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FD2B Talk Radio is a weekly internet radio show for landscape design/build contractors who want to take their companies to the next level.

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UPCOMING PROGRAMS

DATE	SPECIAL GUEST	PROGRAM TOPIC	SPONSOR
7/3	Stephanie Cohen , Garden Expert, <i>The Perennial Diva</i>	Tried and True Perennials	
7/10	Jerry Gaeta , Consultant, <i>J. Gaeta Business Planning</i>	\$0 to 1 Million in 60 Minutes	
7/17	Tom Shay , Vendor, <i>Profits Plus Solutions</i>	How to Promote Customer Loyalty	
7/24	Bruce Crawford , Educator, <i>Rutgers Gardens/Rutgers University</i>	The Best of the Best in Plant Material	
7/31	Dave Conklin , Vendor, <i>RankPop</i>	SEO in Plain English	
8/7	Jason Cupp , Consultant, <i>Kolbe Certified Growth Consultant</i>	Team Building for Landscape Contractors	Sponsorship Available

ABOUT THE HOST

Jody Shilan, MLA is an award-winning landscape designer and former landscape design/build contractor, who has sold tens of millions of dollars of design and installation work throughout his career. He now uses his 35+ years of experience to coach other landscape contractors how to easily and dramatically increase their sales by following his unique landscape design/build/sales process. He does this through public speaking, private consulting, group workshops and his "exclusive" members-only website www.FromDesign2Build.com.



Remember: all shows are archived for later listening at FD2B.COM!

LISTENERS LOVE IT!

"I love listening to FD2B Talk Radio. I appreciate the candid yet light-hearted conversations he has with his guests. And the topics are relevant and on-point." —Chris Heiler, president & founder, *Landscape Leadership*

"Jody has brought a great variety of industry resources to a single media channel. I feel that the topics are relevant and the concise manner in which they are delivered saves me time. The format allows for feedback and questions, which I find helpful." —Michael McShane, president, *Plantique*

"FD2B Talk Radio is not only informative and insightful, but it's also entertaining. Each week I look forward to learning the next guest speaker and topic of discussion." —Amanda Bell, landscape designer, *Landscape Design by Amanda*

"I listen to FD2B Talk Radio to educate myself on the landscape design/build topics to better my business. Jody responds to all my questions promptly and with helpful hints you can't get anywhere else." —Kim Stratton, landscape designer, *Stratton Landscape Design*

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PROFITING FROM DESIGN

JODY SHILAN

Shilan is editor of FromDesign2Build.com. Contact him at 201/783-2844 or jshilan@gmail.com.

The design/build brain

Q When creating job descriptions, what is the best way to separate the roles of design and production?

—Mark Muzio, The Landscape Design Group, Waltham, Mass.

A This is a great question that companies of every size constantly struggle with, regardless of how many years they've been in business. Although my answer is straightforward and simple, creating a highly functional design/build team requires a significant amount of work and efficient internal systems. The good news is that once these roles are defined and everybody is on the same page, your installations and your business will run much more smoothly and more profitably, with fewer errors and better communication.

I can't promise that you'll achieve landscape design/build nirvana, but I can assure you that there's a workable system that will help all of your employees become more successful.

Essentially, there are two basic theories about managing the design/build process. The first is to have your designer be responsible for everything. This means not only designing, estimating and selling the installation, but also taking on the additional production responsibilities of job scheduling, project management and job costing. The second theory is to define clearly the roles of "design" and "build," allowing each department to focus on one part of the process or the other. By the time you finish reading this column, I think you'll be able to tell which theory I subscribe to and why.

Regardless of whether or not you want to believe it, personality-wise, landscape designers are different from production people, and vice versa. There's a scientific reason for this. Designers typically are right-brained. They're visual learners. They are creative by nature—intuitive and free spirited—and depend more on visual cues to understand. As you probably know, they're emotional and easily swayed by their feelings. Unfortunately, they also tend to be unorganized, lack time-management skills and they don't prioritize well.

On the other hand, production people are typically dominated by the left side of the brain; they're auditory learners. They learn through listening rather than by seeing. Unlike the creative and inquisitive right side of our brain, the left side is responsible for organization and logic. Therefore, those who have a dominant left side are typically thorough, prefer schedules and deadlines and love rules and regulations.

All this means that regardless of how much you may want your design/sales department to manage the installations, it's nearly impossible to find a right-brained, creative, free thinker who is well organized and likes to follow the rules. The opposite is true as well. No matter how much you may want your ultra-efficient production supervisor to learn how to think outside the box and creatively problem solve, it's probably not going to happen; he's not programmed that way.

Although we all have a dominant side of our brain, none of us is either 100 percent right-brained or 100 percent left-brained. We are a mixture of both, meaning there is hope for you, your employees and your business.

Now that I've given you some scientific proof that there's a real reason why you need to split the positions, what's my advice to you? Save yourself a lot of time and aggravation and don't try to have one person manage the entire process. Instead, find a creative right-brainer and let him or her design, sell and schmooze the clients. Then set up your designer with a time-managing left-brainer who can keep to a schedule and get things done. Once you have these two people in place, you just need to establish some standard operating procedures or best management practices that allow both sides of your design/build brain to work together to install beautiful landscapes, profitably.

To submit a question for Profiting From Design, please contact Shilan at jshilan@gmail.com.

In-ground opportunity

Transforming unused swimming pools into living pond environments has presented an exciting opportunity for this Pennsylvania-based company.



Steven Katz says pool-to-pond conversions are fulfilling.

STEVEN KATZ HAS worked in the pond-building, -refurbishing and -management business for more than three decades. During that time, some projects have stood out as especially unique. Take, for example, the project where the homeowners wanted their unused swimming pool turned into a pond. While such a project is a massive undertaking, Katz has found it can have amazing results.

When customers browse the website for Land & Seascapes in Aston, Pa., the page opens with a video of what looks like a beautiful, naturally occurring pond, complete

with plant life and fish. They're surprised to learn that the pond had a former life as a swimming pool.

"In the Northeast environment where we're based,

swimming pools don't exist well here," Katz says. "A lot of people have them put in but they soon realize that they only get, at most, three months of use out of them. Then they're staring at an unsightly cover for eight months." Many homeowners tire of that, Katz says, adding that Land & Seascapes saw an opportunity to transform underutilized pools into year-round features.

It may seem that already having a pool dug out would make pond installation easier, but transforming a swimming pool into a pond is more complex than starting a pond from scratch, Katz says. Pools are too deep to allow for a thriving

pond environment, so they need to be filled in before the process can even start.

"We're basically building the pond backwards when we're starting with a swimming pool, because we're doing a lot of the work from the underground up," Katz says. "Starting from scratch is a blank canvas, and that's easier to work with."

The result is a pond that homeowners can actually wade into. "Many of our clients grew up with lakes, streams and ponds and they like the idea of swimming in clarified water surrounded by a few fish and some lovely plants," Katz says. "The clarity of the water is beautiful and naturally maintained."

The profit opportunity from a swimming pool conversion is much bigger than that of a typical garden pond. Projects start at about \$150,000 for the conversion, a water feature and landscaping. But the amount of time, manpower and overall troubleshooting involved makes it a much more complicated process. Because of the cost and scope involved, the company doesn't do many pool conversions—to date it's done five—but Katz says the conversions are fun despite their challenges.

"One of the challenges is access," Katz says. "This requires big machinery. We need a good 8 feet to 10 feet of access just to bring in the machinery and transport our materials."

To make homeowners aware of that, Land & Seascapes markets the concept in display ads and on Google AdWords. It also wants potential clients to consider its other service—installing a "swim pond environment" from scratch as an alternative to standard swimming pool installation.

Katz is doing his best to spread the word that swim ponds have as many benefits as swimming pools. "We want homeowners to know that they don't have to live with a pool they don't want," he says.

Payton is a freelance writer with eight years of experience writing about the landscape industry.

» SERVICE SNAPSHOT

COMPANY: Land & Seascapes

OWNER: Steven Katz

YEAR FOUNDED: 1980

YEAR OF FIRST POOL-TO-POND CONVERSION: 1991

LEARNING CURVE: "The best experience is gained over the course of building hundreds of ponds and pond environments while working hands-on with my crew at many job sites," Katz says.

EQUIPMENT INVESTMENT: Pool conversion projects definitely required an investment in additional equipment, says Katz. The list included: skid-steers, track hoes, buckets with thumbs, several types of hydraulic equipment, vibratory sheep's foot rollers, jumping jack and pressure plate tamers, over-sized mechanical hand tools and more.

Pools need to be filled in to allow for a proper pond environment.



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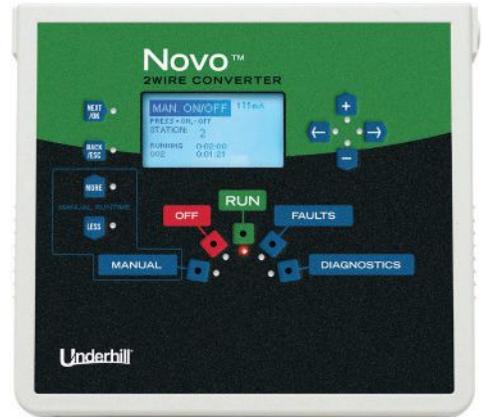
IRRIGATION



5000 PRS rotors and 1800 PRS sprays

Rain Bird's 5000 PRS rotors and 1800 PRS sprays feature pressure-regulating stems (PRS) with Flow Optimizer technology. By regulating water pressure at the head, this technology can help save approximately 1 gpm per rotor or spray, according to the company. It also eliminates inefficient misting or fogging.

Rain Bird // RainBird.com/prs



Novo

Novo, a compact two-wire converter, is designed to quickly transform any standard multiwire controller to two-wire operation by using a "plug and play" feature. Novo installs alongside the host controller and handles up to 32 two-wire stations. The host multiwire controller continues to run all scheduling programs and "talks" to the new two-wire valves and decoders via the Novo converter.

Underhill International // Underhill.us



Aquicare

Aquicare wetting agent helps irrigation practices by preventing localized dry spot conditions and rehydrating water repellent soils. Offering both preventive and curative relief, Aquicare helps reduce surface tension of the water droplets to make water wetter, improving its infiltration. It also is designed to resist excessive water retention on the soil surface.

WinField Solutions // WinField.com

MP3500

The newest addition to the MP rotator family, the MP3500, provides coverage from 31 to 35 ft., which allows for specification in mid-range applications. While this is the longest MP rotator to date, it still maintains the efficiency-focused features of the line, such as matched precipitation, wind-resistant streams, robust design and uniformity.

Hunter Industries // HunterIndustries.com





SEEDERS

SL220 Overseedr Slicer/Seeder

Slice through compacted soils and thatch while seeding with SourceOne's SL220 Overseedr Slicer/Seeder. High-carbon steel fixed knives slice up to 0.5 in. deep for minimal disruption of existing grass. An adjustable-rate hopper drops seed or fertilizer in front of the knives to be transferred into the soil.

SourceOne // SourceOneOPE.com



20-in. slit seeder

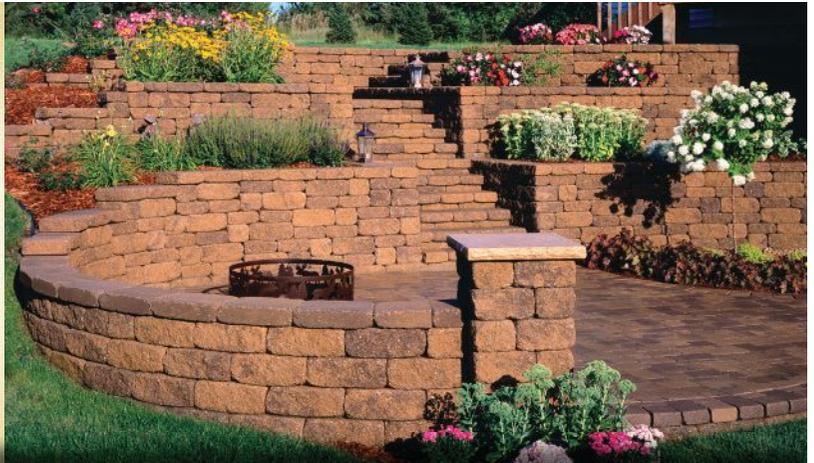
Toro's 20-in. slit seeders are capable of power-seeding, dethatching and verticutting. These three-in-one machines hold up to 40 lbs. of seed, allowing operators to seed up to 8,000 sq. ft. without refilling. They deliver zero-turn maneuverability, even on hills, and a variable-speed drive system that allows forward and reverse operation.

The Toro Co. // Toro.com/professional

TriWave 40

Turfco's TriWave 40 tow-behind overseeder quickly attaches to most turf vehicles to overseed and spot seed a variety of areas with any seed and no mechanical changes. With the patent-pending WaveBlade technology, the counter-rotating blades enhance germination and decrease turf disruption. The seeder also features floating heads that follow the contour of the ground. It's covered by a two-year warranty.

Turfco // Turfco.com



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ZERO-TURN MOWERS

6000 Series

Toro has updated its line of Z Master Professional 6000 Series propane mowers with new closed-loop electronic fuel injection 27-hp Kohler Command Pro EFI propane engines. These new models incorporate closed-loop EFI technology that improves fuel efficiency, features best-in-class starting and can reduce downtime because the mowers operate without carburetors.

Toro // Toro.com/professional



Lazer Z S-Series

The new propane-fueled Lazer Z S-Series zero-turn rider can achieve up to 7.5 hours of operation on a single tank of fuel. The automotive-style, closed-loop electronic fuel injection system optimizes air/fuel settings based on exhaust output, in real time, to maximize performance and efficiency.

The ECU-controlled start-up simplifies

the sequence and eliminates the need for a choke.

Exmark // Exmark.com



2960EFI

The new zero-turn model 2960EFI mower, part of Dixie Chopper's Silver Eagle Series, features a 60-in. cutting deck for mowing up to 5.3 acres per hour. It is powered by a 29-hp Kohler electronic fuel injection (EFI) engine, and it's equipped with a heavy-duty Hydro-Gear pump and Parker wheel motors.

Dixie Chopper // DixieChopper.com



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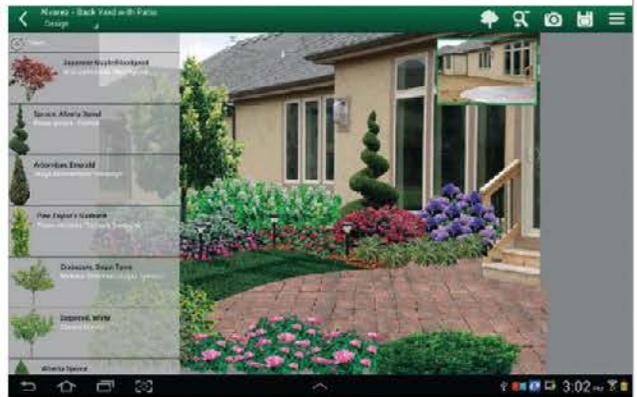
TECHNOLOGY



Model 126V-52

Model 126V-52, a new compact zero-turn mower, features a fully hydraulic, integrated pump-and-wheel-motor transmission; a 26-hp B&S Commercial Turf engine (with an extended three-year engine warranty); a 52-in.-wide, 5.5-in.-deep cutting deck with foot-pedal and drop-pin height adjustment; large turf-style drive tires; and a fully-cushioned Cordura-covered seat with padded armrests.

The Grasshopper Co. // GrasshopperMower.com



PRO Landscape Companion

PRO Landscape Companion, a professional landscape design app for tablets, is now available for Android tablets. PRO Landscape Companion integrates with PRO Landscape design software and allows users to create, edit and present designs on a tablet. PRO Landscape Companion is free for PRO Landscape users and is also available for iPad. PRO Landscape is a complete landscape design software and includes photorealistic imaging, night and holiday lighting, CAD, estimating, 3-D renderings and mobile tablet applications.

Drafix // PROLandscape.com

PVB LOCK BOX

PVB LOCK BOX

The **P.V.B LOCK BOX** will come in one size 24x24x12 this will fit all wall mounted Pressure Vacuum Breaker units ranging from $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " as you may have seen at the 2012 irrigation show this product is professionally built in the U.S.A. The product is powder coated hunter green, it comes with the four security bolts and lead anchors it also comes with one security key unlocking bit. This unit wholesales for \$319.99 and the manufactures suggested retail price is \$499.00. Our contractors are installing these units at \$600.00 each and the unit installs in less than 20 minutes.



CLOCK BOX

The **CLOCKBOX** will come in one size 14x17x10 this will fit most outdoor irrigation controllers, this unit will also be powder coated hunter green and come with a removable front cover for access to the unit the locking mechanism will be (2) security hex pin locking bolts and will come with two unlocking bits one for the owner and one for the irrigation or maintenance tech. This unit wholesales at \$259.99 and the MSRP is \$439.00. Our contractors installed pricing is \$539.00 and this also installs in less than 20 minutes. By installing this product this assures that no unauthorized person or persons are tampering with the irrigation controller and will also protect it from being stolen.



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[Coming in August]

Obamacare: It's here

The Affordable Care Act has been looming over businesses since it was signed into law in 2010. Many of the law's major provisions are effective January 1, 2014 – less than six months away. So, will "Obamacare" batter or bolster your bottom line? We delve into the topic and offer strategies for how Green Industry companies large and small can minimize the impact to their businesses.



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Chris Davitt

President of Ruppert Landscape, Laytonsville, Md.



Who's your mentor? Over the course of my life and career, my mentor has changed, but one is Craig Ruppert. That started when I first began working with Craig [at age 11]. There are just so many fundamental processes about work and life that Craig coached me on.

Additionally, my mother has always served as a mentor. She passed away a year ago, but she had the best outlook on life of anyone I've ever known. She could turn the most negative situation into a positive.

How did you meet company founder Craig Ruppert? He was a friend of my brother's. Craig worked construction during the day. Afterward, he'd pick up my brother and they'd work until dark. My brother grew tired of it, but I loved it. I was 11 years old and being treated like an adult. I remember I used to run with the lawn mower. Our plan at that point was to just outwork people.

What are some of the most notable changes you've observed at Ruppert over the years? Learning the art of personnel management was a big part of the company's development. When we were in the process of trying to outwork everyone, we didn't think being liked was part of the equation. We started attending seminars and learned the value of people management and the value of systems. Systems can turn good ideas into reality.

Of all the initiatives and deals you've been behind at Ruppert, which ones are closest to your heart? The most satisfying are always people related. I enjoy reminiscing about various people who were at a crossroads and had considered leaving the company. But with the company's help, they overcame their challenges, stuck with their career and are better off 20 years later. When the company helps an employee get through a situation, those are the most satisfying moments.

Earlier this year you announced you'll retire in January, at age 53. Why? And what do you plan to do in retirement? My wife, Kate, and I have six kids. We have two grandkids, and in the next few years we suspect we'll have several more. I like the idea that we can send our kids on a getaway, watch their kids and be a life coach.

I'd also like to run a marathon, travel and heat my house with wood that I've cut and split. I expect the novelty of that project to wear off within a year.

What are you proudest of? We've had a very active connection with many charities over the years, including Food For the Poor and Easter Seals. I think these connections have made us a better company.

OFF THE CLOCK

IF I KNEW THEN WHAT I KNOW NOW, I WOULD... Have shown our kinder, gentler side earlier. It's part of running a good business.

I FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE...

Facing challenges. The bigger the challenge the better.

IF THERE'S ONE THING I'VE LEARNED FROM WORKING IN THE GREEN INDUSTRY, IT'S THAT ____. It involves people from all walks of life—and challenges that never seem to be the same.

I ALWAYS SAID SOMEDAY I'D ____.

I never said this out loud, but I think, in some grandiose imaginings, you go through life thinking you're going to make a big impact on the world. There's still plenty to do in that arena.

