letter to all commercial mowing professionals, dealers, distributors and manufacturers.

Dear Commercial Mowing Industry Professionals,

Over the last few years, there has been an undeniable trend in the commercial mowing industry toward stand-on products. I'd like to take this opportunity to share my insight regarding the recent growth of the stand-on market and encourage our continued mutual success.

As our industry grows, all of our businesses grow and vice versa. Our individual efforts to improve our businesses through our respective areas of expertise result in greater success for all of us. The stand-on trend is a perfect example of this phenomenon.

First off, I congratulate and commend each of you who have embraced the stand-on as the most productive mower category today. There are currently about six brands of stand-on mowers. If you've researched stand-on mowers, you certainly understand their productivity and profitability. For those of you who have not looked into them, I encourage you to do so this winter.

In my career, I've witnessed similar trends three consecutive times in the following three categories of mowers:

First off, I congratulate and commend each of you who have embraced the stand-on as the most productive mower category today.

1. The rise, plateau and decline of commercial intermediate **walk-behind** from the early '80s to the early '00s.
2. The rise, plateau and decline of commercial zero-radius-turning, **mid-mount riders** beginning in the late '90s and losing momentum over the past two or three years.
3. The growth of the **stand-on** market, which began around 2000 and has dramatically accelerated over the last few years in spite of industry-wide commercial mower declines.

Incremental advances in technology and the resulting productivity gains have driven this evolution of the commercial mower market. As a leader in the stand-on category, we at Wright are naturally grateful that the industry has begun to embrace standing as superior way to mow. Just as our company, partners and users have profited from this trend, I believe the entire industry will profit as more of you make the shift to stand-on mowers.

Again, I congratulate and give a hearty welcome to the newer participants in the stand-on category. I hope all is well with your businesses and families these days and that you have the finest season ever in 2009!

Sincerely,

Bill

William R. Wright, CEO
Wright Manufacturing, Inc.

In 1981, Bill Wright started with a lawn maintenance business, Lawn-Wright, which grew to mow about 500 lawns per week. In 1983, he also founded a separate manufacturing division, which led to the development of stand-on mowers. In 1993, he formed Wright Manufacturing, Inc. for the purpose of manufacturing stand-on mowers and Wright shipped their first Stander® in October 1997.

THE WRIGHT WAY TO MOW

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SECURING YOUR FUT

Business owners must prepare for the time when they are no longer responsible for the day-to-day operations of their companies

RON KUJAWA STOPPED taking a paycheck in 1997.

Nearly 45 years ago, the 76-year-old father of four founded Kujawa Enterprises Inc. (KEI), just three years after he married Sally, who still serves dual roles as CEO and CFO. While he still goes into the office often, Kujawa, who long ago relinquished day-to-day responsibilities, and his wife enjoy an active semi-retirement that this year includes trips to China, Canada and a pair of visits to Africa. While wise investments have secured their financial future, the Kujawas' main concern is ensuring KEI continues and is able to provide for their children's futures.

In fact, it was money problems that led Kujawa to start working on his long-term finances.

"I never thought of it as retirement planning," he recalls. "In 1972, I had to borrow money to pay taxes."

Kujawa started talking to an advisor who served as both his accountant and attorney. It was then Kujawa began working to create the financial stability that would sustain his day-to-day operations — and also provide him with a comfortable life when he finally decided to hand over the reins.

When an owner starts a business, retirement might be decades away. Working with your advisors to develop a plan early on and periodically revisiting that plan help ensure comfort in your golden years and the successful transfer of your operation — whether it's to a family member, your employees or someone outside the operation.

Volumes have been written about the difficulty of knowing when to make the change. Many owners, like Yardmaster's Kurt Kluznik, know it's an issue, but they have yet to embark down that path.

"I don't have a successor or a partner," says Kluznik, who founded the Painesville, OH-based company in 1971. "I don't have a timeline. I need to be doing that."

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BY **DANIEL G. JACOBS** MANAGING EDITOR

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Solutions

Even for those who have offspring waiting in the wings, transitions can be a challenge. While the way that scenario plays out is unique to each entity, the question of when to begin the process is much simpler.

"With estate planning, (owners) should be doing it when they have accumulated wealth, when it's going to present a tax situation," says Michael Napolitano, a partner with Citrin, Cooperman & Co., which provides tax and accounting services to middle market companies. "You may not make everyone happy, but the business has to be first," he adds. "We try to get them to look at it in those terms."

It's a lesson Kujawa learned early on.

"I was a damn good salesman; I didn't know a hell of a lot about business," he admits. "I've learned a lot since. One lesson that I learned was 'know what I didn't know.' "

Richard Heller, Greener by Design

Kujawa is now working through the second phase of business transition. While each of the Kujawa children owns 12% of the company (Sally has the other 52%), Chris was the heir apparent. Joe joined the business a few years later. Another son and daughter have lives outside the family business.

Chris and Joe are looking to buy out their siblings' shares.

"We've come up with a few different glitches that we're trying to figure out," Kujawa says. "We haven't come to a complete agreement on it on all four sides. Whether the company should buy the stock, whether the individuals should buy (the stock); or if they want to retain any stock on their own as a minority stockholder with a look-back provision if the company is sold."

As for Sally's shares, those are part of the estate.

"We have to be cognizant of the children and their tax problems," Kujawa says. "For them to get a chunk of money at a certain time might not be the best thing. Maybe it's going to be an installment purchase. Each of these things has to be thought out."

And thinking it out, Napolitano stresses, is the important factor.

"A lot of business owners don't want to think about estate planning until it has a financial impact on the business and the children," he says. "That will

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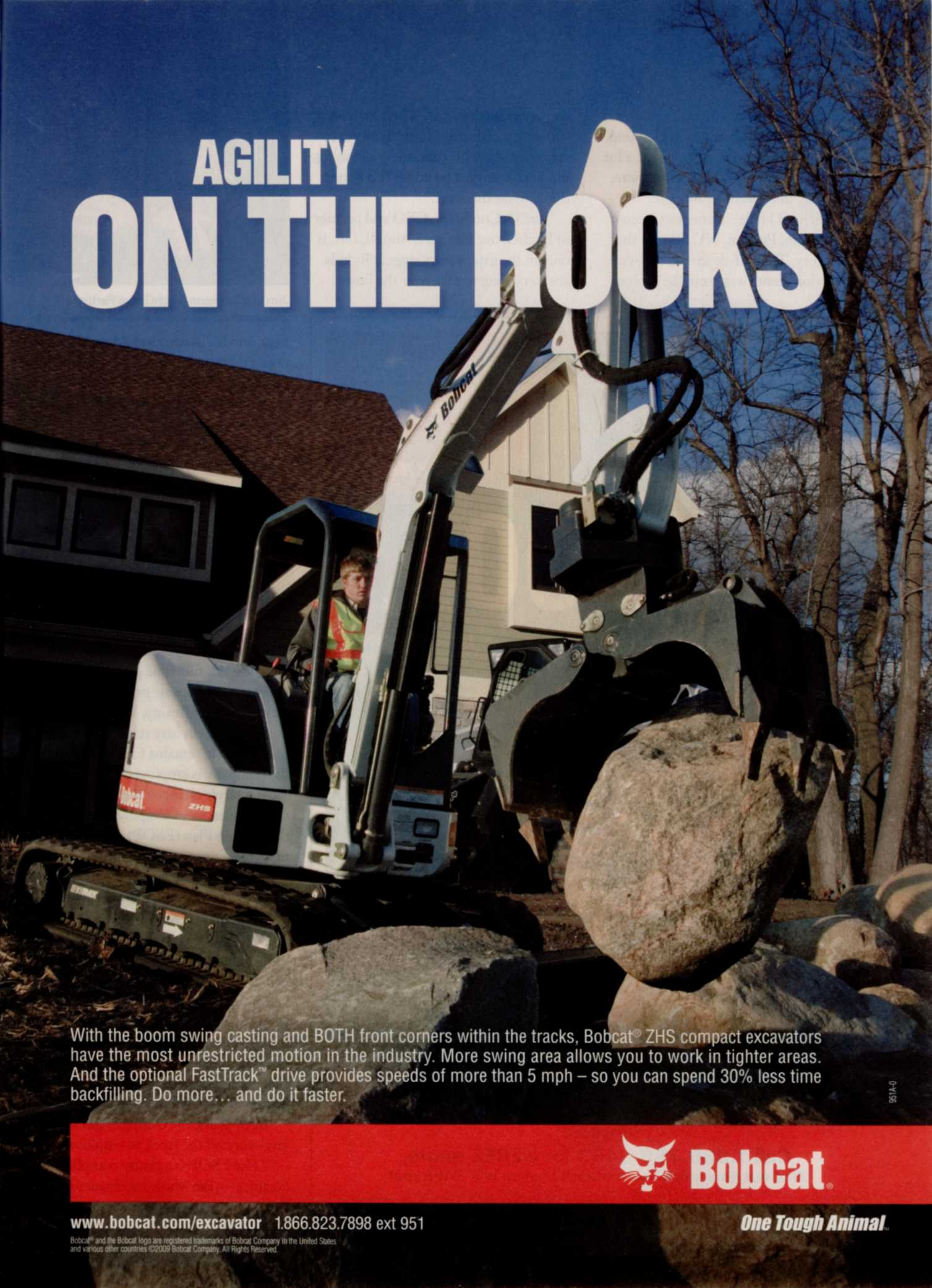
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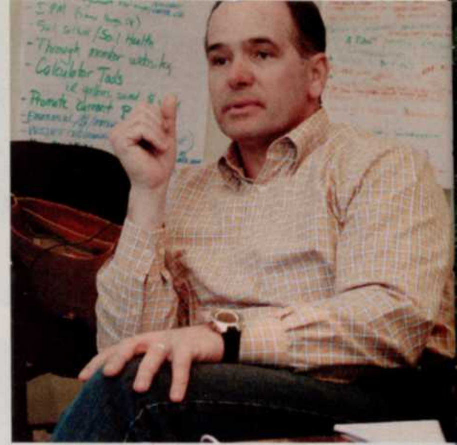
then bring in the succession planning, because that is a very strong issue a lot of business owners know is out there, but they don't want to address."

Richard Heller, owner of Greener by Design, Pelham, NY, fits into that category. The self-described "49-year-old adolescent" was reminded of his own mortality recently when a friend was diagnosed with cancer. He's yet to seriously begin his retirement planning, but knows it must be done: "I'd better think about this stuff."

Jim McCutcheon, CEO and partner of HighGrove Partners, Austell, GA, is only in the exploratory stage. His kids are too young to take over the business, and his partner's children are off doing their own things. McCutcheon is reviewing options, including identifying someone internally who might one day take over operations.


Jim McCutcheon, HighGrove Partners

But, he admits, while it's one thing to have a strong manager, "it's another thing to hand that guy the keys."

ESOP

By the time he was 12 years old, Kevin Johnson probably had a pretty good idea where his future lay. He began working part time in the family business in 1976, the same year his father, Daryle, started operations. Ten years later, it was a full-time gig. And four years ago, he became president of All American Turf Beauty, Van Meter, IA.

While Kevin may run daily operations (Daryle remains CEO), 51% of the company is employee owned. In 1995, Daryle changed the 401(k) profit sharing plan to an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). Naturally, there are tax advantages to that approach, but one key factor was what Daryle saw happening to operations gobbled up by national chains.

"My father looked at what happened to the employees and the people who helped build up those companies after a national company bought them," Kevin Johnson says. "He wasn't comfortable seeing what he worked on for a number of years wrecked or destroyed. He felt some obligation to the employees who helped make it what it has become."

In 14 years, the company has sold just over half the stock to employees.

"The ESOP is a pretty complicated creature — the whole mechanics of it,"

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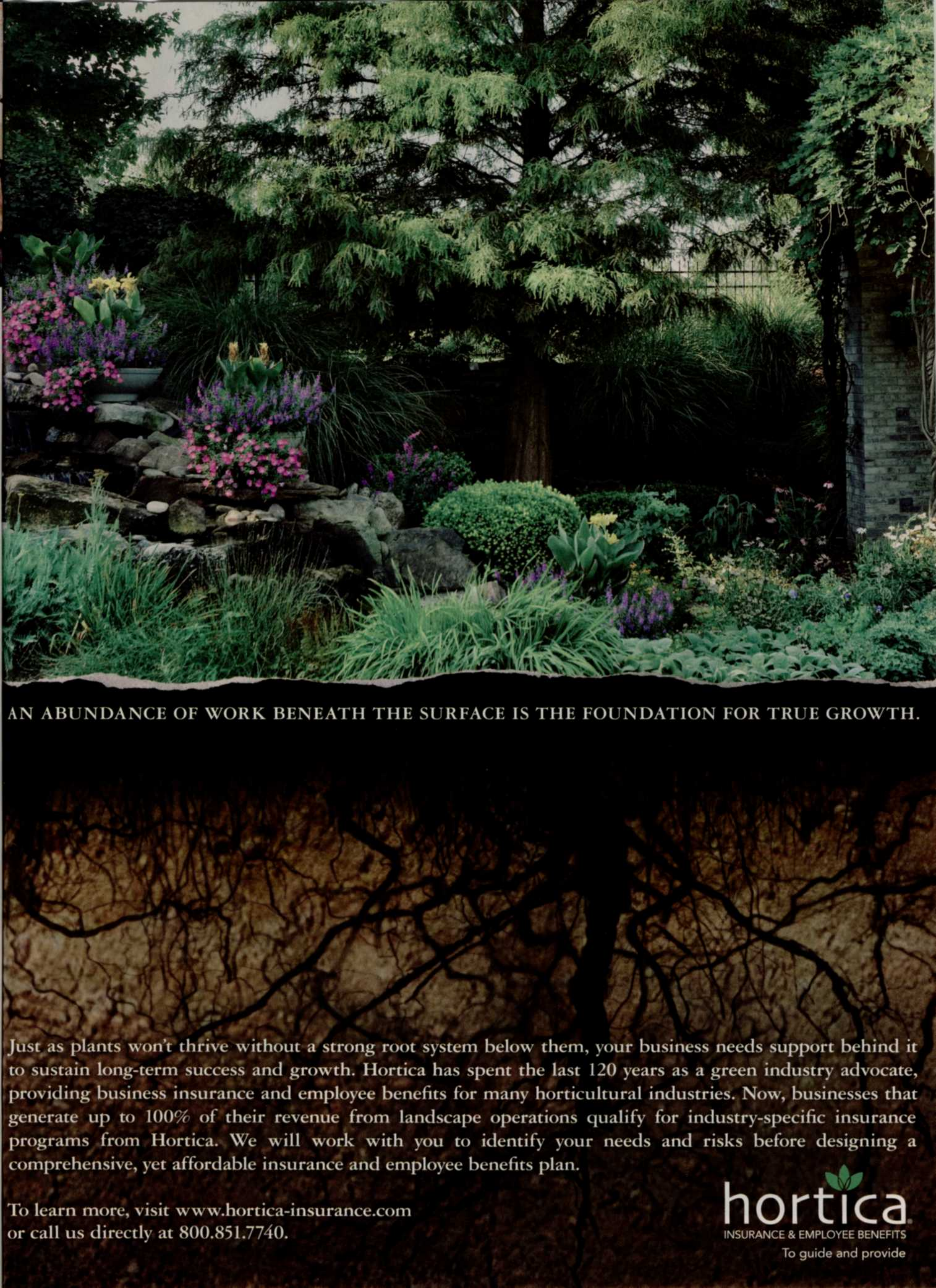
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Johnson says. "We've had two purchases of stock from the original owners. Once we get that completed, we're probably looking at purchasing more shares from the owners."

The company borrows money to buy the stock and then transfers it to qualified employees.

(L to R) All American Turf Beauty's Jim O'Loughlin, VP sales & marketing; Daryle Johnson, CEO; Kevin Johnson, president; Clarice Baiotto, administrative assistant

"It does take a lot of planning and forethought as to how you want things to go. The ESOP has worked out very well for our employees. They receive shares of stock at no cost to them as part of their retirement plan," Johnson says.

He points out the arrangement has kept the company somewhat insulated from some of the market downturns.

When employees leave, the company buys back their shares and recycles them back through the system.

Most years, All American's employees receive 8% to 11% of their yearly compensation in stock. Valuation is a part of any business transfer.

"You have to have an independent appraiser come in and give you an appraisal of what that stock is worth, based on your company performance, the marketability of your company and a whole range of things," Johnson says. "The value in the shares has gone up for the most part since 1995."

Emotion

Napolitano says family discussions about the future of the business can be tricky. "There are so many moving

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Kurt Kluznik, Yardmaster