



SYNGENTA PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTS

HEADQUARTERS:
Greensboro, NC

TOP BRANDS:

1. Barricade herbicide
2. Heritage fungicide
3. Banner fungicide

LATEST/GREATEST "MORE WITH LESS" LAWN CARE FORMULATION AND HOW IT WORKS:

Barricade offers low-rate, solid, season-long control of crabgrass, Poa annua and other grassy and broadleaf weeds. It helps gain efficiency without sacrificing efficacy.

WHAT LCOs ARE SAYING: "My applicators have a lot faith in Barricade because of the length of control. Barricade is not the cheapest product on the market, but on a per-acre basis, it's well worth the price. I know what works and what doesn't work. Barricade works. You can compare one of my lawns to those of my competitors, and there's a difference. My lawns are weed-free." — *Randy Hahn, Twin Lawn, East Lansing, MI*

VALENT PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTS

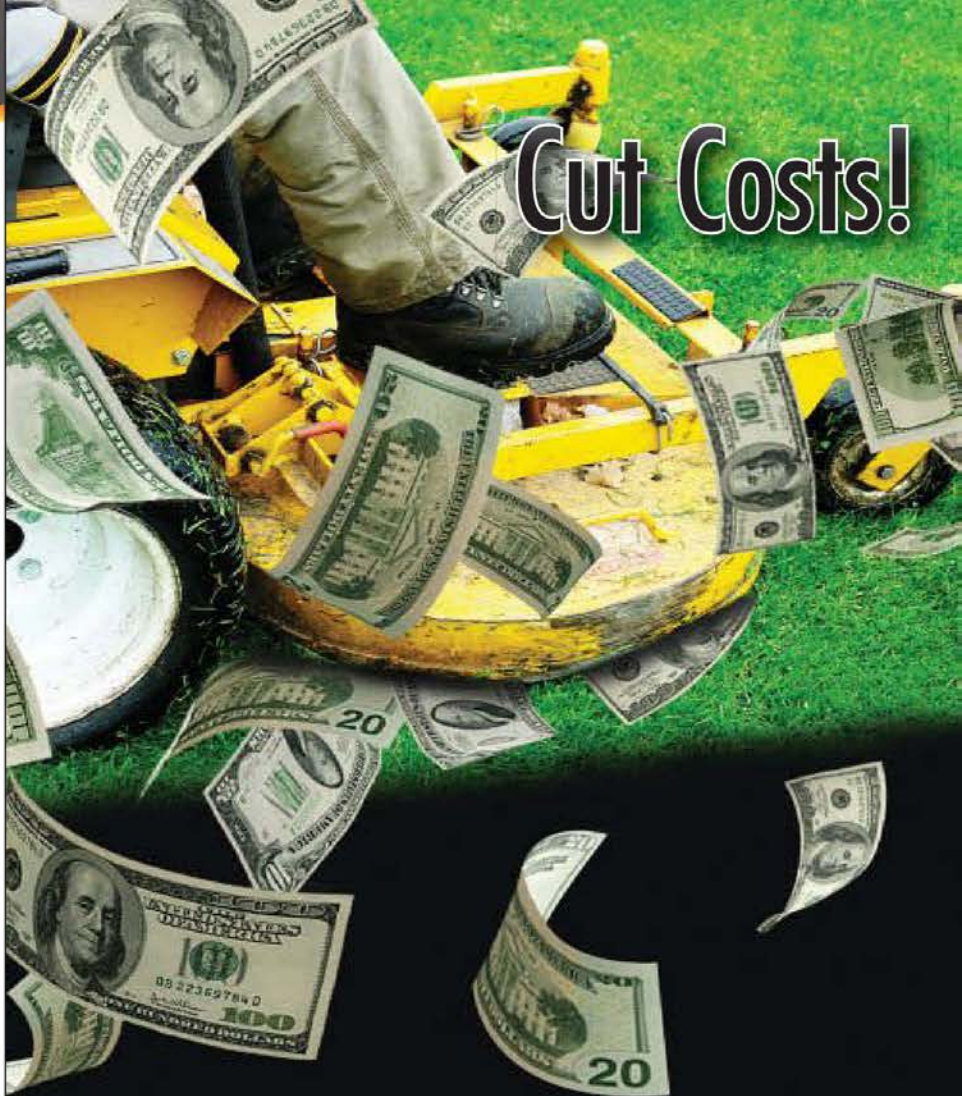
HEADQUARTERS: Walnut Creek, CA

TOP BRANDS:

1. Safari insecticide
2. Arena insecticide
3. BroadStar herbicide/SureGuard herbicide

LATEST/GREATEST "MORE WITH LESS" LAWN CARE FORMULATION AND HOW IT WORKS:

SureGuard provides LCOs with long-lasting preemergent control of annual grassy and broadleaf weeds. It's a sprayable formulation with flumioxazin that provides extended residual weed control and enhances the speed of control and knockdown performance of glyphosate — even on glyphosate-resistant weeds. **LMI**



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THE BENCHMARK

KEVIN KEHOE

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4 steps to a sales-driven operation

Making a profit today relies on your ability to sell. In the old days, the key to profit was production management. Sales were easier to come by: You answered the phone and delivered a proposal. If we're honest, we would admit we were not really great salespeople; we were just great gatherers.

Today, the customers make the rules — and we must learn to become hunters to survive. Hunting requires specific skills and systems many of us have yet to develop. Reviewing the key ones here may help the development process.

1 Price competitively

With lots of contractors chasing work, gross margins are predictably falling. This will continue, and when the economy recovers, it will only marginally recover. Stop target fixating on the gross profit margin percentage when bidding, and instead focus on accumulating total gross profit dollars.

Table 1 provides an example of the revenue impact of this necessary strategy. The skill we need to develop is the ability to sell more and use pricing to be more successful in closing. In a hunting environment,

bringing home enough meat is more important than having it all be prime cut.

2 Be proactive

Distinguish yourself by getting to the customer first and getting back to them quickly. There is no way around this. Get more active.

Someone in your business must sell full-time. You need to relieve them out of measuring, estimating and pricing duties so they can focus on lead generation and closing activities. Salespeople

TABLE 2: SALES BY MARKET SEGMENT

Sales/Salesman	2007	2009
Grounds maintenance	\$500,000	\$1,400,000
Design/build	\$1,000,000	\$2,400,000
Bid build	\$3,000,000	\$5,500,000

glued to computers can reduce selling time by 40% to 60%. Consider this: A sales person may cost you \$60,000 per year; 60% of their time is \$36,000. You can hire data entry staff for less than that. When game is scarce, you have to hunt longer and harder.

3 Set higher sales goals

The top industry salespeople sell a lot more than average salespeople. Yes, they have a competitive price and staff support, but they do it because they are expected to do it. See Table 2 for the top earnings by salespeople per market segment.

Most salespeople simply achieve what is expected, if that. By setting higher goals for leads, bids and closes — and then tracking and measuring these weekly — a salesperson can increase his or her performance significantly.

Most limitations are self-imposed. We must challenge our sales teams to achieve more. Good hunters do not hunt for subsistence only; they go for as much as they can kill and build surplus.

4 Simplify your proposition

Salespeople must be able to state in 50 words or less the answer to this question: "Why should I hire you? You are more expensive than the other guy."

Justifying any pricing premium requires a firm grasp of the customer's deepest concerns, the benefits they seek, and your product/service features that deliver the goods.

Remember, customers don't want the lowest price; they want the best value. Hunt where this idea is appreciated, and leave the rest to the low-price guys.

TABLE 1: REVENUE IMPACT

Gross profit dollars needed	Gross profit margin	Revenue dollars needed
\$500,000	50%	\$1,000,000
\$500,000	40%	\$1,250,000
<i>Difference</i>		25%

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Things are looking up in the weed business. **Tom Mauer**, president and owner of two Springfield, MA-based Weed Man franchises is expecting a year of growth. “Our payments are ahead of last year, and it appears customers are making the commitment to get caught up on some of the services they might have skipped last year.” Mauer discusses changes in the industry and how he deals with a fluctuating economy.

Tom Mauer, tell us when, how and why you got involved with the lawn care industry.

“I fell in love with the Green Industry when I was a little kid following my grandfather around in his gardens and greenhouse. I grew up working in the soil, and when it came time to make a decision about college, it seemed a natural fit for me to start off in the direction of landscaping and lawns.”

New England is one of the most ecologically conscious regions of the country. How does your company meet the environmental expectations of your clients? “It comes down to communication of what we’re doing on the lawn and to the recommendations we make for each customer. We try to let the customer know there is no standard fit that works on every lawn. Our goal is to work with the customer with a ‘big-picture’ approach that will include nutrients, control applications, cultural practices and improvements like core aeration that help to improve

the lawn and soil ecology. And educating the customer on issues like water needs and promoting best practices validates our commitment to protecting our green spaces.”

How to you respond to customers who ask for organic or natural lawn care? “We’ll ask them ‘What is it exactly that you’re looking for? Do you mean organic fertilizer? Or do you mean you don’t want pesticides?’ And oftentimes, they will respond, ‘Yes, I don’t want pesticides.’ Or they will say, ‘Give me a program without pesticides unless I want you to spray the weeds, then I’ll let you know.’ We can work with that.”

How would you describe selling to and serving today’s customers versus customers of 10 years ago? “Tactically, the selling process has changed because of the do-not-call legislation. But

selling to the customer is really still the same. For the most part, they want a ‘green, weed-free lawn.’ Making a sale means educating the customer about the value of their lawn or green space, and helping them to understand there is no way to guarantee a totally ‘weed-free lawn,’ but we will work with them to improve their lawn and soil’s health. And when there are problems, we’re the professionals who will be there to take care of it.”

What do you feel it’s going to take for the lawn care industry to see the kind of growth it experienced in the years prior to this recent recession?

“We need to educate consumers on the value of lawns and landscapes to the environment. Customers buy lawn care because they want their lawns to look nice, and possibly because it’s an expectation a lawn should look nice

AT A GLANCE

COMPANY: Weed Man, Springfield, MA

FOUNDED: 2001

TITLE: President/Owner

NUMBER OF LOCATIONS: two franchise locations

EMPLOYEES: 15

INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT:

Started in landscape and lawn care business in 1977, former member of PLCAA, current chairman of the PLANET Lawn Care Specialty Group, board member and immediate past president of Massachusetts Association of Lawn Care Professionals.

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS & HOBBIES:

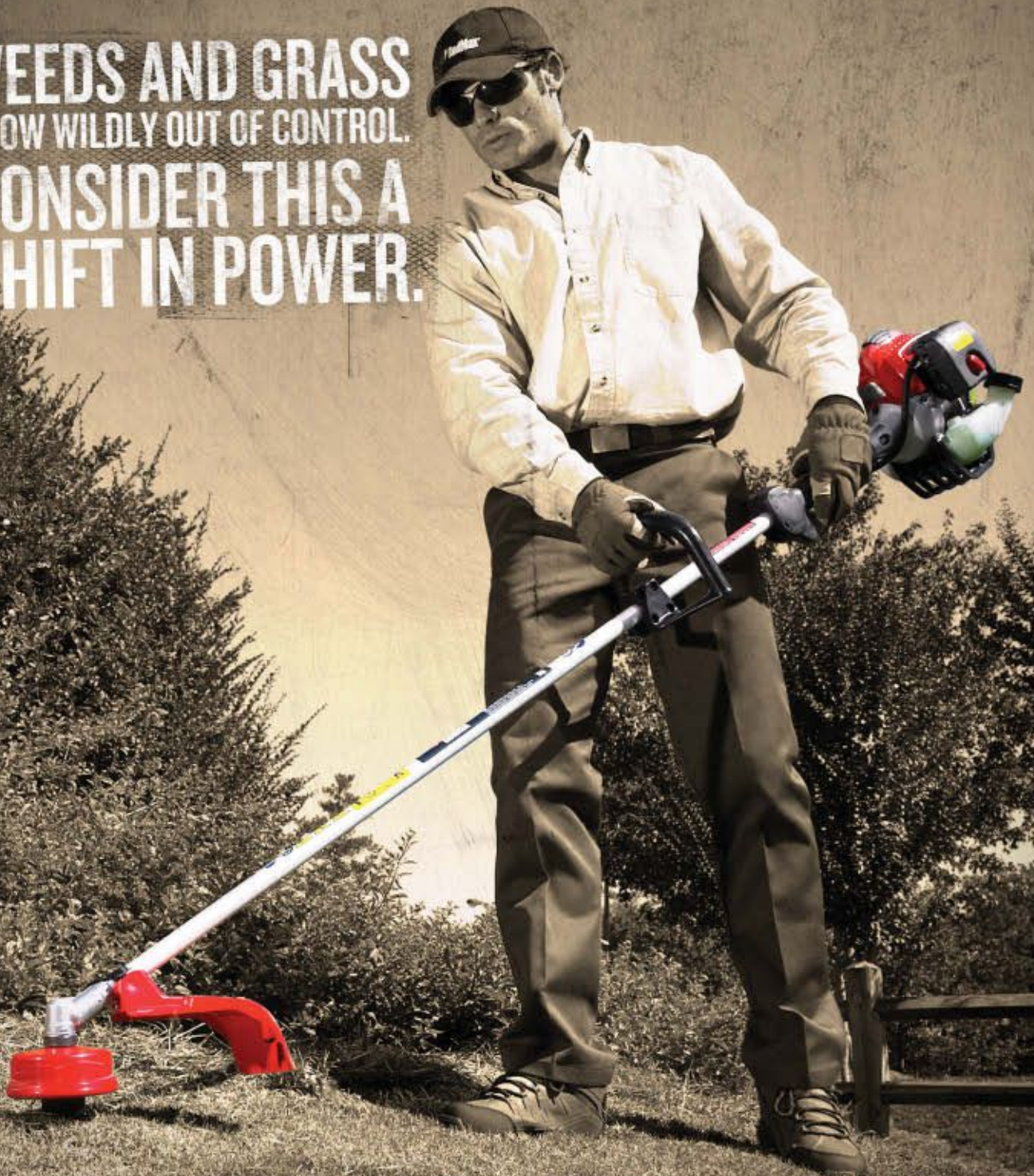
“I love to be outdoors and to spend time with my family camping, hiking, biking and kayaking.”

FAMILY: Wife, Joy, and two daughters: One in college and the other getting ready to go to college next fall.

to add value to a property. We tend not to focus on the real value of what a lawn does as a ‘green space.’ It’s time for us to move beyond pure aesthetics to creating interest, value and demand based on our contribution to ‘green.’”

“OUR GOAL IS TO WORK WITH A ‘BIG PICTURE’ APPROACH THAT HELPS TO IMPROVE THE LAWN AND SOIL.”

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solution

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WILD VIOLET

Viola papilionacea

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- ▶ Small, pansy-like flowers feature five blue-violet, lilac or white petals.
- ▶ Heart-shaped leaves with scalloped edges are often cupped toward the petiole to form a funnel shape.
- ▶ It grows in bunches, reaching a height of 2 to 5 in.
- ▶ It's most often found in cool, shady, moist, fertile soil.

CONTROL TIPS

- ▶ Wild violet is difficult to control because of its aggressive growth and resistance to many herbicides.
- ▶ Apply a post-emergence broadleaf herbicide as soon as violets reach the two-leaf stage of growth.
- ▶ The best control is provided by triclopyr, either alone or in two- and three-way combinations with other broadleaf herbicides.



Recommended
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solution

Gallery® specialty
herbicide

DANDELION

Taraxacum officinale

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- ▶ Bright yellow blossoms of many petals are followed by puffball seed carriers.
- ▶ Long, hairless leaves with jagged teeth grow from low rosettes.
- ▶ Leafless, hollow stems emit a white, milky sap when broken.
- ▶ It grows all summer long in most conditions and soils, but thrives in thin turf.

CONTROL TIPS

- ▶ When soil temperatures are below 60° F in early fall or late winter, apply a broadleaf pre-emergence herbicide.
- ▶ It's good turf maintenance to reduce thin turf to help prevent spread.

For more information regarding these and other turf weeds, and related control technologies and tips, please visit www.DowProvest.com or call 800/255-3726.

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Corona Clipper

Model RS 7255 is a pruning tool designed for small to medium branches. Featuring razor teeth that are sharpened on three sides, the RS 7255 can cut twice as fast as a conventional saw. Each razor tooth is impulse-hardened for a longer service life, while the replaceable 8-in. blade's curved, taper-ground design increases cutting efficiency for a smooth, clean cut. An ergonomically designed, co-molded folding handle offers a steady, comfortable grip. CoronaClipper.com



Stens

Under the Silver Streak brand name, a new line of hedge trimmer blades are available in single- and double-sided varieties in the following sizes: 24 in., 30 in. and 40 in. The blades fit Dolmar, Little Wonder, Kawasaki, Makita, Maruyama, Red Max, Robin, Shindaiwa and Subaru equipment models. Stens.com

Husqvarna

The 400 series commercial-grade trimmers and heavy-duty edgers are equipped with X-Torq engines that reduce fuel consumption as much as 20% and emissions as much as 60%. Features of the 1.2-hp, 11.8-lb. 25.4-cc 426LST trimmer and 430 LS trimmer include a high torque drive system with gear reduction gear head (426LST only); solid steel drive shaft; two-ring piston design; vertically mounted, rubber sealed felt filter; 5 Oil-lite shaft bearing; and 4 bearing commercial bevel gear with external grease fitting (LST version includes 2.1:1 gear ratio for extreme high torque. LS gear ratio is 1.4:1). The 1.2-hp, 13.6-lb. 426EX edger features X-Torq engine design and the same powerhead as the 426LST trimmer. Husqvarna.com



Stihl

The FC 70 C-E edger, which features Easy2Start technology and a curved shaft, is powered by a low-emission, fuel-efficient engine — as much as 28% fuel savings compared to older models. Optimal balance and low vibration reduce operator fatigue and make the edger comfortable for extended use. The semi-automatic choke lever allows for a smooth start and helps prevent flooding, and the depth wheel is easy to adjust. The high-durability, forged, connecting rod allows for a longer service life. Stihl.com



Worx Yard Tools

The WorxGT trimmer/edger features a lithium-ion power pack from 18 to 24 volts. The 24V model holds 20% more power than the 18V. The auto-feed trimmer/edger weighs 5.8 lbs. and cuts a 10-in. diameter swath. It operates at a no-load speed of 8,500 rpm driving a 0.065-in.-diameter line. Its telescoping shaft conveniently adjusts to the user's height. The cutting head tilts 90 degrees to handle varied terrain and hard-to-reach areas. It even has an adjustable spacer guard to help protect flowers and ornaments. The trimmer easily converts to a wheeled walk-behind edger with a simple twist of the cutting head. It also bears the Energy Star label. WorxYardTools.com