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# CONTENTS »

MARCH 2014  
VOL 53, ISSUE 3



Brook (left) and Roscoe Klausing gained their footing in the Green Industry maintaining landscapes together as kids.

# 18

## FEATURES

### 18 Same tree, different branches

The Klausing brothers' separate success is rooted in their childhood venture together.

BY MARISA PALMIERI

### 26 Word-of-web referrals

An introduction to Porch, a new online home improvement site.

BY SARAH PFLEDDERER



## COLUMNS

### 6 Editor's Note

BY MARISA PALMIERI

### 12 Best Practices

BY BRUCE WILSON

### 14 The Benchmark

BY JEFF HARKNESS

### 50 Profiting from Design

BY JODY SHILAN

## IN EVERY ISSUE

### 62 Classifieds, Resources

## ON THE COVER

Photo by Rebecca Frazer

## DEPARTMENTS

### 8 News & Views

Immigration survey; Scotts tests GMO seed

### 16 Weeds 101

Annuals; perennials/biennials

### 35 Market Watch

**LAWN CARE** One firm forms an R&D business to up customer retention

**IRRIGATION** Why pros should perk up to green infrastructure

**DESIGN/BUILD** McKay Landscape Lighting's solution for service frets

**MAINTENANCE** Safeguarding assets with noncompete agreements



# 42

### 52 Add-on Biz

Tom Strangfeld puts his best foot forward with yardwalking.

BY CASEY PAYTON

### 56 LM Reports

Mowers; irrigation controllers; hardscape supplies

### 64 1-Minute Mentor

Gary LaScalea, GroGreen

BY SARAH PFLEDDERER

# 64





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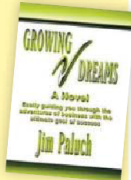
## Facebook Feature QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Do you remember the moment you knew you wanted to be a landscape professional?

- » **Ryan Krafcv:** 10. Taking care of my elderly neighbors' homes.
- » **Wesley Chiles:** My first business card was at 10 years old!
- » **Gerald Landby:** Not really, I was born a landscape professional.

### WEB EXTRAS Visit [LandscapeManagement.net](http://LandscapeManagement.net) Click on Web Extras

- » Jeff Harkness continues the online advertising conversation, touching on how to market your business via Facebook and LinkedIn (from page 14).
- » Check out how the Klausung brothers' story inspired Jim Paluch's novel *Growing Dreams* (from page 24). Plus, win a copy of the book!
- » We turn to the owner of Morisue Photography for tips on capturing and uploading images online (from page 31).



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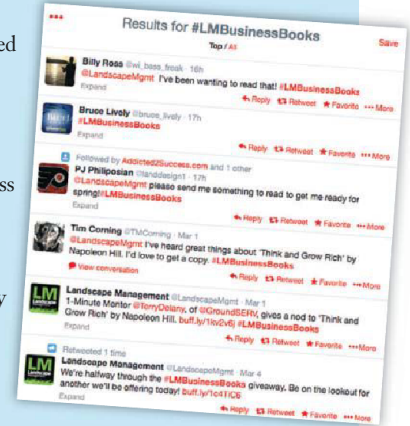
@fehr\_jared: @LandscapeMgmt

@jack\_welch Thanks a lot!!! I'm really looking forward to reading this book. Great prize! #freebook #happydance

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**FREIGHTLINER**



## EDITOR'S NOTE

MARISA PALMIERI EDITOR

Contact Marisa at 216/706-3764 or via email at mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net.

# Difference makers

**W**hat makes the difference between you and your competitors? You may think you know, and you may have an answer you give to customers and prospects who ask, but do you really know?

Of course, this is a rhetorical question because no one could actually account for all the variances. It was interesting, though, to hear one firm's take on what will separate the weak from the strong in the landscape industry moving forward.

I'm not talking about just any company, I'm referring to ValleyCrest Landscape Cos., the nearly billion-dollar, Calabasas, Calif.-based national firm. CEO Roger Zino and Senior Vice President Dave Hanson gave a talk, "Raising the Bar—The Importance of Competing on Service & Quality," at the Professional Landcare Network's Great Escape event late last month in Anaheim, Calif.

A survival-of-the-fittest element—which was evident in full force during the 2007 to 2009 recession—has continued post-downturn and will persist, Hanson predicted. "The weak will get weaker," he said. "Bad decision-making compounds itself over time."

So, what will make the difference? Hanson and Zino focused on four factors.

**Excellent relationships.** "Loyalty, as we know, is tough to win and easy to lose," Hanson said. "Those who stay close to their customers will win." How? Professionals who are tied in with their clients may get a "last look" at a bid, for example, or a phone call

rather than a cancellation from a client with service concerns.

**Quality work.** This one should go without saying, but Hanson put it into simple terms. The goal, he said, should be to have clients who may say "I want to get it cheaper," but never "I want to get it better."

**Best-in-class skills, technology.** "Technology is driving our future and we need to embrace it," Hanson said. Clients' communication needs have increased fivefold over the past few years, Zino added. Don't miss the boat on documentation, client access to information or responding to inquiries in real time, he said.

**Strong teams.** The landscape industry's labor situation shows little promise of improving any time soon. "You've got to treat your people right because the best people in our business are in demand," Hanson said. "The way you'll win is by keeping them on your team."

Zino emphasized the importance of "career pathing," showing employees they have a future with the company and not just a job today. He also said ValleyCrest strives to make its positions rewarding for employees through recognition, such as celebrating wins like positive customer survey results.

The labor component—specifically promoting the Green Industry to young, would-be landscape workers—is an area Zino said the industry as a whole needs to improve if it wants to compete with more glamorous, less labor-intensive and better paying trades.

"Being a gardener is a pretty god-damn good thing," he said. "And we need to talk about it more."

# Landscape Management

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Mark Barbour  
Project Supervisor  
Dennis' 7 Dees  
Portland, Oregon

## Building a green space in Portland's airspace.

Incoming passengers to Portland International Airport are now greeted by a "green" roof, thanks in part to *Dennis' 7 Dees*, a longtime Portland landscaping and garden center. The eco roof project was huge, at 10,000 sq. ft. They installed a modular tray system and a LEED-certified irrigation system. The work was challenging and Mark Barbour says "we couldn't have done it without the reliability and power of our STIHL products, especially our

STIHL Cutquik® cut-off machines." Their environmental commitment is another reason why Barbour and his team swear by low emission STIHL products in this eco-centric northwest city. For their green projects, they stand by STIHL orange.

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IMMIGRATION REFORM

## PLANET/LM survey shows support for citizenship “road map”

**W**ith some signs in Congress that immigration reform may happen this year, *Landscape Management* and the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) partnered on an immigration sentiments survey among members of the landscape and lawn care industry.

The survey was fielded online in February and March, garnering 536 responses with a +/-5 percent margin of error and a 95 percent confidence interval.

It's clear members of the landscape industry believe immigration policy needs to be fixed at the federal level—81 percent of respondents say so. That may be because nearly two-thirds of respondents say they have trouble finding and keeping workers.

Other answers weren't as definitive. For example, on the question, “Should illegal immigrants already here be able to legally work here?” respondents were nearly split, with 45 percent of them saying “yes,” 42 percent of them saying “no” and 13 percent of them unsure.

» WEB EXTRA

For the full report on landscape industry immigration reform sentiments, visit [Landscape Management.net](http://LandscapeManagement.net).

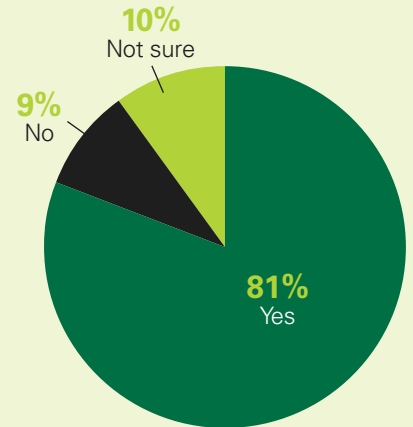
On a question about an immigration policy that includes a road map to citizenship for immigrants who already live and work in the U.S. and aspire to be citizens, landscape industry members' response—75 percent in support—mirrors the general public's sentiments from a

Pew Research Center/*USA Today* survey from last June. That survey found 71 percent of U.S. adults in support of a way for undocumented immigrants to stay in the country legally, if they meet certain requirements.

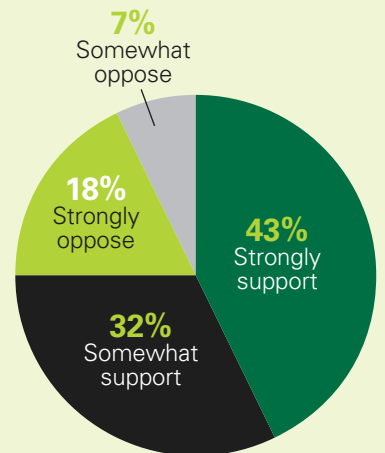
Despite 99 percent of respondents saying it's important they have an all-legal workforce, 39 percent of respondents also say they believe some of their workers' I-9 forms may be backed up with falsified paperwork. More than a third of respondents use E-Verify, voluntarily or because their state requires it, the survey shows.

While most people (81 percent) say they would reach out to their senators and U.S. representatives to ask them to fix the immigration system now, if given the chance, the No. 1 reason respondents who say they wouldn't contact their legislators is they “don't think it would help.” —*Marisa Palmieri*

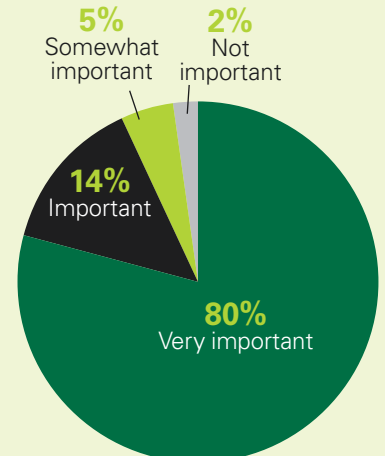
Do you feel the issue of immigration is important to the landscape industry and needs to be fixed on the federal level?



Do you support or oppose a new immigration policy that includes a road map to citizenship for immigrants who already live and work in the United States and aspire to be U.S. citizens?



How important is it to your business to be assured that you have a 100 percent legal workforce?



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## NEWS+VIEWS

### Scotts testing GMO turfgrass

**T**he Scotts Miracle-Gro Co., based in Marysville, Ohio, will test a genetically modified grass seed in the family lawns of a small number of employees this growing season, *The Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch* reports.

The employees will test Kentucky bluegrass that has been modified to protect it from being killed by Roundup, the herbicide produced by Monsanto and sold by Scotts.

The employee testing "is a major step forward," Scotts CEO Jim Hagedorn told shareholders at their annual meeting Jan. 30, *The Columbus Dispatch* reports. "I think we will see limited commercial activity the following year (2015), and I think, if all goes well, much more (activity) in the consumer market in 2016."

In 2011 the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which regulates genetically modified crops, exempted Scotts' genetically modified Kentucky bluegrass from regulation because of the way the seed was modified.

## MAILBOX



### Life is short

I just read the comment "Bigger's not better" in Mailbox in the March 2013 issue of *Landscape Management* by Charles Bowers. I applaud his remarks on the continuation of the American ego myth about bigger is better. Every one of the trade magazines that I receive glamorizes companies for how many sales they have and how many employees they have. Please tell us more about these sales. How many coronary problems did these sales cause? How many divorces? I have a small landscape company that's doing just fine. I have time to spend with family, work out at the gym and run the business. Life is short and if I remember correctly what Sam Walton once said, "I would have liked to have spent a little more time with the family" was his only regret.

#### Rusty Moore

President  
*The Southern Planter*  
Spartanburg, S.C.

Kudos? Complaints? Share your thoughts with the *Landscape Management* team by emailing [mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net](mailto:mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net).