

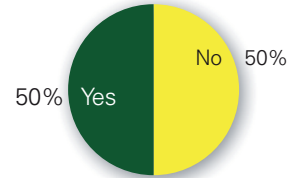
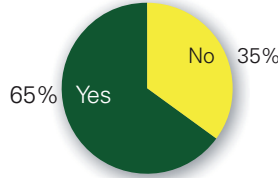
**UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY STATE**

Rank	State	Rate
1	North Dakota	3.8
2	Nebraska	4.4
3	South Dakota	4.6
4	New Hampshire	5.5
5	Vermont	5.8
6	Iowa	6.3
7	Hawaii	6.4
	Wyoming	6.4
9	Virginia	6.7
10	Kansas	6.8
	Oklahoma	6.8
12	Minnesota	7.0
13	Montana	7.2
14	Maine	7.3
15	Maryland	7.4
16	Utah	7.5
	Wisconsin	7.5
18	Arkansas	7.9
19	Louisiana	8.0
20	Alaska	8.1
21	Massachusetts	8.2
	New York	8.2
23	Texas	8.3
24	Delaware	8.5
	New Mexico	8.5
	Pennsylvania	8.5
27	Colorado	8.8
28	Connecticut	9.0
29	Alabama	9.1
	New Jersey	9.1
31	Illinois	9.3
	Washington	9.3
33	Arizona	9.4
	Tennessee	9.4
35	Indiana	9.5
	Missouri	9.5
38	Ohio	9.6
	West Virginia	9.6
40	District of Columbia	9.7
41	North Carolina	9.8
42	Mississippi	10.1
43	Georgia	10.2
44	Kentucky	10.3
45	Oregon	10.6
46	South Carolina	10.7
47	Rhode Island	11.5
48	Michigan	11.7
49	Florida	12.0
50	California	12.5
51	Nevada	14.5

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, December 2010

**TRAINING DAY?**

Do you have an employee manual you hand out to workers when they begin employment?



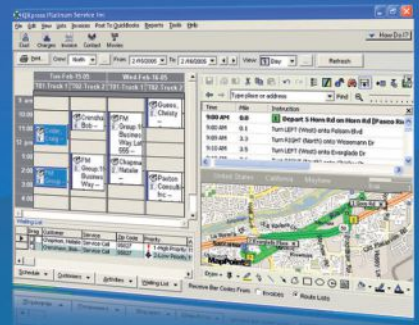
Do you have a formal employee training program you conduct with workers when they begin employment?

Source: Landscape Management, February 2011



If you use QuickBooks...  
QXpress is the Software for You!

- Cuts office time in half!
- Increases Productivity
- Easier Scheduling, Job Costing & Invoicing



Rated #1 scheduling software by QuickBooks users!\*

Pricing Starting At

**\$38/month**

Go To [QXpress.com/landscape](http://QXpress.com/landscape)

To Get A Free Trial!

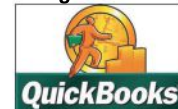
Contact Us At 1-888-QXPRESS  
or [www.QXpress.com/landscape](http://www.QXpress.com/landscape)

\* As determined by searching on <http://marketplace.intuit.com> for "Scheduling Software," and sorting by the "Rating" option. As of December, 2010 QXpress Scheduling Software had the highest rating.

QuickBooks and "Designed for QuickBooks" Logo are trademarks of Intuit Inc., displayed with permission. The use by Marathon Data Systems does not signify certification or endorsement of the QXpress software by Intuit, and Marathon Data Systems is solely responsible for its software and the support and maintenance of the software

© 2010 Marathon Data Systems, LLC. All rights reserved.

Designed for:

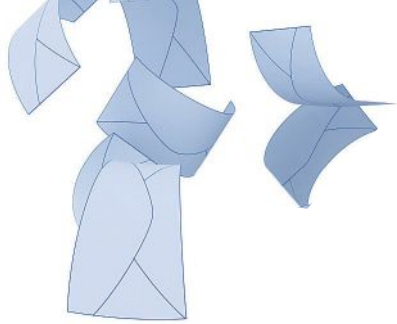




# YOUR EMPLOYEE PROBLEMS



\$30  
\$25  
\$20  
\$15



# SOLVED!

*Got an employee problem you can't fix?  
We offer expert solutions.*

---

## PROBLEM

# 1

**Texting.** "No employee in the 18 to 24 age range will leave their phones alone during work," says Chad Combs, owner of Landmark Lawn & Landscaping LLM in Janesville, WI.

Sure, one text message is no big deal, explains Tony Brown, Tony Brown MBA Consulting. "You lose a minute or so of productivity per text message," he says. It's when those minutes add up "when someone receives and sends 30 text messages an hour as they carry on at least three conversations."

## SOLUTION

Linda Gravett, owner of Ohio-based HR consulting firm Gravett & Associates, advises companies to set up a code of conduct about text messaging and communications on the job.

The reason? Employees presume they have a reasonable expectation of privacy in their personal communications (even on employer-issued devices). Thus, employers must draft policies that effectively limit their employees'



expectations of privacy, advises David B. Ritter, who chairs Chicago's Neal Gerber Eisenberg's Labor & Employment Practice Group where he represents management in all areas of labor and employment law.

"But employment communications policies are only effective if they are clearly communicated and consistently implemented," Ritter says. "And any review of employee communications should be limited, reasonable and conducted in accordance with existing and up-to-date policies to avoid employer actions getting them into litigation trouble with employees."



## PROBLEM

## 2

Employees who regularly **arrive to work late and call in sick** on a more than usual basis.

## SOLUTION

Today, employees call in sick or show up late at a disturbing percentage. A study by HR and employment law firm CCH, part of Wolters Kluwer/Croner, found personal illness accounted for only one-third of unscheduled absences by U.S. workers. The remaining two-thirds were a result of employees calling in sick last minute because they feel entitled to a day off, were stressed or burnt out, didn't want to use up precious vacation time or had a family or personal commitment to which they didn't want to admit.

More than two-thirds of employers also reported a discernible pattern in unscheduled absences with the most noticeable being workers calling in sick on Mondays and Fridays, followed by holidays and during flu and hay fever seasons.

One way to manage this problem, advises CCH, is offering an appropriate range of work-life and absence control programs, including compressed workweeks (ex. four-day workweek), telecommuting, flu shot and other wellness programs and alternative working arrangements.

Regardless of current policies or programs, make sure rules about tardiness and sick days are clear and up-to-date in employee manuals and communicated regularly.

When employees break rules, be firm but reasonable. If a worker shows up 4 to 5 minutes late occasionally, do not make a big issue of it. However, be careful not to let this become a habit by any individual or it will become an office wide problem, says **FireHow.com**.

Incentives may also work. One landscape company responding to *Landscape Management's Wage & Benefits Report* survey pays a \$1 bonus for employees who are on time every day and don't call in sick for each entire two-week pay period.



## PROBLEM

## 3

"We still have problems with people **passing drug tests and having valid and trouble-free driver's licenses**," shares Bruce Bachand, vice president of Orlando's Carol King Landscape Maintenance.

## SOLUTION

Drug testing is an important safety practice in the workplace. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates drug use at work costs employers \$75 to \$100 billion dollars annually in lost time, accidents, health care and workers' compensation costs. Sixty-five percent of all accidents on the job are related to drug or alcohol, and substance abusers utilize 16 times as many health care benefits and are six times more likely to file workers' compensation claims than non-abusers.

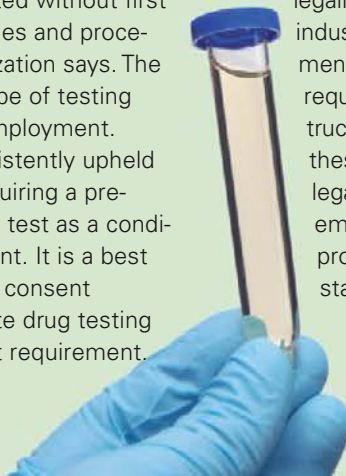
As a result, the best thing to do in

this case is to keep testing to avoid these additional costs, says Pre-Employment Drug Screening (PDS).

A drug-testing program should not be implemented without first establishing policies and procedures, the organization says. The most common type of testing program is pre-employment. Courts have consistently upheld the legality of requiring a pre-employment drug test as a condition of employment. It is a best practice to obtain consent and clearly indicate drug testing is an employment requirement.

For landscape contractors planning to conduct post-hiring testing for current employees, they should include training and education for supervisors and employees, as well as guidelines for discipline in the event of a positive test. Post-employment testing includes random testing for safety sensitive positions, post-accident testing, individualized suspicion testing and testing that is legally required in certain industries (ex. Department of Transportation requirements concerning truck drivers). Each of these types of testing is legally sensitive, and an employer should have a program in place before starting.

*continued on page 37*



# SECOND BEST ONLY GETS YOU SO FAR.



## Target Specialty Products. The quality leader for over four decades.

Wholesale distribution of specialty agricultural chemicals • Recognized for integrity  
Experienced training and regulatory staff • Licensed customer service  
Next day delivery in most areas • ISO compliant



SPECIALTY PRODUCTS

*Delivering Value*

Fumigation • Golf • Landscape • Nursery • Pest Control • Vector • Vegetation Management

Visit us at [www.target-specialty.com](http://www.target-specialty.com)

40 YEARS  
AND GROWING  
STRONG

### SANTA FE SPRINGS HOME OFFICE 800-352-3870

Fresno, CA  
800-827-4389  
Tempe, AZ  
800-352-5548

San Jose, CA  
800-767-0719  
Austin, TX  
800-896-1259

San Marcos, CA  
800-237-5233  
Dallas, TX  
800-345-9387

Sacramento, CA  
800-533-0816  
Houston, TX  
800-901-9746

Las Vegas, NV  
800-533-0816  
San Antonio, TX  
800-925-3922

Portland, OR  
877-827-4381

Oklahoma City, OK  
800-522-9701







See all of our new, lower list prices at  
[www.rainbird.com/PocketTheSavings](http://www.rainbird.com/PocketTheSavings)

**Demanding more  
and paying less.**  
That's intelligent.



**Announcing new, lower list prices on a full range of Rain Bird products.** To help you stay competitive in these challenging times, we've lowered list prices on many of our most trusted products. We hope these prices will help you continue to deliver the industry-leading quality that you and your customers demand. Putting performance in the ground and savings in your pocket. That's The Intelligent Use of Water.™

**RAIN  BIRD®**

continued from page 34

# PROBLEM 4

**Finding people who want careers over jobs.** "Our greatest challenge is getting competent and caring workers who are looking for career positions in one of the green industries and not just short-term employment," Bachand says.

"It's not so hard to find a laborer but it's hard to find someone who really wants to do the best they can and are committed," agrees Jason Raney, president, Raney Landscape, Little Rock, AR.

Ron Skover, owner of \$570,000 Greenlawn in North Street, MI, says workers in his region have "a factory mentality. They want to come in, put in their eight hours and then clock out for the day."

But Skover is in a unique position — he wants an employee who can recognize a long-term career opportunity. "I'm at an age where I'm looking to scale back," he says. "I need to find someone who wants a career and can care about this business like I do."



## SOLUTION

Raney tries to alleviate this problem during the hiring stage. He has noticed a pattern. "Most of the time, a single guy in his 20s isn't as committed," he says. "But a family guy has people to support and is more likely to be long-term."

When it comes to managing and motivating Generation Y employees, *Fortune's* management and career expert Annie Fisher says they may need more direction on tasks that require face-to-face contact. For instance, if they are going to greet customers, be specific and explain you want them to make eye contact, etc. Then demonstrate how you want it done.

For Generation X employees, provide them with job descriptions so they feel like valued co-workers and additions to the team.

Incentives that enhance or grow employee careers in the landscape field may also help. Skover is offering students the opportunity to win a \$2,000 scholarship per year to Michigan State University if they pursue the turfgrass/landscape management field. "I'm hoping it will draw someone to work here and consider my business for a future career," he says.

"Even if it turned into an internship initially, I want to help someone who is interested in the field, and who's really going to try and do a good job and enjoy what they do." **LM**

**WEB EXTRA** For PLANET's analysis of 2009 compensation practices, check out the 2010 *Employee Compensation Report for the Green Industry* in the LM Bookstore at [shop.landscapemanagement.net](http://shop.landscapemanagement.net).

PHOTO BY: ISTOCK INTERNATIONAL INC.

Save more than 40% on list price with proven Rain Bird performance.

TALK TO YOUR SALES REP OR DISTRIBUTOR

**Rain Bird® 1804 Sprays:**  
Save nearly 35% over Hunter® PROS-04 Sprays.\*



Rain Bird List Price **\$215**  
Hunter List Price **\$325**

**Rain Bird® 1812 Sprays:**  
Save nearly 25% over Hunter® PROS-12 Sprays.\*



Rain Bird List Price **\$1135**  
Hunter List Price **\$1475**

**Rain Bird® MPR and VAN Nozzles:**  
Save more than 25% over Hunter® Fixed Arc and VAN Nozzles.\*



Rain Bird List Price **\$119**  
Hunter List Price **\$160**

**Rain Bird® 5004 Rotors:**  
Save more than 40% over Hunter® PGP-ADJ® Rotors.\*



Rain Bird List Price **\$1035**  
Hunter List Price **\$1800**

**Rain Bird® JTV Valves:**  
Save nearly 25% over Hunter® PGV-100-JTG Valves.\*



Rain Bird List Price **\$1950**  
Hunter List Price **\$2550**

**Rain Bird® ESP-SMT Indoor Controller:**  
Save more than 5% over Hunter® Pro-C plus Solar Sync.\*



Rain Bird List Price **\$26000**  
Hunter List Price **\$27900**

\*Based on 2011 U.S. Rain Bird® and Hunter® List Pricing effective January 1, 2011.







## BEST PRACTICES

BRUCE WILSON

The author, of the Wilson-Oyler Group, is a 30-year industry veteran. Reach him at [bwilson@questex.com](mailto:bwilson@questex.com).

# Delegate for success

One of the things we do as consultants when we look at a company is to evaluate how well a team functions. We frequently see companies that work very hard, but always seem to be playing catch up. We also notice that many people in middle management, such as account managers and production supervisors, seem to be doing the work of their subordinates. This occurs through all levels of management — even owners doing things that should be done by someone else.

The simple cause of this is the willingness to accept upward delegation. It sometimes starts at a crew leader level. The crew leader is doing too much work himself or riding the large mower — because that is what he did so well to become the crew leader — and neglects his crew leader duties. The result is the crew leader's supervisor, a production manager or account manager picks up the slack and gets consumed doing crew leader work, thereby neglecting his own work, which in turn gets delegated to his boss.

This ultimately results in a dysfunctional team. Often, criticism is directed at the affected manager, saying that he is disorganized or is unable to multi-task. To a degree it is true, but it is also a result of a dysfunctional culture. Lack of proper

delegation becomes a destructive habit of an organization. It's like the whole organization becomes addicted to urgency. People like to *get things done* and do not take the time out to look at what is really happening.

So, how do you correct this problem? I think it is similar to an addiction. First, you have to realize that you actually have the problem. Recognition starts the road to recovery. Individuals must then take two key steps:

1. Stop accepting upward delegation. If an employee is not getting the job done, stop doing it for them.

2. Learn to develop the discipline to delegate.

People tend not to delegate for several reasons, including that it is sometimes easier to do it themselves. The person who should have done the task does not learn, and you are set up to continue to have to do it for him or her. Another reason can be timeliness of getting it done. *It must be done now*. If you do it, no one learns — and you are set up to continue in that pattern. A lack of trust can also contribute to the problem.

You have to break the pattern and start holding people accountable. I recommend starting each day by looking at your to-do list with the specific goal of identifying the things that should be delegated. Then, delegate them.

Success in delegation starts with clear instruction and some coaching. Some people like to have the person receiving the delegation repeat back what he or she was told to ensure that it is understood. This takes time, but saves time in the long run. Successful delegation is completed when you follow up to see that what was delegated was accomplished.

If you can get everyone on your team delegating properly, you will see a tremendous improvement in your organization. It will not solve all problems, but it will make most people more effective — and you will see an improvement in organizational accountability.

---

Lack of proper delegation becomes a destructive habit of an organization. **It's like the whole organization becomes addicted to urgency.**



# MOVE AHEAD. OR BE LEFT BEHIND.

We've got your number. Twenty-eight innovations and five pending patents add up to 33 new reasons to move ahead with the new generation of BOB-CAT® mowers. They're built smarter to fight operator fatigue, with easy-access maintenance you can count on to reduce downtime. Stay on the cutting edge. Make your move to BOB-CAT.

Find a dealer and demo your future at [bobcatmakeyourmove.com](http://bobcatmakeyourmove.com).



Mariani Landscape continues to defy the odds. According to the Family Business Institute, only 30% of family-run firms make it to the second generation. Mariani Landscape has done that — and is hoping to get to the third-generation now that Frank Jr. has joined the company.

The company is not only surviving generational changes, it is thriving and was ranked No. 27 last year on *LM's* list of top landscaping companies in the country. *LM* spoke with owner **Frank Mariani** and **Carrie Woleben-Meade**, ASLA, LEED AP, director of the design/build division, to find out just how the company stays so strong for so long.



Frank Mariani leads the 27th largest landscape company in the country.

## TRENDS

› **Value.** We need to educate our clients on the meaning of value. For us, value equals good service at a fair price. Anyone can do a job cheaply, but we're proud of the work we do, and we refuse to compromise on quality.

› **Sustainability.** We are seeing an increase in the client's willingness to commit to new projects. In addition, we're developing our native plant program, which will help us become a leader in sustainability. We practice this as much as we preach it. Recently, the firm adopted sustainable business practices, such as the use of bio-diesel to fuel trucks and its 100% organic lawn care program.

## OBSTACLES

› **Distraction.** We need to keep associates energized to differentiate ourselves by keeping an intense focus on delivering a superior product. We need our team to believe in the products and services we offer so our customers will. Developing an energized workforce will also help us retain key associates as the economy picks up.

› **Focus.** A challenging market makes it easier for us to lose our focus on our core market. While they can be enticing, we need to let go of projects that don't fit.

› **Inefficiency.** In down economic times, we need to go lean to eliminate waste. Every extra dollar we can save goes straight to the bottom line. For example, we're using technology to help improve routing efficiency and tracking time.

› **H2B.** The unreliability of the H2B visa program makes it more difficult to maintain the skilled, legal workforce we've relied on

## INSIDE INFO

**Company:** Mariani Landscape, MarianiLandscape.com

**Founded:** 1958

**Headquarters:** Lake Bluff, IL

**LM Top 150 Ranking:** 27, with revenue of \$35 million

**Employees:** 100 full-time/290 part-time

**Key to being a maintenance leader:** We provide unsurpassed customer service. A lot of companies talk about it, but we do our best to drill it into every employee at every level. Every team member represents the company in everything they do. It's difficult and takes a long time to build a great reputation — and only one mistake can ruin it. We strive to ensure that mistake never happens.

for many years. We're hoping Congress does the right thing and restores the returning worker exemption from the visa cap.

## OPPORTUNITIES

› **Lean.** We have an opportunity to capitalize on our associates' increased focus on efficiency and revenue. The economy has made our staff more aware of how they use their time — and more aggressive with prospecting.

› **Revenue.** We have the ability to raise prices. Some of this comes through customers continuing to demand green maintenance practices incorporated into their programs.

› **Staycation.** Our goal is to take advantage of the continued desire for our residential market to make their homes their retreat. Instead of taking big vacations, many of our clients are spending that money on their homes, making them more appealing and more comfortable.