

permagreen™

Using our 100+ years of lawn care experience and 15 years of R&D, we've invented great spreader sprayers that make you *MORE* money and give you more free time to enjoy it. That's why PermaGreen™ is the go-to industry standard.

PermaGreen's are the everyday choice of over ten thousand professionals who use them to profitably treat everything from postage stamps to multi-acre sports and commercial complexes. Agile, fast & powerful, it's a sound investment with a quick Return On Investment.

We'll prove its money-making power. Ride a PermaGreen™ Triumph on your lawns for 30 days: If you don't love it, we'll buy it back!* It's just that simple.



WIN A TRIUMPH!*

Enter online for your chance to make your dreams come true!

Triumph Options: Available with choice of standard 3-hole or optional 1-hole spreader mechanisms in a Spreader Sprayer, Spread-Only or Spray-Only version

permagreen.com | 800.346.2001

DREAM BIG. EXPECT MORE.

© 2012 PermaGreen™ Supreme, Inc. U.S. Patents 6,366,600 & 7,954,573. PermaGreen™ is a registered trademark of PermaGreen™ Supreme, Inc. All rights reserved. *See permagreen.com for details.

THE GROUNDS GUYS

A fresh start

When Brad and Rachel Bell stopped at a trade show booth to snag a free bag at the GIE+EXPO in 2010, they never could have imagined that in less than a year they'd be franchise owners. But one thing led to another, and their chance introduction to The Grounds Guys landscape maintenance franchise system got the wheels turning for the Bells, who at the time owned Brad's Lawn Service in Owensboro, Ky.

The couple describes their previous business as challenging and overwhelming at times. Their greatest roadblock to growing their business, which was doing about \$200,000 in annual revenue, was hiring and retaining employees. In fact, Brad Bell's headaches were such that he was considering reverting to a one-truck operation and working in the field again.

Not long after wandering into The Grounds Guys trade show booth, the Bells made a day-and-a-half trip to Waco, Texas, to visit the corporate headquarters of The Dwyer Group, The Grounds Guys' parent company.

"We learned about the systems and what they were bringing to the table to take our business to the next level," Rachel Bell says. By spring of 2011, the Bells were officially The Grounds Guys of Owensboro, Ky.

Before encountering The Grounds Guys, the couple had never considered buying a franchise.

"I looked at a few after we started speaking with The Grounds Guys, but what really sold me on them was the culture," Brad Bell says. "The Grounds Guys has really developed our culture to what we want it to be. We want to have a positive impact on our community and the entire country, really."

Today, The Grounds Guys of Owensboro, Ky., has grown 30 percent in two years, and is looking at hitting \$350,000 in revenue in 2013.

"I really feel like we started over," Brad Bell says.

Systems are the secret

For Brad Bell, the prospect of being a company with \$1 million or \$2 million in annual revenue is now within reach. Could he have gotten there before joining The Grounds Guys system?

"Never," he says, and then he rethinks his answer. "Maybe, but if I did make it to \$1 million, I would never be making a profit."

Now, Brad Bell "knows his numbers," such as how much he needs to make per man hour to be profitable. And he has monthly sales goals he's accountable for.

"If you implement the systems, there's unlimited growth potential," he

SOCIAL SUPPORT

"One thing that really turned us on was all the support," says Rachel Bell, co-owner of The Grounds Guys of Owensboro, Ky. "The Grounds Guys has more than 100 franchisees. There are 100 people we can ask for help with the blink of an eye if we're doing a big quote or if we're unsure about anything."

The Grounds Guys franchisees nationwide communicate with each other and the home office daily via Chatter, a social network within Salesforce, the customer relationship management software service the franchise uses.

Not only do the Bells get ahead by asking their peers questions, they gain by sharing their knowledge, too.

"It's fun to help other people," Rachel Bell says. "We have strengths where the others have weaknesses, and it's great to share that knowledge and pay it forward."

Brad Bell likes the friendly competition drummed up on Chatter. He's motivated by the project pictures other franchisees post and when they share their successes, like landing a big job.

says. "I could see myself running a \$1 million company."

Brad Bell says he didn't have a system for hiring before becoming a The Grounds Guys franchisee, and now he has an effective six-step hiring process.

"Now, I've gotten myself out of the field, and I'm training my employees," he says. "I'm able to find someone who truly wants a career and not just a paycheck."

Though the Bells still put in long hours, they're happier with their quality of life.

"Brad's hired a great group of guys this year, and they're one of the reasons we're so successful," Rachel Bell says. "His attitude at the end of the day is so much better because it's much easier to deal with the guys on the crew—they're better employees."

It's allowed them more freedom, too. "If we want to go for a day trip or to The Dwyer Group's national conference for three or four days, we have that freedom because of the systems in place and the crews in place," Rachel Bell says.

Brad Bell adds, "We would never have been able to do that with Brad's Lawn Service. It would have fallen apart."



Brad and Rachel Bell, pictured here with their twin daughters, still work hard since converting their business to a The Grounds Guys franchise, but they say their quality of life has improved thanks to the company's systems.

PHOTO: THE GROUNDS GUYS

CULTIVATE YOUR SUCCESS THROUGH THE GROUNDS GUYS® FRANCHISE

Say Hello to *The Grounds Guys*,
The fastest growing franchise in
landscape contracting industry.
The Grounds Guys provides a
successful landscape maintenance
for business owners model
targeting upper end residential
and commercial clients.



the
GroundsGuys®
LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

888.208.0661
GroundsGuysInfo.com



Want to Learn more?
Check out Joe's story
at **Joes-Story.com**



BEST PRACTICES

BRUCE WILSON

The author, of the Wilson-Oyler Group, is a 30-year industry veteran. Reach him at bwilson@wilson-oyler.com.

The power of peer groups

Are peer groups for you? They're not for everyone, but business owners should consider them. At a recent peer group meeting, an outside speaker remarked that not all industries are willing to share best practices among companies. The fact that contractors from different regional markets in the landscape industry can freely share confidential information and commit to transparency and best practices is unique and powerful.

Openness can be a strategic advantage if the member companies of a peer group are serious about improving their organizations. The power comes from not only discussing financials but also sharing and exploring internal struggles and problems.

In good peer group formats, individual owners act as an outside board of directors to each other. Opportunities for formal and informal exchanges extend from the business to personal and social interests. The members share ideas, connect through shared interest and commit to helping each other by participating in all policy decisions that impact growth. This places a responsibility on the owners to take ownership, not only in their own businesses, but also in the other member companies' success. Owners are able to challenge each other to get out of their comfort zones—not always an easy task.

The most common issues holding companies back are challenges around people and performance. All companies have people who are not

right for the jobs they're in. These are the toughest problems for owners to deal with because owners are mostly loyal to their employees, even to the extent they overlook performance issues in favor of loyalty. This is where the other owners as a group are able to assess the issues objectively and help owners realize that a change needs to be made.

Some groups invite key staff to share best practices by job function. For example, salespeople from member companies may meet to discuss marketing and sales. This activity generates empowerment and a willingness to accept and implement ideas owners bring back from the peer group sessions.

There are other types of peer groups that can benefit owners. Most cities have tech or general business groups made up of local owners or CEOs from different industries. These groups match executives from the same market with executives in non-competing companies. Some owners belong to both an industry peer group and an executive group.

Without a confidential peer group or some type of support, owners can be isolated. They are left alone to struggle and have no one to share their thoughts with. Many owners find that having the chance to bounce ideas off of each other is one of the biggest benefits to peer groups.

Peer groups can lose effectiveness if there's not a level of accountability associated with membership. Peer groups that facilitate require each company to make commitments and next steps to improve. They then have to report on those commitments at the next meeting.

Collaborating on problems affecting not only the member companies, but the entire industry, is another huge benefit. Brainstorming solutions to these issues can be a competitive advantage to the member companies.

The best part? Great friendships formed from the connections established and the access and support members gain extends beyond the peer group meetings, especially if the group includes some outside activities from time to time.

The fact that **contractors in the landscape industry can freely share confidential information and commit to transparency and best practices is unique and powerful.**

CONTROLLED-RELEASE FERTILIZER

DRIVEN BY

DURATION^{CR}

ENGINEERED FOR PERFORMANCE

A SIGN OF THE TIMES

Rising business costs. Environmental concerns. You owe it to yourself to look into fertilizers Driven by Duration. These controlled-release fertilizers are coated with an advanced polymer technology, so you can reduce the number of applications per customer. With the time you save, you can add even more properties, and work on them using your same crews. That's cost-effective. And since you're reducing nitrogen use by up to 40 percent, you'll be saving money, while using this resource responsibly. Consult with your distributor today and discuss what a better way can mean for your business environment.

A BETTER WAY TO FERTILIZE.

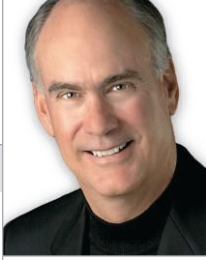


Calculate the square foot advantages and win a Turfco[®] T3000i Spreader/Sprayer!



Find out how fewer applications can benefit your business. Go online yourself, or do the calculations with your distributor. Either way, you'll qualify for a chance to win a Turfco[®] T3000i Spreader/Sprayer.

Visit: DrivenByDuration.com



THE BENCHMARK

FRANK ROSS

The author is owner-manager of 3PG Consulting. Reach him at frank@3PGConsulting.com.

Why are we in business?

Those of you who've joined me in seminars over the years are familiar with my asking that question. If we polled our readership, I'll bet we'd have various answers to it, stretching from producing sales, to providing jobs, serving the customer base, giving back to the community, etc. While all of those reasons are commendable, let's be clear. We're in business for two reasons: profit and fun.

Profit is our lifeblood—it provides us the cash flow we require to meet payrolls, pay our bills and invest in expansion. *Fun* is the fire in the belly, the passion that drives us. And if we're making money, chances are we're having a lot of fun. If we're not, business can be a real bummer.

This is the time of the year that we all prepare our budgets. You do prepare a budget, don't you? Because *Inc.* magazine says that only about 15 percent of us small businesses actually prepare a budget. No one doubts a budget's value, *Inc.* says. It's just that most business owners don't know where to start.

My advice? Start with what's most important—profit—specifically net profit, and work up from there. Here are five steps to get you started:

1 Determine the amount of net profit you need to make.

2 Budget each overhead account using the "zero-based" concept of budgeting. The combination of net profit and overhead equals the amount of gross margin you must generate if you're to be successful in meeting your cash-flow requirements and cover your overhead.

3 Determine your capacity. What do we sell in the service world? Labor mostly. So, prepare a labor budget that will help you determine the number of hours you have available to sell next year.

4 Determine your backlog. This is the amount of work you've already sold for next year. How much gross margin does this generate? This margin will offset the amount of margin determined in steps one and two.

5 What are your 2013 sales goals? We know how much margin we have left to sell, so ask yourself how much revenue is required to cover that margin.

Let's discuss step No. 1: How much net profit do we need to make? Obviously, we want to make as much of it as we can, but the question is, "How much must I make to cover my cash flow demands?" We can calculate that from our balance sheet and the result will be our new break-even point.

First, make a list of all of the debt you intend to retire in the coming year. Add up only the principle payments, as interest is an expense found on the income statement.

Second, make a list of capital purchases you plan to make in the coming year, such as trucks and equipment. Then, itemize the cash payments you'll be making throughout the year (down payments and principle payments).

Third, anticipate the amount of cash you'll need to support your revenue growth. Here we will use a financial statistic that says in the service industry, it takes about 10 cents to support a dollar of revenue. So, if we plan to grow \$500,000, we'll need to raise net profits 10 percent of that growth, or \$50,000, to maintain the adequate cash flow to meet payrolls and pay our vendors while we wait to collect our billings.

Our fourth cash need is the bonuses/dividends we'll disburse if we generate the net profit we've budgeted. This is our way of saying thank you to the hard work our team accomplished in reaching a goal.

And, lastly, Uncle Sam. Calculate the amount of tax you'll incur by reaching your net profit goal. (Your accountant can help here.)

Add the five values together, subtract next year's anticipated depreciation—as this is a non-cash expense item on our income statement—and the result is the amount of net profit we *must* make to support our company in the coming year. Not "want to make" or "should make," but *must* make if we're to meet all of our obligations in the coming 12 months.

Now, it's your turn.

4 out of 5 Landscaping companies use us.



The other 1 is working too hard.

**from Landscape Management's list of the 150 Largest Landscape Contractors.*

Sprayer Standard Features:

- Stainless Steel Construction
- 50' - 100' Hose Reel
- 16 HP Vanguard Commercial
- Constant By-pass Agitation
- Hydraulic Drive Hopper System
- GPS Speedometer
- Locking Caster System



L.T. Rich Products

Call us at: (877) 482-2040



Z-Plug Standard Features:

- 18 HP Vanguard Commercial
- Hydraulic Lift System with Down Pressure
- Attachments Available



Recommended
Dow AgroSciences
solution

Defendor™
specialty
herbicide*

COMMON DANDELION

Taraxacum officinale

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- ▶ This perennial overwinters as a small rosette of leaves. Seedlings grow from a taproot, and begin to emerge in early spring when soil temperatures reach 50 degrees F.
- ▶ Solitary, bright yellow blossoms grow on the end of leafless, hollow stalks that emit a white milky sap when broken.
- ▶ It produces a puffball seedhead shortly after mowing, and seeds are easily dispersed by wind.
- ▶ Dandelions prefer moist conditions and soils but thrive in weak, thin turf.

CONTROL TIPS

- ▶ For early-season control of weeds that overwintered, apply a labeled, postemergent herbicide to turf early in the spring when temperatures are still cool.
- ▶ Properly mow, water and fertilize lawns to encourage healthy growth and minimize thin turf.
- ▶ Florasulam can be applied when the first fertilizer and liquid preemergent applications of the season are made.



Recommended
Dow AgroSciences
solution

Defendor™
specialty
herbicide*

RED CLOVER

Trifolium pratense

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- ▶ This cool-season, perennial legume grows from a fibrous root system and is found across the U.S.
- ▶ Stiff, hairy stems root at the nodes, causing this weed to grow erect.
- ▶ Each leaf consists of three elliptical leaflets, with a light green or white V-shaped watermark.
- ▶ Round pink to purple flower heads, made up of many small flowers, grow on flower stalks.

CONTROL TIPS

- ▶ As with any turfgrass weed, proper cultural maintenance of the lawn will greatly reduce the prevalence and presence of this weed. Properly mow, fertilize and water lawns to encourage healthy turf.
- ▶ When red clover is actively growing, apply a postemergent, systemic herbicide that will move from the treated foliage throughout the plant and into the extensive root system to completely control this weed—roots and all.

* State restrictions on the sale and use of Defendor apply.

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.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



Dow AgroSciences



GENERIC HERBICIDES ARE FINE IF YOU RUN A GENERIC BUSINESS.

Dimension® specialty herbicide isn't the No. 1 brand in the lawn and landscape markets just because it offers outstanding preemergence and early postemergence for crabgrass control.¹ Or because it also controls more than 45 other grassy and broadleaf weeds. It's No. 1 because it's a proven product from a proven company. Unlike generic manufacturers, Dow AgroSciences provides innovative products, expertise and field support that helps retain and grow business. It's what sets Dimension apart from the competition. And when you use it, it can do the same for you. **To learn more, visit www.DowProvesIt.com.**



Dow AgroSciences

Solutions for the Growing World

¹2010 Specialty Product Consultants. ®Trademark of The Dow Chemical Company ("Dow") or an affiliated company of Dow. State restrictions on the sale and use of Dimension specialty herbicide products apply. Consult the label before purchase or use for full details. Always read and follow label directions. T38-813-005 (12/12) BR 010-60787 DATOTURF1074



Jeffrey Scott's SALES SUMMIT

3-Part Webinar Series:

GROWING 2013 SALES

Brought to you by *Landscape Management*, Jeffrey Scott's Sales Summit webinar series is sure to help landscape contractor companies sell, sell, sell and make higher profits in 2013!

**Landscape
Management**



Webinar #1:

Thursday, February 7 @ 11 am ET

Improving Sales:

Sell More with Less Effort at a Higher Margin

- Get clarity on your ideal prospects, and what they are really buying
- Gain control of the sales process, and waste less of your time
- Shift the conversation away from price only
- Separate yourself from the low-ballers
- Earn higher margins through a targeted process
- Close sales more easily and quickly with specific techniques
- Improve profitability by avoiding the "head trash" that affects salespeople

Webinar #2:

Wednesday, February 13 @ 11 am ET

Hiring, Building and Managing a Sales Force

- Learn recruiting and hiring practices to ensure a better hire
- Find a compensation systems that works
- Manage a sales funnel — what is it, how do you manage it
- Keep salespeople efficient and productive
- Understand the different sales roles: hunter, farmer and cook
- Create accountability (beyond commissions) to ensure results
- Transition clients away from the owner
- Avoid the pitfalls of bad hires and bad promotions
- Learn about tools that help you hire and manage your salespeople
- Find the "magic number" of salespeople to have — learn what that is
- Hear what really motivates salespeople (it is not always money)



**Register
for the Series
Today!**

Webinar #3:

Wednesday, February 27 @ 11 am ET

Enhancement Selling, Cross Selling and Add-on Sales

- Help your clients create an 'enhancement and upsales' budget
- Understand the 5 upsales roles: company, owner, salesperson, office, frontline technician
- Learn relationship building techniques to grow sales
- Gain surefire cross-selling tips and techniques
- Turn problems into sales opportunities
- Plant seeds to grow future sales
- Be efficient with your time
- Empower foremen and project managers to sell

About the Speaker

JEFFREY SCOTT is author of *The Referral Advantage* and *The Leader's Edge*. At age 34, he grew his maintain/design/build firm into a very successful \$10 million enterprise. He now consults with others on how to achieve similar success. He facilitates landscape peer groups for owners who want to transform and grow their business. His peer group members achieved 27% profit growth in their first year. To learn more visit www.GetTheLeadersEdge.com.

Turn your company into a selling machine today!

REGISTER NOW FOR \$129

Attend live and also view the recorded webinars later at your leisure!

LandscapeManagement.net/saleswebinars