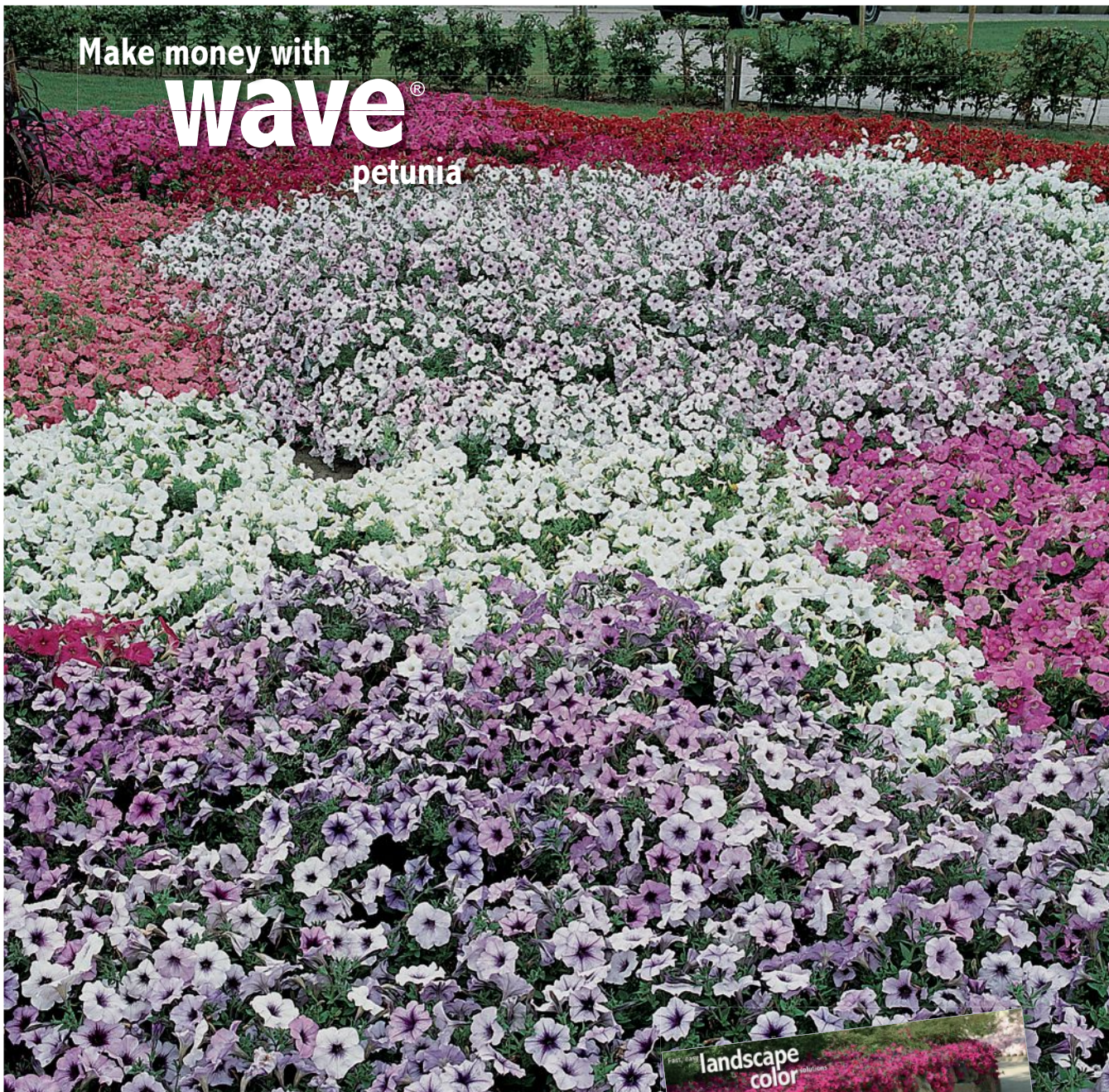


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that have to be grown under contract, and that could take months for them to mature to the proper size.

“Deal with the trouble spots first and get those conversations going as soon as possible,” Gordon says.

Advanced planning also helps with shipping considerations. Specialty plants and trees often can’t be ordered in small quantities. If they’re being shipped across the country, they need to fill up the truck.

Gordon’s planning starts before she places an order. Because there is often significant time between the landscape design and the actual bid — and changes may have occurred that will impact the plant list — she checks the plans.

“I have to do some research on the lists,” she says. “I confirm the legend matches the planting plan. Often the legend is made during the first round of the process and can change dramatically when the planting plan is made. Also, sometimes landscape architects will source a plant that they don’t know about — it might come from England, for example — then we have to get into quarantine research and shipping costs to see if it’s viable.”

Keep your options open

With the variables specific to live goods, such as size, variety, season and condition, it’s important to have as many sources as possible. Most landscapers have their “go-to” suppliers, but it’s wise to have backup.

“What we’ve been finding is that most contractors have good relationships with a few local suppliers, but sometimes architects specify a particular plant that is not available in large quantities in an area,” says Jordan. “Inventories are constantly changing, so you have to start shopping around. That’s when time gets drained.”

Online brokers like Jordan and re-wholesalers like Reddington provide another avenue to plant sourcing.



Reddington buys stock from nurseries across the country and brings it into a central location. Jordan’s findyourtrees.com enables landscapers to submit a list of plants through the site, which is automatically sent to different nurseries to bid on.

“The beauty of brokers is you can find everything in one place,” Gordon says. “It can be expensive, but sometimes it’s worth the money.”

Gordon says New Canaan’s normal approach to sourcing begins with growers or wholesale nurseries. Sometimes branded plants are needed from retail nurseries, and sometimes they go online to source specialty plants.

Use today’s technology

The Internet and digital photography has changed the way plants are sourced, but change has come slowly.

“I think with this industry, they’re not as tech savvy as some others,” says

Re-wholesalers constantly bring in new plants and trees so they can provide one-stop shopping for landscapers.

Jordan. “That’s a challenge we face. Landscapers are kind of nervous about tying out a technology-based product. We spent a year working with landscapers to make our service simple to use.”

Reddington says his company’s site is used as a source for plant availability information, and LP Statile implemented an email sourcing and availability program last year that has become popular.

Still, it’s not an Amazon.com model. “The product we’re selling is not a manufactured item that can be duplicated,” says Reddington. “Sometimes we can’t just special order it. These products might take five or six years to produce. We can’t pay more money to get them to grow quicker. Sometimes the customer just doesn’t understand that.” **LM**



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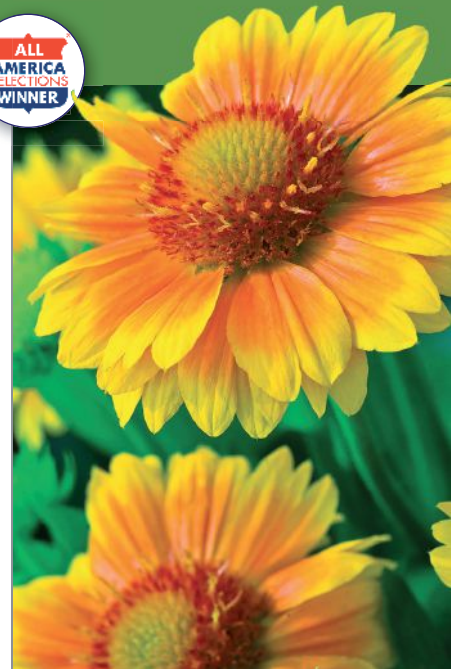


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British beauty

Named for a lake in northwest England, the repeat-flowering *Rosa* 'Windermere' (Aushomer) from **David Austin Roses** features about 80 petals. Its rounded buds open to full, cupped flowers. The blooms are cream at first, paling to white. They have a fruity fragrance with a hint of citrus. This is a free-flowering variety that continues to bloom until late in the season. Its attractive, neat and compact bush produces several basal shoots with few thorns. The plant grows to about 3 x 3 ft., and is hardy in USDA zones 5-9. DavidAustinRoses.com



Gorgeous gaillardia

The blooms of **Benary's** *Gaillardia* 'Arizona Apricot' have yellow edges that deepen to apricot in the center. Boasting 3- to 3.5-in. daisy-like flowers, it will bloom from early summer into autumn. The compact, 12-in.-tall plants offer bright green foliage and a uniform habit best viewed when planted to the front of the flower bed. The plant is free-flowering, blooming heavily without vernalization, covering the plant with bright blooms that look great in mass. This long-flowering perennial is hardy in USDA zones 2-10, is relatively maintenance free, and drought-tolerant once established. Benary.com



Cool kale

As the 2011 Cool Season Bedding Plant Award Winner, **American Taki's** 'Glamour Red' F1 is All-America Selections' first winning kale (edible or ornamental) in 78 years of trialing. The ornamental kale features shiny, waxless leaves. It is a fringed leaf type *Brassica oleracea*, with a flower head size of 10 to 12 in. Leaf coloring begins when night temperatures fall below 55°F for approximately two weeks. Expect good disease tolerance in all regions for this full sun annual, with frost-tolerant blooms from November to March in warmer climates. Taki.com



This ... is Garden Idol!

During the January 2011 American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA) Clinic, First Editions Little Devil from **Bailey Nurseries** took top honors at the ANLA "Garden Idol" live event. Voted the best new plant introduction for 2011, this compact ninebark captured the attention of the judges and attendees. Growing only to 4 ft., it makes a great background for a flowerbed or as a shrub border. Little Devil packs a lot of color and texture into a small package, featuring deep burgundy foliage throughout the season and small white-pink clusters of flowers in June. Videos of all the Garden Idol contestants will be released in the ANLA Knowledge Center soon. The second phase of ANLA's online voting began on March 1, 2011. BaileyNurseries.com

Waterlily winner

Nymphaea 'Wanvisa' was recently honored by the **International Waterlily and Water Garden Societies** as the Best New Waterlily for 2010 and the Best New Hardy Waterlily, from more than 30 entries in the contest. It was also named as one of the society's 2011 Collector's Aquatic Plant of the Year (CAPY). The lily boasts salmon pink to peach-colored flowers with flecks of cream to pale yellow accents. The leaves display a marbled appearance. 'Wanvisa's' story of recognition was nearly bypassed entirely because it was viewed as an abnormality in a cultivated water lily field in Thailand. The water lily nursery owner was concerned it would contaminate her prized *Nymphaea* 'Joey Tomocik,' a vibrant yellow hardy water lily that was growing alongside 'Wanvisa.' But water lily hybridizer Dr. N. Nopchai Chansilpa immediately recognized there was something extraordinary about this plant, and helped bring it to its current prominence. 'Wanvisa' is available in limited shipments in April, May, June and July 2011. IWGS.org/2011-CAPY-Purchasing.html



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THE BENCHMARK

KEVIN KEHOE

The author, owner-manager of 3PG Consulting, is a 25-year industry veteran. Reach him at kkehoe@questex.com.

How to coach a salesperson

PART I

get questions regarding sales staff motivation. I think this is because it's relatively new to most owners who sold for so long they can't understand why others can't do it the way they did it. They manage the salesperson like the batting coach instructing recent arrivals from the farm club. "Just step up to the plate, see the ball and hit it," they tell the less experienced batters.

Thank you, coach, for that invaluable advice. The truth is, though, most of the best batting coaches were .240 career hitters. They lack the gift, but know the science.

There *is* a science to selling — and like the baseball swing, it can be broken down and coached. The coach's job is to teach the mechanics and process through observation, demonstration and applied pressure.

The best place to start is by understanding the factors that produce poor performance. In sales, there are three big ones. Coaches and salespeople should focus on these, and master the process and mechanics of each.

1 Ineffective qualification of prospects. Salespeople can't meet goals if they don't grow and nurture a large pool of warm leads. To do this, the sales manager must focus the salesperson on allocating time to this task, counting and testing the quality of the leads weekly, and providing simple networking call scripts for turning cold/warm leads into hot leads. A good sales manager reviews and develops canned emails and voice-mails, and helps the salesperson strategize ways to get in the door. Poor writing and phone skills with lack of creative follow-up narrow the lead pool.

2 Insufficient lead pool management. Failure to qualify a hot lead as a high probability close opportunity will always produce lots of bidding activity, with relatively little result other than wasted time. Given the low close rates in the

industry, wasted time is a luxury they can't afford. A sales manager can test the quality of an opportunity by asking a few simple questions.

- › Do we know who really makes this decision?
- › Will we have the opportunity to close it face to face?
- › Have we established a clear need (point of pain), and connected that to our service proposition in a way that establishes a "fit"?
- › Do we understand the job specification and budget range, and can we shape it?

A good sales manager provides scripts, practices how to ask the right questions to elicit these responses, and shows the salesperson how to close on an advancing action. If the salesperson cannot confirm a clear fit or a face-to-face, then closing success will be low.

3 Ineffective negotiation under pressure. The art of deal-making — also known as negotiation — takes practice. But the skill set is rather straightforward. The poised and patient salesperson turns an objection into an opportunity by validating the objection, clarifying it, turning it back as a question to the prospect, then closing on the response with an offer, concession or assurance. This simple method gets salespeople past the "deer in the headlight" moment of truth that happens right after a brilliant presentation is followed by a question about matching the lowest price. A good sales manager prepares "objection cheat sheets" and a 4-minute canned "needs/solutions" presentation to arm the salesperson with proper tools. But this is not enough without grilling sessions to produce fluency. At the end of the day, a sale is not made in the presentation, but in the negotiation.

How do you motivate landscape and lawn care salespeople and get better performance? Teach them how to win. For salespeople, winning is the ultimate motivation.



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Case Construction Equipment

New pallet forks are specially designed for use with Case's skid steers

and compact track loaders. They are available with either 48- or 42-in. tines, in a choice of Heavy Duty, rated to 5,500 lbs., or Standard, rated to 4,000 lbs. Case pallet forks feature a rugged, reliable frame and outstanding visibility to the tines for safe, easy loading. The frame's mounting angle assures proper forward tilt for loading and excellent rollback for transporting loads. The design offers ample room between the frame and the cab, providing easy access to and from the cab.

CaseCE.com

General Equipment Co.

The 240 hole digger features the construction industry's first use of four-stroke engine technology on a one-man, handheld hole-digging product. A 1.6-hp Subaru EH035 engine supplies the power. The four-stroke engine also eliminates the need for premixed fuel and oil solutions, effectively removing any worries of engine damage caused by improper mixing techniques. A Magura twist grip throttle controls engine speed for optimal power output. A spur gear transmission, produces a maximum drilling torque of 55 ft.-lbs. Its all-metal centrifugal clutch slips on overload or when the auger makes contact with a buried obstruction. The 1-in.-diameter driveshaft connection accommodates the use of earth augers ranging from 2 to 8 in. in diameter. The standard digging depth is 30 in., which can be increased with an available 15-in., non-flighted extension. GeneralEquip.com



continued on page 60

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continued from page 58

John Deere

In response to customers' needs for faster travel speed across jobsites, John Deere introduces a two-speed option to its mid-frame 318D and 320D skid steer loader models. The new option increases ground speed as much as 62% on both manual and E/H controls machines, from 6.8 mph to 11 mph. It's engineered to provide a second gear for a variety of work, including landscaping. Shift on-the-go ca-

pability allows operators to kick into higher travel speeds with a simple flip of a toggle switch on the left-hand joystick. Electronically controlled shifting allows for seamless transition during upshifts and downshifts. The 318D and 320D are part of Deere's customer-inspired D-Series skid steer line, featuring 24% larger cabs and 6 in. of additional headroom than their predecessors. They are also quieter because of a hydraulic fan drive and engine auto-idle, and positively pressurized for better air temperature control. JohnDeere.com

New Holland Construction

New Holland introduces pallet forks specially designed for use with its skid steers and compact track loaders. They feature a rugged frame and visibility to the tines for easy and accurate loading. The fork assemblies are available with either 48- or 42-in. tines, with a choice of 5,500- or 4,000-lb.-rated tine sets. The frame's mounting angle ensures optimum forward tilt for load pick-up and rollback for transporting loads. The design offers ample room between the frame and the cab, providing the operator with easy access to and from the cab. NewHolland.com



Bobcat Co.

The new, 12,678-lb. T870 is the largest compact track loader the company has ever manufactured, and the 10,008-lb. S850 (pictured) is its largest skid loader. Both new loaders provide operators with more powerful hydraulics, increased fuel capacity, higher lift capacities and reach, increased pushing power and higher horsepower than any of Bobcat's current loader models. In addition, the loaders will enable the operator to accomplish more work through performance and durability enhancements that provide more power and keep the loader working longer, while increasing operator comfort with a new cab-forward design with improved visibility and a more spacious and comfortable cab. Job-enhancing features were also added to the optional Deluxe Instrumentation Panel featured in these machines. Bobcat.com

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