

IRRIGATION:

SMART IRRIGATION MONTH

The Bauer Group

The new ProRain F30 and F40 (pictured) hose-reel irrigation machines distribute water over 295-ft.-wide strips, ranging from 1,375 to 1,900 ft. in length. Each model is equipped with a pendulum equalizer, for maintaining a level sprinkler. The corresponding wheel cart allows for a variable track width of 5 to 6.5 ft., while the four-speed gearbox and electronically controlled turbine ensure precise precipitation rates. Hydraulic supports make it easy to swivel the reel; mechanical and hydraulic swivel aids are available as options. Machines can be equipped with under- and over-pressure shut-off valves. Bauer also offers solar panels as a standard

feature to power the Ecostar irrigation computer system. Bauer-AT.com



Underhill

The new AuditMaster LT Kit includes all the tools necessary to audit and evaluate sprinkler system performance, based on Irrigation Association Guidelines and covered in IA audit classes. The kit sets up quickly, and results are typically determined the same day. Contents include a heavy-duty wheeled duffel bag to store the equipment; 30 large CatchCanPro cups with inches and centimeters; 100-ft. measuring tape; 0.75-in. POC hose bib with 160 psi pressure gauge; pitot tube attached to a 30-in. flex hose with 160 psi pressure gauge; sprayhead tester adapter with 160 psi pressure gauge; stop watch; anemometer; 50 yellow marking flags; 21-in. wire staff and 4 x 5-in. flag. Underhill.us

Hunter Industries

The new full-featured I-Core controller is available in plastic or metal, in both wall-mounted cabinet and pedestal versions. It's expandable from six to 42 stations, with ICM-600 six-station modules. Boasting a bold, backlit graphic display, the I-Core includes multi-language capability. Its Diagnostic Dashboard provides the user with a quick and comprehensive status of the entire system and sensors in real time. In addition, the modular design allows station modules to be removed without detaching any field wiring from the controller. HunterIndustries.com



EsQape-proof your weed control.

Even hard case weeds like crabgrass can't get away from Quincept® herbicide. With three active ingredients in rates that optimize performance, Quincept nails grass and broadleaf weeds that have escaped pre-emerge applications. See your distributor or www.nufarm.com/turf for more on how to put a stop to escapes.

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LAWN CARE: SPREADERS



Bobcat Co.

Mount this attachment on a loader or compact tractor and spread dry, free-flowing granular materials such as seed, fertilizer, sand and salt. The spreader is equipped with a 12-volt DC motor and a 10-in. spreader wheel, controlling the spreading pattern anywhere from 4 to 40 ft. The spinner rate is regulated from the operator seat by a rotary dial switch. The hopper is a high-density polymer with UV protection that can hold up to 5.75 cu. ft. of material. Bobcat.com

Ecolawn

The new Ecolawn Self-Propelled Multi-Purpose Applicator helps Green Industry professionals with top dressing, compost spreading, turf renovation, and seeding organic matter. As a way of saving time, labor and operating costs, it spreads a wide variety of materials, including compost, soil mix, pelletized products, calcite clay, crumb rubber, sand and salt. EcolawnApplicator.com



TurfEx

TurfEx introduces two ground-drive spreaders: the 7-cu.-ft. capacity TS700GR and 12-cu.-ft. capacity TS1200GR. Intended for use with tractors and various utility vehicles, the polyethylene spreaders are designed to exert less impact on surfaces than similar tow-behind models. To ensure precise material feed and spread pattern, the spreaders are equipped with a manual flow gate. Additionally, both units include a 12-in. steel spinner with adjustable fins. Spread width is infinitely variable up to 30 ft. TrynexFactory.com

SourceOne Outdoor Power Equipment

The TurfSavr starts as a spreader, but also slices and dethatches. When spreading seed in hard soil, use the slicing blades to increase seed penetration. Then change from seed to fertilizer. Remove the hopper, and you have a dethatcher. Add a flail reel, and the TurfSavr will tackle the toughest turf conditions. Powered by a Honda GX270 Series OHV engine (approximately 8 hp), there is plenty of power to slice deep into hard soils, dethatch through tough turf and let the operator direct all the action from the StepSavr sulky. Sourceonex.com/plugr





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In 1979 **Wayne Volz** wanted a 10-speed bicycle. “My Dad told me that if I wanted it, I would need to earn the money to pay for it,” says Volz, president of Wayne’s Lawn Service. Volz started mowing nine lawns that summer and the rest is history. He continued mowing through high school, and college. After graduating from college, he had a “real” job for four years working as a financial aid counselor before committing full-time to his business in July 1987.

What’s the biggest lesson you’ve learned as you’ve built your lawn care company?

Success is not measured by customer count or dollar volume. Those are the two easiest measures of operating a business. True success is measured by customer loyalty and great employee retention. If they’re in place, profit dollars will take care of themselves.

You own and operate two companies, Wayne’s Lawn Service and also Profits Unlimited. Tell us about Profits Unlimited.

I started Profits Unlimited to help lawn and landscape companies with the same trials and tribulations I experienced the first nine years I was in business. I was working very hard, had no free time and I was not making any money. Although I had a business degree, I did not know how to bid contracts, market or sell to be successful. These are basic for any successful business.

My biggest issue was that I had little to no structure as to what I was charging for

my services. I was bidding my jobs based on what I thought the market would bear, what I thought my competition was charging and, in many cases, what my potential clients said they were willing to pay for the services I offered. This kind of pricing is too common for the industry and is responsible for the staggering failure rate for lawn care and landscaping companies.

I knew there were many lawn and landscape company owners just like me who were struggling with these same issues so we decided to offer our bidding and cost calculation methodology to contractors across North America. Thus, Profits Unlimited was founded in 1990 to help commercial lawn care and landscaping companies earn what they deserve.

How do you find time to run two companies? I’m very fortunate to have my brother

and other loyal, trained and committed employees. Once I realized I must delegate the responsibility and authority of getting jobs completed without me, our businesses grew.

What is your advice to any young person eager to start a lawn service or landscaping company? Remember you’re operating a business. Let me emphasize the word business. This business is not just cutting grass and planting shrubs. It’s easy to get caught up in the I-am-small-I-can-do-it-cheaper mentality and put yourself right out of business. Know your operating costs per hour based on your unique overhead and expenses and charge accordingly. Don’t worry about what everyone else is doing. Pick a lane for your company by defining what your company is and what it’s going to do better than the competition. Let this separate you

AT A GLANCE

COMPANY: Wayne’s Lawn Service Inc.

FOUNDED: 1979

TITLE: President

HEADQUARTERS: Louisville, KY (sole location)

EMPLOYEES: 10 – 13

INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT:

Past President, Kentucky Lawn Maintenance Association; Past Board Member, Kentucky Turf-grass Council; speaker at industry events; regular contributor to industry publications

BUSINESS GOAL FOR 2010:

Striving for excellence in all aspects of operating our business to create customer loyalty.

FAMILY: Married 27 years to my wife, Jane, and has four children – Kyle, Katie, Daniel and Holly

WEBSITE: wayneslawnservice.com and profitsareus.com

from the competition. Resist the temptation to compete based solely on price.

Any final thoughts? Check your ego at the door when running your business and surround yourself with people smarter than you are.



KNOW YOUR OPERATING COSTS BASED ON YOUR OVERHEAD AND EXPENSES AND CHARGE ACCORDINGLY.”



Knock out multiple weeds in a single round.

Only Solitare® takes on crabgrass, sedges and broadleaf weeds with no tank mixing required.

Fighting more than one weed problem used to require more than one product. Now there's new Solitare® herbicide from FMC Professional Solutions, the only all-in-one postemergence solution designed to help you control multiple weeds in a single, fast-acting application.

Wherever several weeds like crabgrass, sedges and broadleaf weeds come together, you'll experience the Solitare "sweet spot." That's because Solitare controls or suppresses over 60 weeds without the hassle and cost of tank mixing. Dual-action Solitare herbicide features a patent-pending combination of active ingredients that combats weeds from the foliage down and the root up. Solitare also impacts viability of seeds and tubers within the soil, helping to decrease weed populations this season and next. When multiple weeds gang up on you, there's only one solution you want in your corner: Solitare herbicide.

For more information on Solitare and other solutions from FMC, visit www.fmcprosolutions.com or contact your FMC Sales Representative or local FMC Distributor.

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Recommended
Dow AgroSciences
solution
Lontrel®
specialty
herbicide

COMMON SOWTHISTLE

Sonchus oleraceus

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- ▶ This annual is hard to distinguish from perennial sowthistle (*Sonchus arvensis*) because both species are tall weeds with yellow, dandelion-like flowers and stems that produce a milky sap.
- ▶ Common sowthistle has a taproot and reproduces only by seed.
- ▶ Leaves are bluish-green alternate, clasping the stem with prominent, rounded spiny lobes.
- ▶ Bright yellow flowers bloom from June through August and turn into

white “puffballs” similar to dandelions.

CONTROL TIPS

- ▶ Identify whether you have annual or perennial sowthistle. Herbicides registered for control of one form of sowthistle may not control the other. Check the label carefully.
- ▶ Clopyralid controls both annual and perennial sowthistle.
- ▶ Tillage and low mowing help control annual sowthistle.



Recommended
Dow AgroSciences
solution
Turflon® Ester Ultra
specialty
herbicide

BROADLEAF PLANTAIN

Plantago major

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- ▶ This plant has a short, thick taproot that forms a rosette of leaves that lay flat to the ground.
- ▶ The broad, oval-shaped leaves have three to five prominent parallel veins, and are attached to the root system by a fibrous, celery-shaped petiole.
- ▶ Flowers appear on leafless, unbranched stalks that originate from the base of the plant.
- ▶ It adapts well to most sites — including dry or wet conditions, heavy soils and very low mowing heights.

CONTROL TIPS

- ▶ This species typically requires repeat applications of triclopyr or two- or three-way mixtures of 2,4-D containing products.
- ▶ Helpful turf management practices include conducting soil aeration, avoiding overwatering, and using the proper mower cutting height for each turf species.
- ▶ Once under control, dense stands of turf and ornamentals will shade the soil surface — making establishment of new plantain seedlings more difficult.

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

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P R O V E N S O L U T I O N S



BEST PRACTICES

BRUCE WILSON

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What to consider when pricing

Most very successful companies spend a lot of time on the strategy of how to price work to grow their companies profitably. Every proposal is an opportunity. There is usually a cost associated with generating that opportunity, such as a sales call, advertising, marketing cost, etc., and there is also the cost of estimating and putting the proposal together and making the presentation. Every unsuccessful proposal is a lost opportunity.

All is not lost, however, if you can convert knowledge gained through the proposal process into useful intelligence relative to market pricing and positioning for future opportunities. After a failed proposal, continue to probe. Find out what didn't work. Use that to improve new opportunities.

In most cases, price plays a role. But there can be other factors — proposing a higher service level than the customer could afford. You need to consider that ahead of time and prepare a contingency. You have to ask yourself:

- › Did I spend enough time up front probing the potential customer?
- › Did I look realistically at what the customer was likely to make the decision upon?
- › Was the person soliciting the proposal even the decision maker?

At our firm, we believe the marketplace ultimately sets the pricing. Therefore, we do not recommend the overhead recovery pricing technique. Customers don't care what your overhead is; they want to pay a competitive rate for the service. As a contractor, you must engineer your company to be profitable within the market pricing.

Understanding market pricing is critical to establishing a presence in a market. All too often, new contractors fall prey to the temptation to simply take what the market gives them. But taking only what the market gives you prevents you from building density, which is necessary to build an efficient operation.

Pricing tips

Here are some suggestions to get started:

› **Develop an awareness of market segmentation and the ability to pay of various market segments.**

In many markets, prices are determined by price per door. For example: Apartments frequently have price structures within their rental rates that allow them to pay \$6 to \$8 per door for landscape maintenance services. Factor that into your pricing. This may mean a very basic service level, such as METS (mow, edge, trim and sweep), as opposed to a full-service contract.

› **Consider "break-in" pricing at viable accounts.**

This pricing strategy is used to help break into a segment or with a certain owner who might handle multiple properties. If you've determined there is opportunity in the segment or with the property owner, you might consider pricing at a lower rate to get your foot in the door. Gradually raise your prices from that point for future work.

› **Be sensitive to a prospect's or segment's current financial limitations.** For example, for a commercial building with a high vacancy rate, offer low pricing that increases when financial conditions improve.

› **Develop an aggressive pricing strategy to develop density.** This can eventually result in improved margins once the optimum density level is achieved. An example would be trying to capture most of the properties in a business park. If you could have a work crew spend all day in a single business park, it gives you a significant price advantage: less travel time, less set-up time and simpler supervision.

› **Price aggressively to achieve a dilution of fixed overheads.** Adding a large book of business, even at a low margin, may add to your bottom-line. If you were doing \$750,000 in annual sales and had an opportunity to add \$250,000 in new sales, you might be able to do it out of your current facility, without adding overhead staff or support personnel.

Spending more quality time on the strategy of how you position your company to be successful in the selling process can pay huge dividends.



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