

# Cut Costs!

nity as very important,” says Michael Hupf, CEO of Lifescape Associates. “For us, it creates a huge sense of teamwork.”

In all, about 15 workers will install scores of plants, trees and shrubs — along with a flagstone patio to create a seating area.

“The addition of the Children’s Healing Garden ... will make our facilities more beautiful and provide a better experience for the children and families we serve,” says Dr. Gizane Indart, executive director of the DCAC. **LM**

## RIVERSIDE CEMETERY PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

A number of organizations from CALCP and a few other organizations volunteered their time and effort to the Riverside Cemetery Revival project as part of PLANET’s Day of Service on Earth Day 2010:

Agrium Advanced Technologies  
Alpha One Inc.  
Arkansas Valley Seed  
Barr Lake Nature Center  
Colorado Forest Service  
Colorado State University  
Colorado State University Master Gardeners  
Colorado Tree Coalition  
Davey Tree Expert Co.  
Denver Botanic Gardens  
Denver Rose Society  
Fertek Co.  
Front Range Community College  
Green Mountain Lawn Service  
Helena Chemical Co.  
International Society of Arboriculture  
Iris Colorado  
John Deere Landscape  
L.L. Johnson Distribution  
Million Tree Project  
Organix Supply  
Pawnee Buttes Seed  
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# WHAT GOES AROUND, COMES AROUND



YardApes' Owner Shayne Newman chats with Parks & Rec committee members and the New Milford mayor.

YardApes' Shayne Newman is a big believer in good karma, and that's why his investment in community service marketing has yielded great return — in more ways than one.

BY **NICOLE WISNIEWSKI** EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

SOME PEOPLE think Shayne Newman is a mastermind when planning community service and gaining recognition for his New Milford, CT-based company, YardApes.

"They think I know it all when it comes to these events," says the incoming president of the Professional Landcare Network Day of Service Committee. On a recent PLANET Webinar on the topic, moderator and industry consultant Jeffrey Scott even called Newman a

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PHOTO BY: NICOLE WISNIEWSKI

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**syngenta**

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community service “rock star.”

What’s his *real* trick? “I just get lucky,” says Newman, crossing his arms over his chest and shrugging his shoulders. He squints in the sun at his team of 12 working in khakis and blue, white and green PLANET Day of Service shirts at a town playground on April 22. It’s a cloudless,



Spread the love: YardApes’ crewmembers shovel topsoil and plant turf seed.

### FIELD REPORT #3:

**Children’s Playground**  
New Milford, CT

**Day of Service Mission:**

YardApes donated their time and energy to move 60 yards of topsoil, plant turf and install a paver patio at a children’s park in Connecticut.

70-degree day. One couldn’t ask for a better morning to move mulch and 60 yards of topsoil, plant turf seed and install a paver patio walkway in a children’s park that needs some attention.

On this Earth Day, Newman donates services worth \$7,000 to the community park. And where this “luck” is concerned, Newman is on a winning streak.

**Instant karma**

Five years ago, when he held his first community golf fundraiser, Newman raised \$10,000 for his charity and maxed out at 120 golfers. Last year, on his first PLANET Day of Service, Newman’s event was featured on the front page of the local garden club’s newsletter — as well as the local daily newspaper. This year, because the playground is a hot-button issue in the town, reporters showed up again.

Also in attendance is New Milford Mayor Patricia Murphy, as well as Dan Calhoun and Eleanor Covelli — the director and assistant director of the Parks & Recreation Department, respectively. As this trio and several members of the media survey the project while the crew works, Newman talks to them with ease about the park

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PHOTO BY: NICOLE WISNIEWSKI

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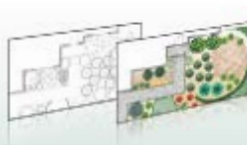
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## COVER STORY



Laying the groundwork: Workers meticulously lay the paver pattern, above, and a crewmember's son, right, enjoys the playground after the hard work is done.

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maintenance, as well as other projects that need assistance. It's certainly not bad company to keep when you're a landscape contractor.

"Yeah, that was pretty cool that the mayor showed up," Newman says, nonchalantly.

There's one theory Newman uses to explain this good fortune. Deep pockets? No. Political agenda? No. Ingenious planning? A little. Right place, right time? Maybe. However, Newman says he can sum it up with just one word: Karma.

"I believe that if I do good things then good things will come back to me," he says. "It might not be today or tomorrow, but somewhere down the line it will pay off."

That's when you see it. The immense pride. Newman swells with it as he watches his crew in action while juggling reporters' questions and mingling with the mayor.

"We are working on two projects today, and 15 of my 17 guys volunteered to help — unpaid," he says, beaming.

This fact you wouldn't know off-hand. The crew is as focused as usual. Crewmembers Ramiro Parra and Franklin Guaman, who were installing the paver patio walkway, are meticulous in their laying of the pattern — a design that duly impressed the mayor. Just a normal day's work? Hardly.

"My wife and kids come here all the time, and people in town will know we did this. It has to be perfect," Parra



says to Newman.

And it is — down to the last brick engraved with a special message: "Walkway Donated by YardApes Landscaping."

Though Newman hasn't crunched the numbers on exactly the type of return-on-investment this community service event will provide, he knows there is value he can't compute. After all, how much could you pay for the front page of the local daily paper? What price can you put on more than an hour of undivided attention from the city mayor? What about employee excitement and pride? Or the number of current and potential clients who say they saw what YardApes did for the community?

"I'm a numbers person, and I can get really into the processes," Newman admits, taking a bite of the pizza he provided his crew for lunch. "But I try not to get too wrapped up in numbers during Day of Service.

"It would take away from the good feeling I get just by giving back," Newman says, "and that is bigger for me than anything I could get back monetarily." **LM**

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## THE BENCHMARK

KEVIN KEHOE

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# Keys to managing a sales machine

**D**eveloping a sales machine is the most important investment a landscape contractor can make. Given pricing conditions and the negative impact this is exacting on gross profit margins, generating increased revenue volume is necessary to achieve net profit dollar goals.

Key to this revenue generation effort is the sales team. The team has never been more important, and its management has never been more critical.

The sales game is a tough one, and lack of success can cause even the best to go into a slump. Keeping your sales staff motivated is essential. The primary motivators include:

- › the need for achievement,
- › the desire to get better, and
- › the opportunity to make money.

To produce these motivators, try using the classic carrot-and-stick approach.

### Carrot

Goals and commission programs provide the carrot. Goals should be set weekly for number of sales calls, monthly for the dollar value of bids required, and quarterly for every quarter for closed revenue volume.

In my experience, most managers set goals too low. Low goals provide little pressure, and most salespeople are motivated by pressure.

Commission plans are essential. A successful salesperson should be the second- or third-highest paid employee in the company. I prefer a first year 60/40 base/commission structure, graduating it by the third year to a 40/60 with unlimited upside for the sales rep.

Salespeople are motivated when there is something at risk. When pay is guaranteed, they don't run as hard.

### Stick

Dashboards and coaching provide the stick. Most contractors do a good job managing production.

Yet they don't apply this same principle to the sales. Salespeople perform better when they are focused on high-return activities. The dashboard is the pipeline report. It is a necessary "stick" because too many salespeople spend too much time:

- › selling to people they know and too little to those they don't, and
- › working on prospects that ultimately have little chance of closing.

Salespeople need feedback. All good salespeople have had the experience of wishing they had been quicker or smarter at some point during a call. Making joint calls and engaging in post-call "curbside chats" applies the stick gently and motivates them to become better.

In working with salespeople, I have discovered some typical bad habits that can be easily addressed by this method. These include:

- › talking too much,
- › not asking the right questions,
- › arguing with the customer, and
- › failing to ask for the business and get a signature.

No salesperson is immune to these behaviors. Some years ago, in an important sales presentation, a customer actually said to me more than once, "Kevin, ask me if I want to sign this contract."

Apparently, I did not hear this. Instead, I proceeded to provide him with proof and testimonial to my wonderfulness until he finally became adamant. "Ask me!" he said.

At this point, I said, "Would you want to sign this contract?"

He said, "Yes. Now let's talk schedule. When can you start?"

I was so busy talking and avoiding the potential rejection that comes with "NO" that I never asked the closing question. It is a lesson I have never forgotten: Salespeople require the coaching stick.

The best salespeople are hard-wired for the job. At their best, salespeople are capitalist athletes. They like to win. And when they are not winning they are high-maintenance time wasters.



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## LAWN CARE: INSECTICIDES

### Bayer Environmental Science

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### BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals

Amdro Pro Fire Ant Bait insecticide delivers cost-effective control of imported and native fire ants and offers flexible dose and application options for single mounds or large areas. When used as directed, Amdro Pro eliminates the queen and her colony within seven days of a mound treatment, and rids an entire infested area of fire ants within two weeks of a broadcast application. *BetterTurf.BASF.us*



### FMC Professional Solutions

New Talstar XTRA granular insecticide eliminates dangerous fire ant colonies in four hours or less — meaning you bring your customers peace-of-mind faster than ever. Its optimized combination of zeta-cypermethrin and bifenthrin provide fast-acting, long-lasting control of more than 75 pests. The product will be available by June 1. *FMCTProSolutions.com*

### Syngenta

Meridian insecticide (thiamethoxam) offers both control and application flexibility in managing a broad spectrum of grubs and insects on turf, trees and shrubs. Meridian 0.33 G granular formulation contains .05 oz. of active ingredient per pound of formulated product, and is packaged in 40-lb. resealable bags. Water-dispersible Meridian 25WG contains 4 oz. of active ingredient per pound of formulated product, and is packaged in 4- and 17-oz. bottles. *GreencastOnline.com*

## MAINTENANCE: ALTERNATIVE FUELS

### Gravely

The Pro-Master 260H LP XDZ, a propane-powered zero-turn mower, is available with a 60-in. cutting width. The mower features a 28 hp/992 cc Generac Liquefied Petroleum (LP) engine with heavy duty air cleaner and uses twin 33-lb. LP tanks (not included). The aluminum 33.5-lb. fuel canister for the LP unit is common across many equipment platforms, reducing fuel logistics for a commercial user. *Ariens.com*



### AgriFab

Ideal for spaces smaller than 1,000 sq. ft., the new electric dethatcher eliminates the mess and fuss of gas and oil: Connect an extension cord to the dethatcher and plug it in. No tools are needed to adjust dethatching height; just pull an easy-to-move handle. The 40 stainless-steel tines are designed to protect against rust and wear and tear, while quickly removing thatch buildup for a healthier lawn. For assembly, simply attach the pre-assembled handle to the pre-assembled base. *Agri-Fab.com*



### Worx Yard Tools

The new lineup of 18-volt, lithium-ion battery powered-tools includes a two-in-one grass trimmer/edger (WG151), hedge trimmer (WG251) and sweeper/blower (WG540). The tools, which bear the Energy Star label, are as much as 35% lighter than competitive models. The emission-free products hold their charge for long periods, and have seasonal operating costs of less than a dollar. *WorxGT.com*

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