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YOUR INSURANCE RESOURCE

Cut your costs

INSURANCE COSTS ARE INCREASING—
HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO KEEP THEM DOWN
IN FOUR VITAL CATEGORIES.

WITH INSURANCE COSTS poised to rise, now is the time to keep your costs down as much as possible. John Hodapp, CPCU, senior vice president of Hortica Insurance & Employee Benefits, shares some ways landscape contractors may be able to lower costs on four main types of insurance.

1 Workers' compensation—

It's likely that workers' compensation is a large percentage of a landscape firm's overhead. There are some things companies can do to keep the number of claims at a minimum. The key is a safety culture, Hodapp says.

He recommends "tailgate safety meetings," which are short meetings, often held right before crews go out in the field. "The topic can be closely tied to whatever they're doing on the job site that day so the information is fresh in their minds," Hodapp says. "For instance, you can talk about team lifting for heavy objects or lifting with the legs when you're lifting on your own."

Companies also should pay attention to credits that may be available for drug-free policies. Larger companies should form a safety committee, typi-

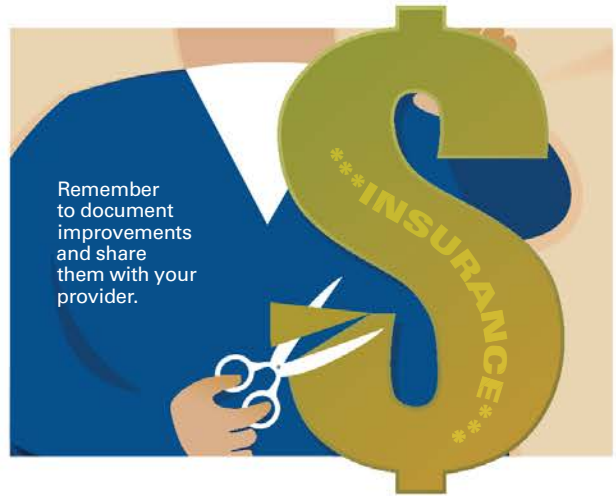
cally made up of four to six members and consisting of both management and non-management employees. A safety committee is responsible for reviewing accidents and near-misses and recommending corrective procedures.

If a claim needs to be filed, Hodapp says it's best to be proactive and handle it right away as opposed to letting the situation drag on. "It's always best to show empathy and let the employee know the situation is being cared for," he says. "You're not taking blame, you're just taking action. When employees do return, a 'return to work' program should already be in place."

2 Auto insurance—

The effort to keep auto costs down starts well before employees are even driving your vehicles. "The best predictor of future driving is previous experience," says Hodapp. "Employees should not have DUIs or have been cited for careless or reckless driving. One or two minor violations in the last three years might be OK, but if it's anything beyond that, you might want to assume that driver might be more likely to be involved in future accidents."

Business owners also should ask their insurance



companies about a credit for vehicles not being utilized in the winter, Hodapp says. Also consider asking the insurance company to put on a defensive driving course for all employees. Distracted drivers are too often the cause of serious accidents. Cell phone use should be limited to minimal use of hands-free devices in uncongested areas. Texting while driving should be prohibited.

Finally, operators must make sure every load is properly secured. Large insurance claims often result when unsecured cargo spews from trucks.

3 Property insurance—

With equipment, the mantra is "reduce loss, reduce cost," says Hodapp. "Avoid leaving equipment on job sites overnight and if you can't, at least fence it in. Also focus on anything that will make the equipment less desirable to steal. That includes making your equipment look like it belongs to your company with painting, logos and making sure the company's unit number is emblazoned on the equipment, installing interlocks, and putting the VIN number in more than

the one place the manufacturer put it."

4 General liability—

With general liability insurance, focus on managing claims costs. "This includes transferring risk to responsible third parties," Hodapp says. For example, make sure subcontractors have proper insurance.

Though it may be tempting, one thing business owners shouldn't do is lower liability insurance to try to save a few bucks. "You're betting the farm," Hodapp says. "In even the most safety-conscious companies, accidents still happen."

Companies should document changes and bring them to the attention of their insurer. Improvements won't save money if the provider doesn't know about them. "Make your insurance company understand why you deserve a better price," says Hodapp. "If I'm the underwriter and one company has a written safety program, a safety committee and a good plan to prevent theft and another company doesn't, it's obvious which one will get a better price."

Does your insurance company think a “grub problem” means mystery meat monday?



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MARKET REPORT

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AND INNOVATIONS FOR LAWN CARE CUSTOMERS, AND IT MAY EVEN "BUST SOME MYTHS" ALONG THE WAY...

◀ BY RICK GRANT

WHO WE ARE

The Quali-Pro brand is part of Control Solutions Inc. (CSI), a specialty chemical company based in Pasadena, Texas. CSI's parent company, Makteshim Agan (MAI), a global ag-chem manufacturer, acquired Quali-Pro with Farmsaver in 2004 and rolled it under the CSI umbrella in 2011 to help it thrive in the ever-changing and competitive marketplace. This move gave Quali-Pro renewed support in the areas of management, structure, product development, regulatory and marketing. The combined businesses now make up the largest non-crop company within the global MAI. We now employ and access the most talented and knowledgeable formulation chemists, production engineers and sales and marketing people to help our customers be successful.

INNOVATIVE FORMULATIONS

We at Quali-Pro have access to more active ingredients globally than any other company. This unique situation gives us the ability to improve upon the current products in the marketplace and deliver products that are unlike anything lawn care operators (LCOs) can get from other companies. We are a new generation basic! We're proud of our formulations and we're willing to compare them to the original products that exist today. In fact, many of our most popular products and formulations already have been put in side-by-side testing at the major universities and they perform very well compared to the "basic registrants." In many instances our products bring additional value through minor differences that improve mixing, handling or performance.

WELCOME TO PASADENA, TEXAS!

Many of our products are manufactured at the CSI headquarters in Pasadena, Texas, near Houston. Our manufacturing and formulation facility is state of the art, extremely clean and very well run. Spending most of my career in the specialty chemical business, I've been in

many manufacturing facilities and was completely impressed when I toured the CSI plant for the first time.

LCOs want their technicians to present themselves in a professional manner because their look and demeanor reflects on the company. That works the same way for our company. Most of our customers will never see the inside of our manufacturing plant, but how we maintain the facility and the processes we use to create our products reflect CSI's quality.

BRIGHT FUTURE

We've launched five new products in 2013, including Negate and Enclave. Both products are a direct result of our superior market understanding and formulation know-how. CSI currently has more than 100 projects on the five-year developmental schedule with 20 exclusively for Quali-Pro.

One of the most exciting things we're going to be doing in 2013 is something no other post-patent manufacturer has done. CSI will be launching patented, proprietary products for the turf, nursery, ornamental and pest management markets. Other manufacturers are becoming more generic in their offering and at Quali-Pro we're becoming more basic in our offerings.

BASICALLY BETTER™ SUPPORT

Quali-Pro provides full technical and sales teams to support our current and future customers. In addition to retaining seasoned veterans like Jerry Corbett, the Quali-Pro technical service manager, CSI also added a vice president of business development in 2012: Rami Soufi, Ph.D., MBA. We have a desire to fully support the industries and businesses we participate in. Expanding the support we provide to our customers and building a new product development team is how we plan to continue to bring innovation and value to our industry.

There's no compromise when you choose Quali-Pro products, whether it's the current product line or the soon-to-be proprietary products. You're continuing to get quality products at a great value, which makes our value proposition to the customer "basically better."



Quali-Pro is part of CSI, which is headquartered in Pasadena, Texas.



Lawn Care

MARKET REPORT

LAWN CARE—the segment of the Green Industry in which professionals apply fertilizer, pesticides and/or use cultural methods to improve and maintain turf—remains one of the most profitable yet competitive parts of the market. There are many regional players competing with a few large, national companies and franchises—in addition to the full-service or landscape maintenance companies that do application work for their clients.

Because lawn care is its own animal within the landscape industry and among our readers, we investigated the state of the lawn care market, how its operators are faring and what's on the horizon with a mix of interviews and an exclusive survey. These are the results.

Survey methodology

To gather insights for the 2013 Lawn Care Market Report, *Landscape Management* surveyed readers online in February, resulting in 773 responses. The charts and statistics published throughout this report come from that survey, unless otherwise noted. Based on the sample size and response rate, a 95 percent confidence level is assumed with a +/- 5 percent margin of error. Not all respondents answered every question; we denote the response number with each chart (i.e., $N=619$).

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BLUE SKIES AHEAD

*Lawn care operators
are positioned for
a strong 2013.*

BY MARISA PALMIERI

BUSINESSES OPERATING ON the lawn care side of the Green Industry are feeling positive about the year ahead.

Nearly 90 percent of respondents to *Landscape Management's* Lawn Care Market Report survey say they are "very optimistic" or "somewhat optimistic" about their 2013 business outlook.

Companies say despite some less-than-stable conditions on the economic and political fronts, they're positioned to grow this year. Only 8 percent expect a decrease in revenue for 2013 over 2012.

Seventy-one percent expect an increase, and 21 percent foresee no change.

“The market is coming around a bit,” says Andrew Ziehler, president of Ziehler Lawn and Tree Care in Centerville, Ohio. His firm grew 40 percent last year and is expecting another 40 percent bump this year. “I think it’s going to be a good year. People are tired of doing without. For years they’ve tried to save money and they’ve lost out on service or quality.”



ANDREW ZIEHLER

On the East Coast, Jim Campanella, owner of Lawn Dawg, a \$10 million, 10-branch outfit based in Nashua, N.H., agrees.

“We’re projecting about 16.4 percent growth this year, and we think that’s a little conservative,” he says, noting the growth will be organic vs. through acquisitions. Lawn Dawg has acquired three firms since December 2011. “We’re already ahead of the same time last year.”

Bill Leuenerger, soil and turf management depart-

ment manager for Chalet’s landscape division in north Chicago, Ill., also sees a good year on the horizon for lawn care.

“I think lawn care will continue to do fairly well,” he says. “People don’t go on vacations like they used to, they’re putting money into their yards and one of the cheapest ways to look good is through lawn care, maintenance and specialty gardens. Those three areas have been strong for us the past year and I believe that’s going to continue.”



JIM CAMPANELLA

CHALLENGES REMAIN

Despite overall optimism, there are some concerns. For example, the 2 percent payroll tax reduction workers have benefited from the last two years expired on Jan. 1. That amounted to an annual pay cut of up to \$2,202 for a worker



NASHUA, N.H.-BASED LAWN DAWG, WHICH HAS ACQUIRED THREE COMPANIES SINCE DECEMBER 2011, EXPECTS ANOTHER GROWTH YEAR.