

Pest control giant enters the lawn care business

MEMPHIS, TENN.—Terminix International, the nation's second largest indoor pest control service, has entered the lawn care business. The company plans to open branches in all parts of the country, starting with a handful this year.

Terminix, based in Memphis, opened test lawn



care operations in Tennessee and Florida this past year. Additional branches this year will be in the North and Midwest.

"Terminix is looking forward to expanding into more consumer services," says Mike Ostien, manager for the new lawn care division.

"It's been a residential pest control name. We hope to play off that." He says marketing studies show homeowners prefer dealing with one company for dif-

ferent home services.

About 75 percent of Terminix's 1 million customers are residential property owners, Ostien says.

Terminix is owned by ServiceMaster Industries, Inc., which also has a lawn care division. ServiceMaster Lawn Care, however, is strictly a franchise operation.

"We will compete directly against them," Ostien says. While Terminix has 100 to 150 pest control franchises, it has no plans to sell lawn care franchises.

Terminix entered the lawn care business for a short time several years ago. The commitment at that time was not as se-

See **TERMINIX** Page 21

LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

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VOLUME 12 NUMBER 10 \$2.50

AN **EDGELL** PUBLICATION

OCTOBER 1988

State won't fine LCO for bird kills

COLUMBUS—An LCO who applied diazinon in an area where 26 waterfowl later died will not be fined for label violation.

The Department of Agriculture official who investigated the deaths says diazinon, applied in combination with fertilizer pellets, was watered in properly. Watering was prohibited by a city-wide watering ban, but a liquid herbicide was sprayed over the pellets.

"It's just one of those things that's not spelled out," says



Richards: LCO couldn't water.

Oren Spilker, the department specialist who investigated. "He was using a liquid. What does the label mean? There are a lot of ambiguous statements on the labels that are going to have to be cleaned up."

Green Magic Services, Inc., a full-service firm, did the fertilizer/diazinon application on Friday, Aug. 12 at the Island Club Apartments' 12-acre lawn in Columbus. Diazinon was applied at five pounds active ingredient per acre, says Jim Halliwell, company president.

Ducks and geese came from a pond 15 to 20 feet away when a resident began offering food. Later that day, residents found many of the birds dead.

The company used a dry fertilizer/diazinon combination from Rocky River, Ohio-based LESCO, Inc. containing 3.33 percent diazinon.

The label calls for light watering and does not specifically say not to apply in the vicinity of waterfowl, says Greg Richards, chemical products manager at LESCO. It does say, under "Environmental hazards," that it is toxic to fish, birds and other wildlife and should be kept out of water bodies.

"Since there was a watering ban there, the product couldn't be watered in," says Richards. "He was hoping it was going to rain."

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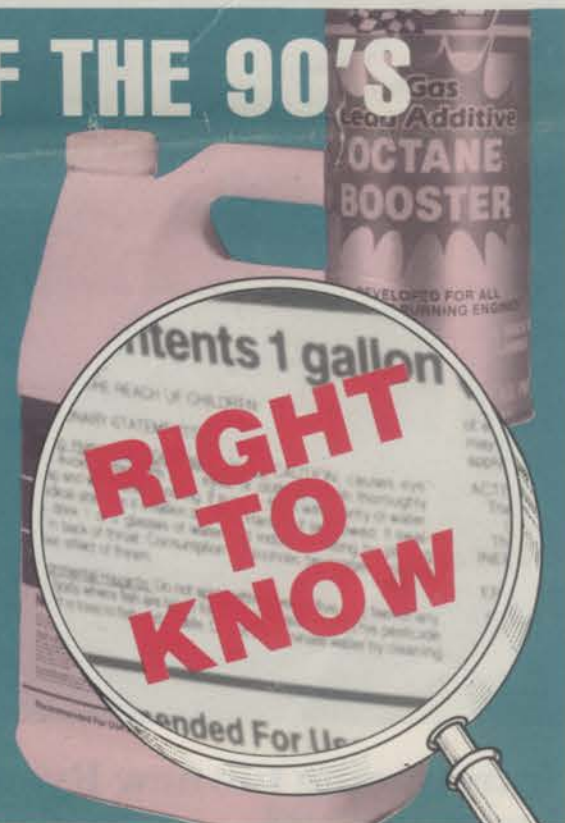
MANDATE OF THE 90'S

KANSAS CITY, MO.—Have you received Material Safety Data Sheets on all your hazardous materials? If not, don't hesitate to request them from your suppliers, and keep copies of your requests.

Companies working with hazardous chemicals must now have these sheets in a place where they are available to employees, and the employees must be taught what to do if the materials spill.

The Hazard Communication Standard for non-manufacturing employers was summarized at the recent Professional Lawn Care Association of Mid-America conference in Kansas City, Mo. It

See **MANDATE** Page 14



Full service company goes public

TULSA, OKLA.—LawnAmerica, Inc., based in Tulsa, Okla., recently became the first full service landscape management company to go public in several years. The offering was announced in a news release by Richard Hughes, company chairman.

Hughes is president and major stockholder of Hinderliter Industries, a publicly-held firm specializing in metal heat-treating equipment.

LawnAmerica provides lawn care, tree care, shrub care, landscape design, installation, mowing, pool care and other related services to both residential and commercial properties.

The company was originally GreenLawn of Louisville, strictly a lawn care firm. Hughes bought the company and moved it to Tulsa in 1984, renaming it GreenLawn

of Oklahoma, and expanded into additional services. It was

renamed and incorporated as

See **PUBLIC** Page 31

LATE NEWS

Tru Green buys Greenkeeper

ATLANTA—Tru Green Corp. has entered the Texas and Oklahoma markets by purchasing Greenkeeper, Inc., a San Antonio-based lawn care firm with branches in Oklahoma City, Dallas, Austin and Houston. The company had about \$3 million in revenues in 1987 and 20,000 customers.

Greenkeeper's 55 employees will remain, says Don Karnes, senior vice president of Tru Green. "They're a quality company with outstanding personnel," he says.

James Eckhardt, Greenkeeper's former president and co-founder, will continue to manage the operation.

Eckhardt says he was not looking to sell the company when Tru Green approached him. "A lot of it was the people," he says. "There's going to be a lot of opportunities for our employees."

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NEXT MONTH

- Annual PLCAA Show Issue.
- Special Report: the commercial lawn care market. How LCOs land commercial accounts.

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OCTOBER 1988

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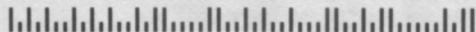
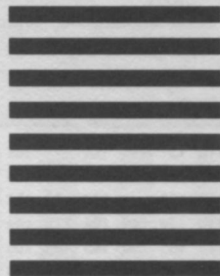
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ABP BPA

Howard Johnson Enterprises and Riverdale Chemical Co. have teamed up to offer a distribution network for turf and ornamental products.

Both companies have 66 years experience manufacturing fertilizer, post emergent herbicides and other turf care products. For information, contact Howard Johnson's at 800-642-4656 or Riverdale at 312-754-3330, or Lonnie Pell, regional sales manager, at 919-846-2257.

LESCO, Inc. will develop a full line of irrigation equipment, the Rocky River,

Ohio-based supplier of turf care equipment announced recently. Development of irrigation equipment for professional use on golf courses, commercial sites and home lines will be overseen by Arthur D. Wick, vice president of research and development.

Jim Fetter has been promoted at O.M. Scott & Sons Co. from marketing manager to director of marketing.

Michael Keltz, Ph.D. was named director of research and development.

The company is based in Marysville, Ohio.

Ron Zwiebel, formerly president of Green Care Lawn Service, Inc., has joined LESCO, Inc., Rocky River, Ohio, as a fertilizer and seed specialist. He founded Green Care, based in Birmingham, Ala., 15 years ago. The company is now run by his wife, Marlene.

ChemLawn has named Gary Yaekle vice president of marketing. He previously served as regional marketing manager for the McDonald's Corp. where he was responsible for developing marketing programs for more than 230 stores.

LCI

"Be a partner" with Special Olympians

A Special Program with Special Rewards

Under a bright winter sun, an icy breeze brings roses to cheeks as skiers move along a trail, some smoothly, others struggling. It could be any cross-country skiing event.

But soon differences appear. As the athletes cross the finish line, they are greeted with cheers of encouragement and congratulations—and hugs for every skier.

The contest is a winter event of the Special Olympics, patterned on the traditional Olympic games and conducted for athletes of all ages who have mental retardation. And while their movements may not be those of polished athletes, there is no mistaking the intensity of their effort, or the joy of their achievement, wherever they finish.

Dow and Industry to Sponsor. In 1989, Dow and the lawn care industry, through PLCAA and state associations, are Official Bronze Medal sponsors of the International Winter Special Olympics Games, by contributing more than \$100,000.

To be held

in April 1989 at Lake Tahoe, the games will attract more than 1400 athletes from around the world. Events will include Alpine and Nordic skiing, speed skating, figure skating and floor hockey.

Special Olympics: a Special Program. The Special Olympics program, founded in the 1960s, is run by more than 600,000 volunteers. It provides year-round sports training and athletic competition for more than one million people with mental retardation.

For many of these participants, the program is their only opportunity to take part in activities which most of us take for granted. To say that Special Olympics are a bright spot in their lives is an understatement.

Special Volunteers. All types of volunteer helpers, from coaches and managers to trainers to fund raisers, pitch in to keep the program going.

One unique group of volunteers are the "huggers." They see to it that all participants at every event get warm personal recognition—regardless of where they finish. Competition is intense, but the medals won are less important than the effort put forth. The huggers have the rewarding job of rewarding the effort. And they love it.

If you'd like to be a hugger, or help some other way, contact your nearest Special Olympics office. Or see your Dow rep for lists of Special Olympics officials in your state, and ways you can support the year-round program in your area.

The Partnership makes it possible. Dow's contribution, in the name of the lawn care industry, is made possible by a program called The Partnership, Dow's commitment to you.

The Partnership brings together all the things Dow offers you. It includes not only the products you use, but many other pluses: industry-leading research and development, training for your technicians, business management seminars, legislative lobbying and assistance at national, state and local levels, and industry-wide public relations programs.

Dow's underwriting of industry support for the 1989 International Winter Special Olympics is one way of encouraging others to become involved in worthwhile local activities.



"Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."
—Special Olympics credo

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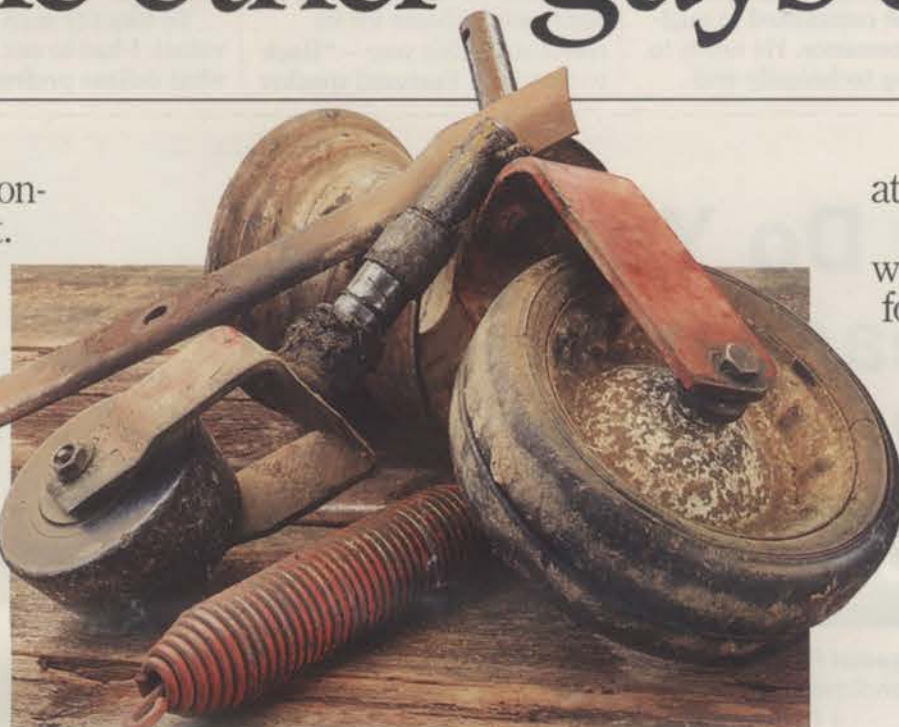
Springs are the key components in many weight transfer systems.

But, if you've ever seen a kid on a rocking horse you know what springs do. They bounce.



One knob hydraulically transfers weight from the mower deck to the drive wheels on John Deere's F930, F932, and F935.

That's also what happens when you put springs on a mower deck. A side effect that's damaging to both deck components and quality of cut. John Deere's weight transfer system is better. Here, your mower deck doesn't bounce because there are no springs.



Trying to match the traction advantages of John Deere front mowers is hard on other machines.

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You get better traction without sacrificing mowing quality. Best of all, it's all done on the move so you're always in control of changing conditions.

NO WORN-OUT BRAKES

A standard differential lock is the second major part of the system. Here, a touch of a pedal is all it takes to lock both drive wheels on the move. So, if one wheel slips, the other can still pull you through.

It's not a brake. There are no drums to heat up or wear out. It's a straight linkage in the axle that allows both wheels to turn at the

at the same speed.

A much more positive way to get through tough footing than what the others would have you do—ride your traction assist brake.

Why not save that for when you really need it?

NO LOST MOMENTUM

All told, you get a tremendous traction advantage with John Deere. The ability to use the differential lock and hydraulic weight transfer on the move means you work better on steep slopes, sidehills, and slick ground without losing valuable momentum.



A touch of a pedal locks both drive wheels on John Deere front mowers to help get you through difficult conditions.

Talk to your John Deere dealer today for more information on these superior machines. Or write John Deere, Dept. 956, Moline, IL 61265.



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Commitment to service is no light matter

Lawn care is a technician-driven industry. The majority of the companies are owned by field workers who got ambitious and started their own businesses.

In most companies, the technical tasks have been better executed than the management tasks. Which is why many owners are seeking more management training.

So today, management types are being recruited to fill in the gaps in many companies. Business management books are being

marketed to LCOs, and trade conferences are offering more business presentations.

Large companies trying to acquire smaller competitors often cite their management savvy as an important asset.

This is all well and good. What had best not be overlooked in this push for stronger management skills, however, is a commitment to service. The man in the field on the customer's property has to be committed to quality performance. He needs to be strong technically and



ELLIOT MARAS
EDITOR

have good interpersonal skills.

The Professional Lawn Care Association of America could not have picked a more appropriate theme for its convention this year—"Back to Service." Featured speaker

Ron Zemke, author of *Service America*, will speak on doing business in the new service economy.

I got to thinking about commitment to service while considering selections for our magazine's annual "Man of the Year" award. The award, which will be announced at the PLCAA show, is for an individual who has served as a model in lawn care professionalism.

To identify such an individual, I had to ask myself what defines professionalism

in this industry. The most important attribute, I concluded, is the ability to "reach" the man in the field; to instill the significance of pleasing each individual customer.

These thoughts were best summarized by an operator I met at the recent Professional Lawn Care Association of Mid-America Show in Kansas City. He said: "The integrity of the applicator has more to do with the success of your company than anything else."

Those wise words were spoken by Bill Wise, co-owner of Countryside Lawn & Tree Care of Wichita, Kan. He and his partner started the company after working for a larger firm for several years.

Wise says his experience as a field man is crucial to his ability to motivate his own workers.

Lawn care managers must be aware, says Wise, that the field technician is not a non-thinking position. The man in the field must be able to think on his feet—where does he throw the clippings if there isn't a receptacle nearby?

It's not easy to be nice to irate customers when you're huffing, puffing and sweating, Wise says. And it's not easy to keep your cool when you get lost in a new neighborhood and you've got a production schedule to meet.

It's not like sitting behind a cash register.

Tools are available to strengthen employee commitment to service.

One of the best I've seen is a training video recently released by PLCAA. In explaining the many benefits of lawn care, "Introduction to the Benefits of Pesticides" gives the employee a sense of pride in his profession. It covers everything from the definition of a pest to the relief pesticides offer hay fever sufferers.

If you think an hour-long video on this topic will put you to sleep, think again. The video features Wendell Mullison, Ph.D., one of the world's leading pesticide experts and an eloquent speaker.

The video, produced by the Dow Chemical Co., comes with a 16-page manual written by Barry Troutman, Ph.D., the PLCAA's education director.

With the 1988 season winding down, now is a good time for the industry to reflect on its commitment to service. The tools to make that commitment are available. Let's use them.

Elliot Maras

You can reach Editor Elliot Maras at 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130. Phone: 216-243-8100

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When Lawn Doctor franchises move up to TURFLON, broadleaf weeds take a fall.



"TURFLON is more effective on the broadleaves that the competition is missing."—

Russ Frith, president
Lawn Doctor,
Matawan, NJ

If "easy" weeds were the only ones cropping up in customers' lawns, 2,4-D would handle the job. But that's not the case. You need a tough product to keep tough weeds down. Maybe that's why you should move up to TURFLON* herbicide.

The real problem with lawn care.

"Weed control is the most important problem," explains Russ Frith. And as president of one of the nation's most successful lawn care franchisers, he ought to know. In explaining how TURFLON has worked for Lawn Doctor, Russ says, "It does a better job on the tough to control weeds."

Prove it for yourself.

How do franchisers who use it justify broadcast spraying TURFLON at about \$9.50 per acre? "Reduced callbacks," Russ says. He adds that independent Lawn Doctor operators select their own products. Most are skeptical of TURFLON until they prove for themselves that it does a better job of controlling tough weeds. "Many who use it full service started with spot (spraying)."

Finally, Russ says one word describes the experience Lawn Doctor franchises have had using TURFLON: "Excellent."

Isn't it time you moved up to a better herbicide for better weed control? Call us to find out more. 1-800-373-4DOW (4369).

Move up to TURFLON



*Trademark of The Dow Chemical Company

Circle No. 106 on Reader Inquiry Card

Pesticide-cancer link questioned

CHICAGO—While studies have shown pesticidal agents cause genetic damage or cancer in animals, a recent report from the American Medical Association says only two have proven to cause cancer in humans.

A recent report by the AMA Council on Scientific Affairs says that except for arsenic and vinyl chloride, there is great uncertainty about the human cancer causing potential of hundreds of other pesticidal agents, despite significant research.

The report was featured in a recent issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Animal and vitro tests, the report says, do

not reliably predict human carcinogenicity, and epidemiological studies often fall short of establishing definite links between chemical exposure and cancer in humans.

The report, a scientific literature review, was prepared in response to an AMA House of Delegates resolution.

The Delegates' resolution urged physicians to be alerted to potential hazards of agricultural pesticides.

With few exceptions, delayed health effects of pesticides on humans have been difficult to detect, the report says, but surveillance and assessment of all human health effects from exposure must continue. LCI

NCI continues to study 2,4-D

By ELLIOT MARAS
Editor

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The National Cancer Institute continues to study health effects of 2,4-D on farmers after a study in 1986 suggested a link between the herbicide and Non-Hodgkins lymphoma (NHL), a form of cancer.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency surveyed available research on the com-

pound after the NCI released its report in 1986. Three of the four EPA epidemiologists disagreed with the conclusions of the NCI study, and the agency eventually concluded there was no evidence linking 2,4-D to cancer.

NCI recently completed another survey, of Nebraska farmers, that supports the findings in the earlier study, says Aaron Blair, Ph.D., chief of the NCI's occupational studies section. The earlier study surveyed farmers in Kansas.

Blair says farmers that used 2,4-D at least 20 days per year in Nebraska had a three-fold greater likelihood of contracting NHL. In the Kansas study, the NCI concluded farmers using 2,4-D at the same frequency had a six-times greater likelihood.

In Nebraska, Blair says NCI studied 201 individuals who had contracted NHL and 725 controls who did not.

The Nebraska study, unlike the Kansas study, specifically asked farmers if they used 2,4-D.

A presentation on the Nebraska study was made at the Annual Society for Epidemiologic Research this past June in Vancouver, Canada. One epidemiologist in attendance was Greg Bond, Ph.D., research leader and technical coordinator for epidemiology at the Dow Chemical Co.

"They're interpreting it as supporting what they found in the Kansas study, although it's much smaller and nowhere near as statistically significant," Bond says. The three-fold increase in risk, as determined in this study, is not statistically significant, he says.

Bond says a study must be viewed in the context of all other studies examining the same compound. Studies of 2,4-D in Washington and New Zealand showed no correlation between exposure and cancer rates.

The findings will not be presented in final form for several months. The principal investigator, Shelia Zahm, Sc.D., is presently on maternity leave.

Most studies show no cause-effect relationship between 2,4-D exposure and NHL, says Wendell Mullison, Ph.D., a consultant to the 2,4-D Industry Task Force.

"There've been a variety of studies out on 2,4-D that tend to contradict each other," says Jack Moore, deputy administrator of the EPA. He had not seen the Nebraska study.

A one-page abstract of the Nebraska study is available from Blair at NCI, Executive Plaza North, Room 418, Rockville, MD 20892. LCI

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When Jim Gourley moved up to TURFLON, callbacks in Kenosha went down, way down.



"Our resprays have decreased by almost 50%."—

**Jim Gourley, owner
Lawn Masters,
Kenosha, WI**

If you're like most LCOs using standard three-way herbicides, there are days when you wish the phone wouldn't ring again. Callbacks and cancellations can really get you down. Well, maybe it's time you moved up to TURFLON* herbicide.

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"We switched to TURFLON because we were having too many resprays," explains Jim Gourley. And after 22 years in the business, he's happy with the results: "Our records show that we do have much better weed control and many fewer resprays this year than we've ever had."

You'll save money in the long run.

"Yes, we pay more for TURFLON," Jim says. "But when I figure how much it costs us per respray, it's saving us lots of money. And that justifies the extra cost."

Jim adds that there's another reason he can't afford to make too many callbacks. "When you have to go out and do a respray, you're taking a chance on losing that customer."

Isn't it time you moved up to a better herbicide for better weed control? Call us to find out more. 1-800-373-4DOW (4369).

Move up to TURFLON



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Circle No. 107 on Reader Inquiry Card

MANDATE

from Page 1

was explained by Dean Lakin, manager of the agricultural products division at MFA Oil Co., Columbia, Mo.

Lakin also explained the Community Right to Know Law, which requires that much the same information be provided to emergency response officials.

Lakin stressed that the two laws, tedious in their written forms, are not hard to follow. "Don't let the thing scare you," he says. He passed out a simple, six-page plan that is being used by many companies.



Lakin: Industry must inform emergency response people.

The worker right to know law, mandated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, was put on hold

by a court challenge in May, but reinstated in August. The community right to know law, mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, became effective Sept. 23.

The OSHA law

The purpose of the OSHA law is to advise employees of the hazards in the work place. Keep this in mind, Lakin says, and it isn't hard to implement.

The first step, he says, is to designate an individual, not a committee, to be in charge of the program. Then determine which products are either health hazards or physical hazards.

A chemical is a health haz-

ard if there is at least one scientific study showing acute or chronic health effects may occur if employees are exposed. A chemical is a physical hazard if it is combustible, explosive or flammable.

A mixture is considered hazardous if any of the component chemicals comprising at least one percent of the mixture is itself hazardous.

"You need to make an inventory of the products you have out there," Lakin says.

Manufacturers should be sending their customers Material Safety Data Sheets on all regulated products, he says. If you have not received the MSDS sheets from your supplier, request it in writing and make a copy of the request.

The next step is training. Employees must be told what the MSDS sheets are and where they are available on the premises of each facility where they are stored. They must also be taught what to do in case of a chemical spill. This plan must be in writing.

Employees should sign a statement after each training session, Lakin says.

In addition, contractors whose crews work in the area where chemicals are stored or applied must be shown the safety plan.

The information required by the OSHA law can be used to comply with the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Law. "Once you've got one, you've really got the other," Lakin says.

Community right to know

The Community Right to Know Law falls under the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986, which falls under the supervision of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

All you need to do, Lakin says, is give your inventory of hazardous materials and your emergency response plan to local emergency response officials.

"We've got to make it known to the emergency response people what we've got in our businesses," he says. If your facility should catch fire, you wouldn't want the firemen rushing in to the fuel loading area.

Lakin says states will instruct local officials to handle enforcement, but most local officials have yet to be advised.

He encourages lawn care companies to show their insurance companies their training programs—insurers often choose to reduce premiums. **LCI**

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Tim Doppel, president
Atwood Lawncare, Inc.
Sterling Heights, MI

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Reducing callbacks and cancellations is the key.

"The first year we used TURFLON, we had a 20 percent reduction in callbacks and that has held steady over the years," Tim says. "We've also seen an increase in customer retention in the three years we've been using TURFLON."

And using TURFLON has one more advantage, Tim adds. It's the reason he's been able to reduce callbacks and cancellations: "My customers are happier."

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Interest rising in smaller monthly leasing payments

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- ✓ Find out how the final value is computed.
- ✓ Is the deposit reasonable?
- ✓ Find out under what conditions your deposit can be kept.
- ✓ What is the leasing fee?
- ✓ Get familiar with the leasing agent.
- ✓ Shop around.
- ✓ Know the end cost upfront.
- ✓ Read **all** the fine print.
- ✓ Consult with your attorney and/or accountant.

By JAMES E. GUYETTE
Managing Editor

Changes in the tax laws and the need for more available cash are making the leasing of equipment more attractive to turf managers.

The demise of the Investment Tax Credit and the introduction of a new depreciation method has taken away incentives to buy—and it's given leasing new appeal.

Under the Tax Reform Act of 1986, purchased equipment

up to \$10,000 is 100 percent tax deductible—but equipment buys over that amount must be written off over seven years.

A lease, however, is 100 percent deductible no matter what sum is invested.

"Generally your lease payments are written off on a monthly basis," explains John Davis, a regional supervisor at AVCO Leasing Services in Irvine, Calif. The company makes leasing arrangements for Jacobsen and other firms.

"The lessee can deduct the entire monthly payment as a

business expense," says Joe Miller, senior account executive at First Interstate Leasing Service in San Diego, Calif.

His company "sets up custom in-house leasing programs" for a number of major manufacturers, including Bunton.

"Leasing lets the customer obtain the equipment he (or she) needs—using operating funds instead of capital funds," says Terry Waak, general accounting and credit manager at OMC Lincoln.

A business that invests less than \$10,000 in equipment a year can benefit by freeing up its cash flow.

Professional Tree and Turf Equipment in Golden, Colo. is seeing a big jump in leasing from its customers, according to Vice President Bob Smith.

Similar interest is being expressed throughout the green industries, as the equipment leasing market in general tops \$75 billion in the United States.

"We do an awful lot in the (turf) industry," says Mike Bush, an account executive at Bush and Cook Leasing, Inc. in Wilmington, Ohio.

His firm has written more than 1,000 leases to lawn care professionals, and Bush says the group has a "very, very good" delinquency rate of only 1 percent. (A delinquency is declared when a payment is 10 days late.)

"We're seeing a substantial increase in leasing by commercial outdoor power equipment users in recent months, due to the changes in the tax laws last year," reports Jack Snow, president of Gravely Financial Services, a division of Signet Leasing Co., Inc. of Winston-Salem, N.C.

According to Snow, "If you're in the 33 percent tax bracket, as most companies are, you can save 33 cents on the dollar of your equipment investment by deducting 100 percent of the lease payments."

A sample Gravely lease might go like this: If you lease a \$5,000 mower, the payments will be \$255 monthly for the 24 months of a two-year lease. This means you pay out \$6,120 over the period of the lease, but the 100 percent tax deduc-



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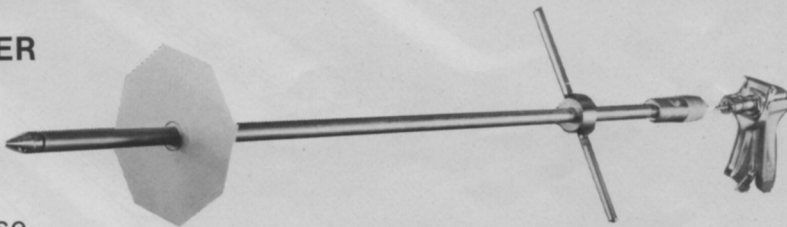
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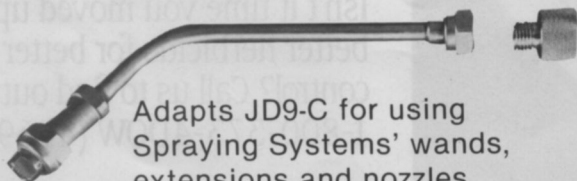
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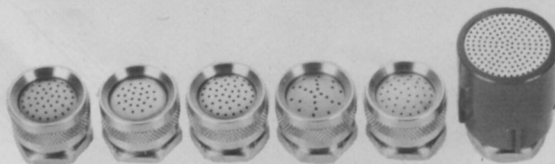


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tion means the actual cash outlay can be reduced 33 percent to \$4,100, says Snow.

"Thus in real terms," Snow continues, "you've paid less than the cost of the equipment, while having its use under warranty the whole time. At the end of the lease you can buy the machine outright for 10 percent of the lease, in this case, \$500. Or you can trade it in and lease a new one, or simply turn the equipment back in to your Gravelly dealer."

"Under the new tax laws, leasing just makes sense," observes Gene Grant, Jr., president of Grant & Power Landscaping in Villa Park, Ill. His company has leased trucks, car phones and 11 Gravelly mowers.

"With a two-year lease, your equipment is brand new and under warranty the whole time," says Grant, "which means less down-time and little maintenance work. After two years, you can turn over the equipment by buying out the lease, selling the equipment and re-leasing new machines.

"Besides the better tax situation, leasing eases your cash flow crunch," adds Grant, "and in our business, the most important thing is cash flow."

"Leasing is really another form of financing," says Dennis L. Brown, manager of marketing services at the Toro Co. He notes that Toro dealers offer a number of leasing plans.

"We'll offer it in about any form the customer wants," Brown points out. "You design one to fit whatever the customer tells you he (or she) wants to do."

The new Advanta Lease program at Exmark Manufacturing Co. in Beatrice, Neb. has plans that are "beneficial not only to the large commercial maintenance organizations, but also the small contractor," notes lease coordinator Cindy Jurgens.

LESCO, Inc. in Rocky River, Ohio expects to have a leasing plan available by the time this story hits print, according to the company.

Like a number of manufacturers, Excel Industries, Inc. in Hesston, Kan. has leasing plans through outside financial firms that feature higher payments during the more productive summer months for contractors, with lower payments during the winter.

"It's a marketing tool," says John Harrison, marketing manager. "Excel kind of fronts it."

He points out that leasing can provide a hedge against inflation. "New equipment is obtained today and paid for with tomorrow's dollars."

A lease can allow a business to free-up its line of credit at the local bank by not becoming part of the company's debt line.

"It's an off-balance sheet transaction," explains Miller at First Interstate. (He will give a talk on leasing at the Professional Lawn Care Association of America convention in New Orleans.)

"You're not really a bank risk, so you can use leasing to spread things around a little bit," says David Fuller, president of Fullcare Turf Maintenance, Inc. in Louisville, Ky.

However, Fuller cautions, don't expect a lease agreement to go completely unnoticed when arranging finances. "Anyone who's seriously looking at you is going to look at your lease load as well as your debt load."

Fuller's company has leased a number of items over the years, including a snack vending machine, an electronic time clock, a phone system, cars, trucks and mowers.

Some of the leases provided a rude education for the jovial Fuller: "This is the Full Care method of finding out how it works," he jokes.

"I can't say that leasing is an *advantage*. I think it's an *alternative*," Fuller comments.

"You tend to pay more through leasing. You can get a lower (monthly) payment, but it doesn't necessarily mean it's cheaper."

Contractors are cautioned to be sure to check with their accountant and/or attorney before signing a lease.

Fuller offers some other hints for those who are considering leasing:

- "Read the form—even the small print—or have your attorney read it for you."

- "Know what your end cost is going in." Some people don't realize exactly how much a piece of equipment is going to cost them. "They thought they'd paid for it, and it turned out they owed several thousand dollars more on it."

- Beware of the "end value" or "residual value" and how it is computed. "Don't let them



Felix: Have enough work to do.

give you a residual value that's not realistic."

- Be careful about the "ac"

See **LEASING** Page 31

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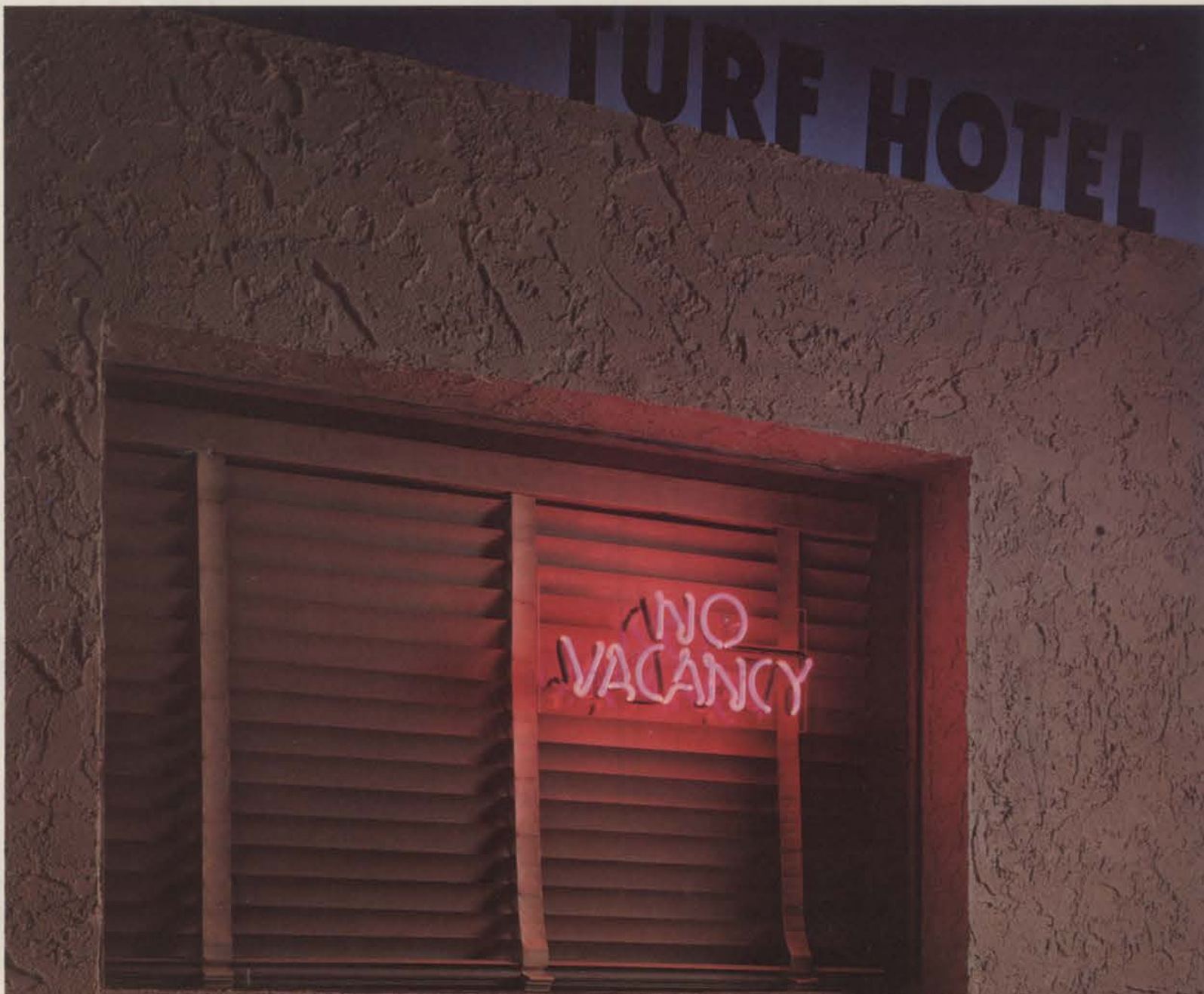
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Keep loyal workers with bonuses and profit-sharing



Novy: Share the wealth.

By JAMES E. GUYETTE
Managing Editor

Business owners and managers face a common problem when trying to retain loyal, long-term employees.

They don't want the good workers to seek other—better-paying—jobs, yet there are limits on what they can spend on hourly wages.

The solution? Set up a profit-sharing or bonus program.

"I definitely think it's a key in motivating your employees," says Linda J. Novy,

owner of Gardeners' Guild, Inc., San Rafael, Calif. "I hope more landscape companies do it. I think profit-sharing and bonusing is very important."

Last year each of the 30 employees at the full-service interior and exterior firm got an "across the board" bonus of about 4 to 6 percent of their salaries. Certain workers got extra money from their site managers for doing a particularly good job.

"I've always believed in sharing the wealth with my staff and getting them involved with the profitability of

the company," Novy explains.

Previously, Novy offered a standard profit-sharing deal based on years of service. She has dropped that in favor of the performance bonus system.

"I no longer feel that your length of employment should be a criterion in your bonus," Novy observes.

"There's more of an incentive if you do it that way. They're getting the bonuses they're getting because they are high producers—not because they've been with me that long."

In addition, the company offers a production bonus of \$30 to \$50 a month for a hard worker, and an employee with a good attitude is eligible to pick up an extra \$35 and have his or her name inscribed on an "Employee of the Month" plaque.

At Palliser Environs, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, 25 percent of the net profits are distributed among the employees.

The company has a three-part system for determining who gets how much, says Doug Marter, vice president of operations.

Part One is the amount of their current salary, Part Two is number of years at the firm, and Part Three is an employee evaluation on a 1 to 10 scale covering 20 areas of work habits.

"It seemed to be the fairest way of doing it," Marter recalls. The three-part program is particularly pleasing to Marter because it allows a lower-echelon employee, such as a reliable truck driver, to be rewarded as much as people with higher positions.

A worker has to be with Palliser for at least a year to be eligible to participate. About one-third of the company's 450 employees are qualified.

Marter says the minimum may be raised to three years eventually because it's a "bit of a problem" with too many people cashing in.

Just the same, Marter is thrilled with the five-year-old plan because it "encourages people to find ways to save money."

A worker who in the past may have left a mower running while carrying on a conversation or completing another task will now shut the machine off to save costs—and perhaps boost his or her yearly bonus.

Also, more tools are put away more often and "we get more input as to how we can fix problems," Marter points out.

(Employees know that their bonuses will be bigger if the company clears a larger profit. And that bonus-share evaluation depends in part on their attitude towards the job.)



Marter: Ask lawyer, accountant.

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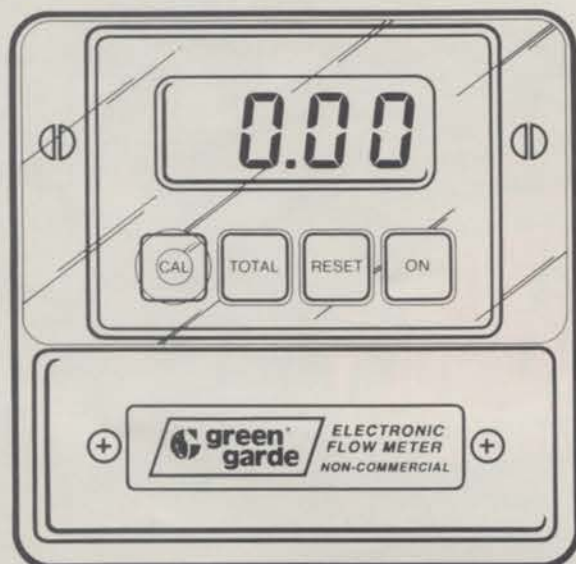
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Marter says that when setting up the program he talked to 20 different people and got 20 different opinions on how to do it. His advice is to take a close look at your business.

"You have to give a lot of thought to your own personal situation and how you want to set it up," he says.

The plan has to be flexible. "You can't have it written in stone."

But, don't jump into a plan unless it's well thought-out, Marter emphasizes.

"Sometimes it can be a disadvantage depending on the way it's handled," he warns. One drawback could be a situation where the extra money thrusts the "lucky" worker into a higher tax bracket.

Make sure you check with the experts before doing anything. "You really have to sit down with your lawyers and accountants to determine which way you want to go," according to Marter.

"I'd never set this thing up without talking with your lawyer or accountant," Marter urges.

Richard Underwood, co-owner of AAA Landscape, Tucson, Ariz. agrees that talking to your banker, accountant and lawyer before implementing a profit-sharing plan can save you trouble down the road—especially trouble with the Internal Revenue Service.

"These things have been abused very badly in the past and the IRS has a lot of regulations on them," he explains.

"It can be a good deal or it can bite you on the butt," Underwood adds.

AAA's profit-sharing is much like a retirement plan, he says, and one big benefit for the company is that "if you have a good year you can contribute to it and that reduces your corporate taxes."

In a bad year, you don't have to pay in.

Another benefit offered by the firm rewards supervisors who get the job done. "What we have is a commission plan for construction foremen... if they make their targeted profit or better (on jobs) we give them 5 percent of the profit," Underwood notes.

The profit-sharing trust at Lied's in Sussex, Wis. is similar to a retirement program.

Points are added based on years of service and salary. An employee has to work 1,000 hours to participate, but he or she can't keep any of the money contributed to the plan until they have worked there three years.

If an employee leaves after three years, he or she only gets 30 percent of the money set aside. The scale rises up to 10 years. After that, the employee gets to keep it all.

Ritchie B. Skelton, administrative vice president, would like to see that 10-year requirement expanded, because a

worker leaving the company "can use that nest egg to go into business for himself."

However, there are tax benefits to the company. The contributions are not taxed until the employee cashes in—and the employee pays the taxes.

Still, there are rules, and tax regulations change all the time. Skelton, like the others, says "get a lot of advice" from experts before setting up a program.

"These plans are subject to government review and approval before you can get a tax exemption," he explains.

Skelton confesses to having some misgivings about deferred payment plans. "I think

they can be good, (but) I think they can be hamstringing."

He'd like to see workers' salaries go up and "let them manage their own money. Pay the person what they're worth while they're earning it," Skelton comments.

"I personally want to be paid what I'm worth while I'm working and manage my own money."

An annual bonus is another concern: "Year-end bonuses become expected and viewed as a delay in salary."

Perks such as free dinners and tickets to sporting events are more meaningful methods of rewarding good work, says Skelton. **LCI**

PBI recalls Teremec

KANSAS CITY, MO.—PBI/Gordon Corp. has recalled all stocks of the fungicide Teremec SP (chloroneb) in response to a recall notice from the manufacturer/formulator.

The notice stated: "In view of the recent phytotoxicity problem which has developed with some of the chloroneb fungicide that was formulated by Drexel, we recommend that you advise all your customers and (end users) not use or sell this product until the full scope of this situation can be determined. We will keep you advised."

The fungicide is used to control snow mold on turf.

PBI/Gordon is presently making arrangements with distributors for returns of all Teremec SP, broken or unbroken, for credit.

Tests conducted of Teremec SP by the Virginia Polytechnic Institute confirmed the presence of 969 ppm of atrazine herbicide in a sample. **LCI**

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Customers thirsting for irrigation to battle droughts

By JAMES E. GUYETTE
Managing Editor

Now is the time to market irrigation systems if you are in the sprinkler installation business.

Suppliers are reporting increased interest from assorted regions throughout the country, particularly areas that previously had enough rainfall to make irrigation systems a slower-moving sales item.

The drought has convinced some clients that a built-in sprinkler system is the way to go.

"It's all we can do to keep up with the demand," says Fred Harned, vice president of Netafim Irrigation, Inc., in Valley Stream, N.Y.

"We're signing people up," reports Charles B. Murphy, president of Eight Days a Week, an irrigation contracting dealership operation based in Aurora, Colo.

Interest is high in locales such as Minneapolis, Cincinnati and Cleveland—regions that have seen plenty of rainfall up until the Great Drought of '88.

"These kinds of areas have

a much higher incidence of people looking at it for the first time," Murphy explains.

However, cautions Mark Williams, "It's been a double-edged sword" as regions under drought conditions during previous years are finding that some customers no longer want irrigation if sprinkling bans prohibit them from using it.

Williams, who is director of communications at the Irrigation Association, says clients who are fed up with drought damage can be convinced that "you can irrigate your lawn

and have it look good without wasting water."

You should be approaching your prospective customers right about now, says Williams. "This fall would be an excellent time to get that system installed."

While Murphy and Harned both report that the drought is a boon to the irrigation industry, John Morgan is not so sure. Morgan, who is sales manager at Olson Irrigation Systems, Inc., in Santee, Calif., maintains that interest will wane if next summer sees normal rainfall.

"I really don't think the drought does anything except make people aware of a water shortage on a short-term basis," he says, recalling the gasoline shortage of 1973: "We soon forgot about gas lines and now we're driving big cars again."

But, Morgan adds, if the drought continues into next summer look for irrigation sales to explode. You can also expect more interest in xeriscaping, which is use of drought tolerant plants and prudent watering techniques.

Marketing irrigation to your clients can be made easier if you point out that "we won't face the situation we had in '88" if a high-quality system is installed, suggests Don Synnestvedt of the Brickman Group, Ltd., headquartered in Langhorne, Pa.

If the customer already has an irrigation system, this drought presents an opportunity to point out a faulty installation job, he says.

A system that does not take water pressure variables into account will show its failings right in front of the client's eyes.

"When the water pressure goes down you see little green circles around the heads," Synnestvedt observes.

A properly designed system will take water pressure differences into account, unlike an unsuitable plan: "When they design for the norm they don't anticipate the lousy years," he says, noting that "alternative programs" for droughts should be sold, too.

All this will avoid situations where the customer asks, "Why the hell is my irrigation system not doing what it's supposed to do?"

When pitching irrigation to a first-time customer, there are a number of benefits you can cite.

For one thing, you use less water than hauling a sprinkler out to the area you want wet.

According to research by A.J. Powell, Jr., and Charles Dougherty at the University of Kentucky, "It has been estimated that oscillating sprinklers used during a hot windy day may result in a 30 percent



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Synnestvedt: Avoid more '88s.



Murphy: Drought is boon.

water loss to evaporation."

They add that such waste "may cool the air a little, but it won't help the turf get a drink."

If a community has watering restrictions, they usually are enforced during the day, and, "most people don't want to be home at those times," says Murphy at Eight Days a Week.

With an automatic irrigation system, "it allows them to do it at night," he adds.

Watering during the night also reduces evaporation and loss due to misting, Murphy notes.

A customer can keep a green lawn even if he or she is not home: "You don't have to worry about it if you go away."

Another benefit cited by Murphy is that each area of the yard gets the right volume of water. "You get balanced amounts to each location," he explains. LCI

Suppliers sign up for expo

NORWALK, CONN.—Most of the green industries' major suppliers will exhibit their wares at the third annual Landscape Exposition, to be held Oct. 22-24 at the Nashville Convention Center.

Besides exhibits, the expo features a three-day comprehensive seminar program. Conference fee is \$60 per day, with a \$30 discount for all who pre-register for all three days.

Exhibitors include: Asplundh Manufacturing Div., BASF Manufacturing Corp., Big John Tree Transplanter Mfg., Inc., Briggs & Stratton Corp., Buckner Irrigation Equipment, Chevron Chemical Co., Cushman Ryan, John Deere Co., Dixie Chopper, Elanco Specialty Products, The Green Machine/HMC, The Grasshopper Co., Kawasaki Motors Corp., USA, Kubota Tractor, Melroe Co., and Modus T Systems.

For information, contact Becky Lerew or Mary Sue Christoffers at 1-800-243-2815. In Connecticut, call 203-853-0400. LCI

TERMINIX

from Page 1

rious, Ostien says. There was no separate lawn care division.

The relationship with ServiceMaster, which acquired Terminix in December of 1986, has enabled the company to see lawn care in a "new light", Ostien says. "It's a tremendous market out there," he says.

The lawn care operations will be handled out of the pest control offices for the most part, but with a separate staff. Terminix is presently recruiting people.

The company hired outside consultants to set up the lawn

care program, Ostien says, which will consist of fertilization and pest control. He says the program will eventually include aeration, but he is unsure about any additional services.

The program will include five or six rounds per season—one round more than what ServiceMaster provides, Ostien says.

"We're now reviewing what markets to get into," he says. "We're going to get into it cautiously. We will not be marketing the lawn care everywhere where the pest control service is. We'll be concentrating in the major metropolitan areas."

Ostien expects Terminix will eventually add more consumer services, but none are planned for the immediate future.

Ostien started with Terminix 11 years ago as a salesman. He managed three different regions in the past five years. "I've been selected because of my business background."

He would not say how many branches the company will open this year—or where.

Terminix had sales of about \$200 million in 1987.

Terminix is second to Orkin Exterminating Co., Inc., a subsidiary of Rollins, Inc. of Atlanta, Ga. Orkin also has a lawn care division. LCI

BUYS

from Page 1

The Greenkeeper name will be kept for the time being, Eckhardt says. He says Chem-Lawn is the largest competitor in the market.

The acquisition marks the second time in 1988 Tru Green has acquired a competitor with revenue above \$1 million. Earlier in the year, it acquired Keystone Lawn Spray of Wayne, Pa.

Tru Green has nearly doubled its size through acquisition since last year.

The company is owned by Oak Brook, Ill.-based Waste Management, Inc. LCI

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Planning a continuing education program

Many of you have been attending seminars to improve your technical and business knowledge. But have you actually outlined a plan for the professional development of you and your employees? Here are some questions to consider.

• What are the company's education needs?

Identify the areas of development that are needed by every employee. Group the needs into categories and then rank them in order of importance. Not all of the needs will

be met in one season.

• What can you afford to spend to meet those needs?

The specific amount of money to be spent for an individual will vary depending on his or her prior education. Most green industry firms today spend only \$100 to \$300 per year on an employee's education. This sum, while adequate in the past, will have to become two to five times larger in the next decade.

• What options are available to meet the development needs of your

personnel?

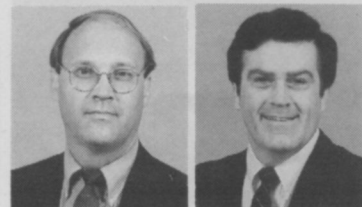
Some employees need a formal program. High school or college continuing education programs are good for these employees. Learning in this type of system is very structured and some employees need it.

Some needs may be better met by attending private educational programs such as the Dale Carnegie course. These often have smaller classes but they are generally more expensive than the previously described option. They are also

shorter in length of weeks but more intensive during each session.

Some needs can be met by attending meetings and conventions. This type of learning is more difficult unless employees attend the sessions with a specific learning objective in mind. Management must set the objectives before the sessions, then require some follow-up report.

Trade shows provide a unique forum for enhancing employee education. They enable employees to compare



McGary

Wandtke

About the Authors

Rudd McGary and Ed Wandtke are senior partners with All Green Management Associates, Columbus, Ohio.

products and equipment.

In addition, there is the opportunity for employees to be aggressive and meet individuals from other companies who will discuss how they deliver services.

Another format to consider in continuing education is audio and video tapes. These range in both price and content, but oftentimes, one tape can be used by more than one employee.

Magazines and other publications are also excellent sources of information. The best are industry specific, but general business and technical publications are also useful.

Other questions

There are several important questions to consider when choosing the best format for your specific needs.

1) Is the information generic or industry specific?

You must decide, for example, if the course content matches the specific needs of your company.

An accounting course dealing with accounting for manufacturing would not be appropriate.

2) How quickly is the information needed?

Some courses condense a great deal into a few days, while others take weeks or months.

If you are under time pressure, a shorter course would be more appropriate.

3) How will you or your employees learn best?

Some people learn better in a short course format where the material is dense and quickly given. Such people will get bored with a semester type of course.

Others like the opportunity to assimilate materials and look at various aspects of what's being taught.

4) How much supervision is necessary for the learning of the topic?

Certain topics can be assigned without the need for a teacher.

Many programs involve employees learning at home from a study guide.

5) Have you set clear educational objectives?

Oftentimes, the employee isn't clear on what is expected in the educational process.

By setting objectives and stating them clearly before beginning the educational process, you will control your program and be able to monitor progress.

LCI

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WATCH THIS SPACE

Choosing between renovation and reconstruction

By ELIOT ROBERTS

Many lawns will be in bad shape following this summer's drought. How do you know whether to renovate or completely reconstruct?

If the lawn has the proper grade to provide good surface movement of excess water (no standing water in low spots following rain or irrigation) and a good soil that lets excess water move down through it (to prevent the formation of wet spots), it can be more easily improved by renovation and overseeding than by starting anew (reconstruction).

On the other hand, lawns that have poor soils and are in need of soil modification (addition of sand or organic matter) to improve them and lawns that must be regraded to provide more desirable surface countour must be reconstructed.

Lawn renovation simply involves removal of any thatch that has accumulated along with weeds and undesirable grasses. This debris is removed so that the lawn surface is thinned down to the soil.

Types of renovation

There are two types of lawn renovation. The first is appropriate for lawns with less than 50 percent weeds and no major soil limitations.

The second is appropriate for lawns with more than 50 percent weeds and no major soil limitations.

Both of these types of lawn renovation can be successfully done in early spring and autumn. It is important to reno-

vate at times of least weed seed germination so that grasses get a good head start.

Usually lawns with less than 50 percent weeds can be renovated without use of a herbicide to kill out all vegetation. The following steps are recommended:

1) Using a power rake or vertical cutting or slicing machine, remove thatch and weeds from the lawn. Usually this requires several passes over the area in different directions.

2) Rake off much of the debris so that the soil surface is exposed between grasses that are left.

3) Repeat use of the equipment and removal of debris until all thatch and weedy vegetation is gone.

4) Spread ground limestone and fertilizer as needed. A soil test will provide information on soil needs for lime and fertilizer.

5) Set the power rake or vertical cutting/slicing machine so as to cut slightly into the soil surface and run the machine over the area again to work lime and fertilizer into the soil surface.

6) Spread a seed blend or mixture that contains new (named) improved varieties of grasses. The importance of seeding grasses which are disease and insect resistant and have stress tolerance and vigor sufficient to crowd out weed seedlings cannot be overemphasized. Getting these grasses, which cost less to maintain, into the lawn is the reason the renovation process works so well. Lawn failures can be expected where natural

or common type grasses (like those already in the lawn) are seeded.

7) Water the newly seeded lawn and keep the surface moist with small amounts of water applied frequently.

Usually lawns with more than 50 percent weeds require the use of a herbicide to kill out all vegetation as the first step in the renovation process.

A chemical such as glyphosate (Roundup) must be used prior to mechanical thinning. Turf which is thinned before the glyphosate has been translocated throughout the plants will contain plant parts in the soil that have not been killed and will continue to grow.

This is particularly important in removal of grassy weeds like quackgrass and creeping bentgrass.

In the transition zone and in cooler parts of the southern region, bermudagrass can become a weed among cool season grasses. Glyphosate will only kill bermudagrass when it is actively growing so that the chemical can spread within the plant to reach all parts, both below and above ground.

In late fall, winter and early spring, glyphosate can be safely sprayed on bermudagrass and zoysiagrass to kill out winter weeds as long as the bermuda and zoysia are dormant.

The following seven characteristics make glyphosate easy to use and effective:

1) It is translocated throughout the plants, thus killing the entire plant.

2) It is nonvolatile so that it stays where it is sprayed.

3) There is no root up-take

so that it does not spread through the soil.

4) It has a low level of toxicity.

5) There is no residue.

6) Small areas may be treated with hand sprayers.

7) Two to three ounces of glyphosate per gallon of water per 1,000 square feet is all that is required for application.

Application of glyphosate is made as follows:

• Do not spray when grass and weeds are stressed.

• Skip one mowing before spray to provide more leaf surface.

• Spray 10 days before scheduled date of seeding.

• Do not spray when rainfall is expected within six hours.

• Do not spray in winds of excess of five miles per hour.

• Do not walk from treated to non-treated areas.

• Protect non-target areas from spray drift.

• Calibrate equipment carefully.

Cloudy weather slows results following application. In addition, not all old turf will be completely brown at the end of 10 days, but the chemical will have done its job.

Overseeding

Overseeding following use of glyphosate involves the following steps:

1) Select the recommended seed mixture in sufficient quantity to plant the entire area treated.

2) Use a power rake or de-thatch machine to loosen dead and dying vegetation.

3) Rake up and remove excess debris.

4) Apply fertilizer and lime as needed.

4) Use a vertical mower, de-thatch machine or a slit seeder to get seed in contact with the soil. Make slits in two directions to form a diamond pattern. With a slit seeder, this is done in one operation. When a vertical mower or de-thatch machine is used, the slits are made and then the area is seeded.

Expect the following response to renovation seeding:

1) Two weeks after seeding a bluegrass/fine leaved fescue mixture, grasses will have germinated and started growth.

2) Three weeks after seeding, the lawn will still look very thin.

3) Three weeks after seeding, the lawn will start to look good.

How much will it cost?

Lawn renovation costs will vary with location across the country. Labor and business expenses contribute the most.

A good average estimate for renovation of a 3,000 square-foot lawn using glyphosate and a good quality lawn seed would be \$650 or about 20 cents per square foot.



About the Author

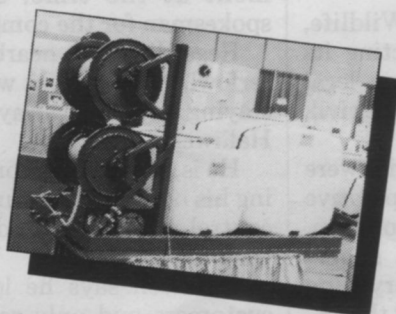
Eliot Roberts, Ph.D., is director of the Lawn Institute in Pleasant Hill, Tenn.

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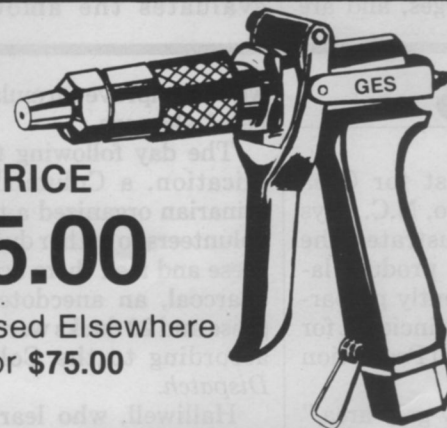
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Finding the best method for recovering overhead

How often have you felt that you were running your business well and having a profitable year only to discover that you were experiencing cash flow problems?

There are several possibilities to consider and evaluate: low productivity, poor cost control, inappropriate pricing techniques, and failure to recognize and recover indirect and other business costs.

Recovering overhead costs is probably the most difficult task for businesses that have grown from small to medium or large in a short period of time.

The identification and recovery of such costs is not absolutely necessary to the survival of the business when the business is small. However, as the business grows, it begins to acquire obligations of a more significant nature.

In addition to debt repayment, these include advertising, telephone, electricity, office rent, office equipment, legal and professional fees, insurance premiums, managerial and office salaries, etc.

Many costs, such as the owner's salary, may not involve immediate cash transactions if the company is a sole proprietorship. Other costs are general in nature, or spread over the entire business, and thus are not directly chargeable to any one contract.

These types of charges must be included in the bill to the customer, or they will drain the profits.

Each job should contribute some revenue toward recovering overhead costs. Therefore, a charge to recover overhead costs should be included in each job cost estimate, and in the final contract or bid proposal.

Consider, for example, how you could allocate the following expenses for Pilgrim Lawncare Service, Inc., a hypothetical company.

Some of the costs are obviously direct charges, and are

Pilgrim Lawncare Service, Inc.			
Direct Expense Items		Indirect Expense Items	
Salaries	\$ 23,414	Professional Fees	700
Labor	43,540	R.E. & P.P. Taxes	1,470
Repair & Maint.	5,610	Small Tools	1,320
Depreciation	5,752	Utilities	620
Seeds/Plants	300	Dues & Subscriptions	280
Fertilizer & Lime	4,880	Office Supplies	400
Chemicals	3,990	Miscellaneous	850
Insurance	3,520	Interest	7,453
Gas, Fuel & Oil	5,060	Advertising	150
Subtotal	\$ 96,066	Subtotal	\$ 13,243
Total costs	\$ 109,309		

easily allocated to a given job or contract. Others are indirect, shared by several jobs, or by the firm as a whole.

It is not easy to properly allocate these expense items. Any scheme to allocate expense items must necessarily be somewhat arbitrary.

It is easy for a manager to "tilt" toward a favorite by assigning costs to another operation that may earn a higher margin, or to unconsciously penalize an operation with a higher share of costs than may be justified.

Allocating costs

If there are several departments within the firm, the managers responsible for each should be involved in the allocation process. To fail to allocate these expenses is to fail to exercise managerial responsibility.

To prorate them all on the basis of sales volume, while easy to do, may place an unfair burden upon some lawn care operations and could lead the manager to false conclusions.

The trick is to find the most appropriate method to use that will allocate the different items in as objective a manner as possible.

Several commonly used methods for allocating overhead costs include: 1) direct 2) work effort 3) square footage, or 4) the contribution to overhead.

This latter concept is preferred by some managers. It evaluates the amount of

money that each contract or job contributes toward general overhead costs. This approach may be used if there is no logical basis for selecting another method to allocate costs.

However, the contribution to overhead approach does not help to identify which operations are making and which ones are losing money, and how much. Facts, such as these, are needed by the manager for cost control, pricing and overall management.

If overhead costs are not included in the contract, total costs will not be recovered.

Choosing a method

The easiest way to allocate overhead expenses is to review each expense category and decide which method is the most appropriate to use with that expense.

For example, direct costs can be allocated by using bills or invoices, checkbook stubs, or record book entries, to determine just where that particular expense should be allocated.

When the expense is incurred, make a note on the check stub of the account to which this particular expense should be charged.

The work effort method is appropriate for other types of costs. For example, if the manager estimates that he spends 10 percent of his time preparing for and executing a given job, and this is not included as a direct cost in the job cost estimate, then that job cost es-

timate should include 10 percent of the manager's salary, including fringes, as part of the overhead cost item.

The third method, square footage, may be used for such cost items as rent, utilities, some insurance, maintenance, taxes, etc. Square footage estimates may need to be further broken down as to heated and unheated space, and then used for such items as heat, light, water, rent and similar expense items.

The contribution to overhead method, briefly discussed earlier, is appropriate for those items for which there is no other reasonably justifiable method.

One example would be generic advertising expenses that promote lawn care. Another could be interest on operating capital.

Care should be exercised that this category be kept reasonably small and not used to avoid making managerial decisions. Each contract is then expected to contribute to the overhead account.

How much is expected and appropriate is up to the manager to decide, and may well depend upon the margins available in specific applications and upon the competitive situation faced by the business.

One approach that we favor for a small business is to calculate the percent that overhead costs is of total direct expenses, and use that percentage to apply to each particular job cost estimate.

For example, in the above listing of expenses for Pilgrim Lawncare Service, the direct expenses totaled \$96,066 while the indirect expenses amounted to \$13,243, for a total of \$109,309. Indirect expenses (\$13,243) divided by the direct expenses (\$96,066) equal 0.1378 or 14 percent.

If the manager of Pilgrim would add an amount equal to 14 percent of direct costs to all of contracts and bids, then the

firm should be able to recover its overhead costs during the course of the business year.

For simplicity, it has been assumed that 100 percent of the salaries were charged out to contracts, and similarly, for other direct cost items.

The amount of each direct cost item that was not charged out directly on each job should be added to the indirect expense item and the overhead percentage should be recalculated.

One of the most important reasons for prorating overhead expenses is that management will have detailed cost information readily available for use in analyzing contract costs, or in preparing job cost estimates or bids.

For example, the manager will know the amount of direct charges, the overhead charge, any contingency allocation and the dollars of profit included in the final target bid price.

Management needs this type of information for making decisions regarding the internal control of operating expenses. Without this knowledge, expensive inefficiencies can easily go undetected.

The demand upon management's time, in preparing for and bidding on contracts and other jobs, can be reduced by adopting appropriate policies and by using systematic procedure.

LCI
NEXT MONTH—Break-even analysis.



R.K. Reynolds W.R. Luckham

About the Authors

R.K. Reynolds and W.R. Luckham are associate professor emeritus and extension marketing specialist, respectively, in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Virginia Tech.

BIRDS

from Page 1

ulatory specialist for Ciba Geigy, Greensboro, N.C., says the incident illustrates the need to improve product labels. She is presently preparing a report on the incident for the Environmental Protection Agency.

"This is a very grey area," she says. "Who is to define what is light watering and what is not? The label needs to be improved."

Bussey notes that Ciba Geigy's label calls for a quarter-inch of water for diazinon and includes precautions about applying in the vicinity of birds. "We want to see if we can work with EPA if

we can improve formulator labels," she says.

The day following the application, a Columbus veterinarian organized a team of volunteers to gather ducks and geese and feed them activated charcoal, an anecdote. Nine geese and 20 ducks were saved, according to the Columbus *Dispatch*.

Halliwell, who learned of the deaths the next Monday, rented a large, submergeable pump and sent a four-man crew to the site. He received an exemption from the city's watering ban to pump water onto the lawn.

The incident was reported by the *Dispatch* and all three television stations.

Spilker says the depart-

ment will officially announce what caused the deaths once it completes examining the dead birds.

The Division of Wildlife, meanwhile, is conducting its own investigation. Any legal action initiated would be civil, not criminal.

"They (Green Magic) were a hundred percent cooperative with us," says Jim Johnson, district enforcement supervisor. "They did everything they could to try to get the situation corrected."

Halliwell says he has made the same application for the past two and a half years at the site, leaving instructions to the property manager to water.

This year, however, a city-

wide watering ban was in effect. In addition, there was no resident manager at the apartment at the time, says a spokesman for the complex.

Regarding the nearby waterfowl, "We thought we were staying far enough away," says Halliwell.

He is, meanwhile, considering his options for future grub control programs. He did not wish to elaborate.

Halliwell says he lost no customers and only received one angry letter from a resident of the apartment complex. He is presently in the process of writing a letter to send to his customers, along with the pesticide regulation inspection report from the department.

Other Columbus area LCOs say the incident sparked no backlash from customers or the general public.

"I thought that we would get more comments from our customers than we did," says Pat Norton, president of Worthington, Ohio-based Barefoot Grass Lawn Service, Inc.

ChemLawn Services Corp. reported no customer complaints about the problem.

Other LCOs interviewed were critical of Green Magic for applying the insecticide so close to an area where waterfowl were known to be present.

The EPA recently banned diazinon from use on golf courses and sod farms because of bird kills.

LCI

CONVENTIONS

PLCAA set for spice in N. Orleans

NEW ORLEANS—This year's national convention of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America promises to be a spicy affair as the event will take place in the heart of Cajun Country.

PLCAA's ninth annual conference and trade show will be held Nov. 7-10 in the world's largest indoor assembly facility—the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans.

The theme of the conference is "Back to Service." Ron Zemke, author of *Service America* will give the keynote address.

Thirty-eight hours of educational seminars will be offered in three series.

A business track concentrates on service by investigating customer care and retention and alternatives to standard service.

An agronomy track focuses on training and updates on pesticide use, handling, and environmental issues.

A landscape track looks at pricing services offered, reducing downtime and cultivation methods associated with thatch control and seeding.

Service workshops will be conducted free of charge by several manufacturers during the extended hours of the trade show.

Monday, Nov. 7, 8:30 a.m.: Breaking away from standard service—Roger Funk, Ph.D., Jerry Faulring, Rudd McGary; training—Lawrence Kokkelenberg, Ph.D.; pricing landscape maintenance—George Koziarz; dealer/dis-



Ron Zemke

tributor workshop on the lawn care market.

Monday, Nov. 7, 1 p.m.: Keynote address, doing business in the new economy—Ron Zemke.

Monday, Nov. 7, 8 p.m.: Meet the experts—roundtable discussion.

Tuesday, Nov. 8, 8:30 a.m.: PLCAA town meeting—James Wilkinson, Ph.D., Russ Frith.

Tuesday, Nov. 8, 1:30 p.m.: Hardiness in plants

and people—Tom Jadin, Ph.D.; insect control—Harry Niemczyk, Ph.D.; thatch management—Bob Shearman, Ph.D.; customer care and retention—Lawrence Kokkelenberg, Ph.D.; building design characteristics—Fred Haskett; aeration and pre-emergent herbicide applications—Bruce Branham, Ph.D.; spill preparedness—Phil Catron; power overseeding—Jeff Lefton; alternative financing methods—Joe Miller; hands-on workshops, engines and pumps—Lawn-Boy, Briggs & Stratton and FMC Corp.

Wednesday, Nov. 9, 1:30 p.m.: Business legal issues panel—Richard I. Lehr, moderator; consumer contracts—J. Martin Erbaugh; buying and selling your business—

Patrick Norton; drug testing in the workplace—Preston Driggers; advertising and marketing issues—Richard Steinau; the changing customer—Rick Raleigh, O.M. Scott; pesticides in the urban environment—Wendell Mullison, Ph.D.; pesticide alternatives—Mary O'Brien, Ph.D.; using less pesticides—Roger Funk, Ph.D.; turf and water quality—Thomas Watschke, Ph.D.; integrated landscape management—Mark Timmons; reducing downtime and increasing productivity—Steve Cornwell.

Thursday, Nov. 10: Outdoor equipment demonstration.

For more information contact the PLCAA at 1225 Johnson-Ferry Road NE, Marietta, Ga. 30068. LCI

G-Team to cover biz, tech skills

FALLS CHURCH, VA.—Both the business and technical aspects of running a landscape business will be expounded upon during the 1988 Green Team Conference and Trade Show, Nov. 18-21 at Buena Vista Palace, Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

The show is sponsored by the Landscape Management Division and the Exterior Landscape Contracting Division of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America and the Professional Grounds Management Society.

Katie Moss-Warner, general manager of parks & hor-

ticulture for Walt Disney World Co., will give the keynote address, 8:30 to 11 a.m. The show is titled, "A Commitment to a Professional Image."

Awards luncheons for the three entities sponsoring the show will follow the keynote address.

The trade show will be open Nov. 19 from 4 to 7 p.m. and on Nov. 20 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sessions are listed as follows:

Nov. 18, p.m.:
1-2:15—Irrigation seminar, Century Rain Aid; 1-3—Interlocking pavers—costing, selling, estimating and installing, Brad Legare, Pavloc Industries; 1:30-2—PGMS certification program, Fred Lennertz; 1-5—Substance abuse, Bruce S. Wilkinson, Work Place Consultants, Inc.; 2-3:30—Water gardening,



Katie Moss-Warner

Peter Slocum; 2:30-3:45—Newest varieties in annual color, speaker to be announced.

3-5—Decking and patios, speaker to be announced; 3:30-5—Landscaping with ornamental grasses, Kurt E. Bluemel.

4-5:15—The value of landscape maintenance from the client's point of view, panel discussion.

5-6—PGMS certification test; 5-6:30—ECLD roundta-

ble discussion.

6:30-8—Welcome reception.

Nov. 19, a.m.:
7-8:30—Breakfast roundtables.

8:30-noon—Water features—engineering, construction, estimating, Allen Keesen, Allen Keesen Landscape, Inc.; 8:30-noon—Pricing for landscape management profits, George Koziarz, George Koziarz & Associates.

9-10—New plant varieties for interiors, Richard W. Henley, Ph.D.

10-11—Growth retardants for woody plant materials, Jeff Norcini, Ph.D.

11-noon—Asphalt maintenance, James England.

Nov. 19, p.m.:
1:30-3—Subcontracting management, Larry Cammarata, The Brickman Group,

Ltd.; 1:30-4—Pricing landscape management profits, George Koziarz; 1:30-4—Newest developments in landscape management, Carl Whitcomb; 1:30-2:30—Turf renovation and soil improvement, Bert McCarty, Ph.D.

2:30-3:30—Natural versus artificial turf, Henry Indyk, Ph.D.

3-4—Irrigation's role in the future of the industry, Denne Goldstein, Landscape & Irrigation magazine.

5:30-7—Reception.
Nov. 20, a.m.:—7-8:30—Breakfast roundtables.

8:30-10—Management "Disney Style."

Nov. 20, p.m.:—2-3—Attracting wildlife to the landscape, Joseph Schaefer, Ph.D.

For information, contact ALCA at 703-241-4004 or PGMS at 301-667-1833. LCI

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Contacting your firm's potential buyer

BY PETER H. CONNELLY

Now that you have identified prospective buyers for your lawn care company, it is important to approach them in a proper, professional manner.

Develop a cover letter to the person in charge of acquisitions. If you do not know who this is, simply call and ask. Do not assume that it is the president.

If you are uneasy, don't say who you are when you call. "I am an owner of a lawn care company trading in one of your areas. I am exploring a number of alternatives and I would like to know who at your firm is responsible for reviewing information about acquisitions."

Be sure to get a complete mailing address at this time. Also ask if the Federal Express address is the same. Remember, you can't send Federal Express to a P.O. box.

Send the information and then follow up in a few days with a phone call. If the information was passed on to someone else, find out why and to whom. Then call them immediately. Don't be the least bit timid. The person that holds that information may hold your future. Find them and open the dialogue.

This first telephone call is the hardest step in the entire process. Once you have done this, it begins to get easier. It takes a lot of guts at first, and then you talk and soon a lot of your fears about the process slowly start to fade.

The buyers are not out there to chew you up and spit you out. They don't want to beat you into submission. In fact, you will learn that a funny relationship develops between seller and buyer. You will discover that the buyer wants your company to look as good as you do.

Advertise in trade publications, giving a minimum amount of description about your company. Don't tell all the secrets. List the area that you service in general terms

SELLING YOUR COMPANY PART IV

like mid-Atlantic region instead of Newport News.

Assign the ad to a blind box so you are not hounded by the buyers. All of this may sound silly, but remember, you are expected to continue to run a business while all of this is taking place.

If you and your secretary are taking 20 calls a week from potential buyers, what do you think that will do for staff morale, not to mention your operation and your bottom line?

Respond to the buyers on your own terms. Just make sure that you do it quickly. The flow of information between you and the buyers will develop pretty quickly. Be sure to keep track of it. Use the separate files I mentioned earlier to include a list of what each buyer requested, when they received it and a copy of exactly what you sent them.

Try to turn the information around as soon as possible. Promptness in your response will signal to the buyers that you are organized and this is important. In your response to the buyers for the information they request make sure that you reinforce the fact that there are others getting the same information.

This allows the buyer to draw the conclusion that other firms are interested in your company. This is easily done.

For as long as is possible be sure that you send the same information to all the buyers.

Don't play games. Remember that you are dealing with professionals. You wish to be treated professionally so allow them the same treatment. If you are asked a question then answer it as accurately as possible and do not misrepresent the facts. You could damage your credibility and this is dangerous.

If you are asked if there are others interested in buying your company, answer truth-

fully but never be forced into telling the buyers who the other interested parties are. Leave this up to the buyer's imagination. Besides, it's your business.

Above all, be honest. As in any business deal, there must be an element of trust. You could make up the numbers you present, but if you cannot substantiate these numbers, then you may develop a mistrustful relationship.

Furthermore, if the potential buyers do not think they can trust you, you'll find out quickly that they can make the job of verification very difficult for you. After all, this should not be a hostile takeover.

You want to sell your company and they want to buy it. There should be some common ground there for both companies.

Conversely, don't let the buyers push you around. Make sure you have a clear understanding of what they want in the information being requested. If you do not, then do not be afraid to ask questions. You may be able to get the information quicker and faster if you really understand what they want.

There will be a point in your dealings when you will want to respond to the potential buyers individually and not provide like information to all. You will know when you reach this point.

It is the point when the requested information is of such a nature that providing it to the other interested parties will identify the potential buyers. Do not do this.

In developing your confidentiality agreement you may find that a reciprocal agreement is desired by the potential buyer. If not, you are still wise to not divulge to the general industry who is trying to buy your firm. Relay this information to those whose

opinion you value and to your advisors only.

Keeping options open

Remember that the best way to ensure that you do not sell at a discounted value is to be organized and plan your attack. You must not give the impression that you are having a fire sale.

If you cannot get the price you want, you may wish to stay in the business. You may also wish to indicate this to the buyers.

Do not give the impression that you must sell. At the same time, you must be careful to make sure that the buyers do not think that all you are doing is shopping for a price. The buyers don't like chasing rainbows anymore than you do.

In summary, gather all the information about your company that you can for a period of no less than five years back...more if you have the data.

Compile this information in as presentable a form as possible and most of all learn it inside and out.

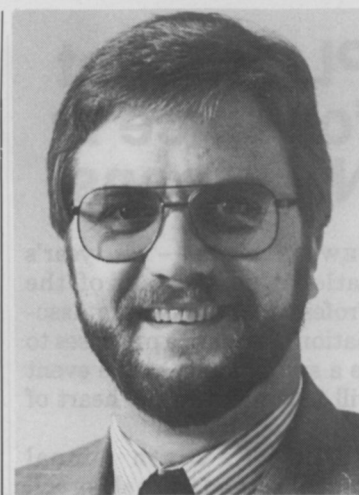
Develop a plan as to how to notify your staff. Or understand the risks associated with not telling them. Some of the most dejected people in the world are long-term employees of a company who learned about the sale of their firm from their competitors.

Develop a list of those that you think may have an interest in buying your company. Then set up a system to keep track of all the correspondence and conversations with each of these firms.

Put the information about your company in a presentable form and put a little creativity behind it. Mail this information to those that you feel are interested and then follow up with telephone conversations with all those that you sent the information to.

Remember, if they are not interested, you may still learn something in the conversation.

Continue to run your operation as sharp and keen as ever.



About the Author

Peter H. Connelly is vice president of W.S. Connelly, Inc., Roanoke, Va., which closed the sale of its lawn care operations to Tru Green Corp. at the start of the 1988 season. The process took about six months.

Respond to the requests for information from the buyers timely and honestly.

Keep all the interested parties abreast of all the information being requested as long as possible.

Never violate the buyer's confidence. It damages your credibility and weakens your position. Additionally, don't feel timid about your accomplishments and your investment.

Commit to a six-month process.

Lastly, try to enjoy it. This is the hardest part of all. The process of having a company take your insides and cut them out and examine them in front of you can be pretty nerve wracking, pretty personal, and sometimes pretty darned embarrassing.

In the decision-making process, you made decisions based on information you had available to you at the time. Placing conditions on the past results in guilt. Forget it. Go forward. Learn something.

Try not to make the same mistakes but forget about what's been done.

Remember, if that buyer didn't think that you had done a few things right, he wouldn't be talking to you right now.

LCI

NEXT MONTH—Negotiating the sale.

DATES

Oct.

■ **Florida Turfgrass Association Annual Conference and Show**, Oct. 9-12, Curtis Hixon Convention Center and Hyatt Regency Hotel, Tampa, Fla. Contact: FTGA 302 S. Graham Ave., Orlando, Fla. 32803-6332; (407) 898-6721.

■ **University of California Cooperative Extension Palm Tree Management Seminar**, Oct. 19, Oxnard Community

Center, Oxnard, Calif. Contact: Jim Downer, UC Cooperative Extension, 800 S. Victoria Ave., Ventura, Calif. 93009; (805) 654-2924.

■ **Landscape Exposition**, Oct. 22-24, Nashville Convention Center, Nashville, Tenn. Contact: Becky LeRue, Edgell Expositions, 50 Washington St., Norwalk, Conn. 06854; (800) 243-2815.

■ **ALCA Seminar—Art of Management**, Oct. 22, Milwaukee Area Technical College. Contact:

Martha Lindauer, Associated Landscape Contractors of America, 405 N. Washington St., Falls Church, Va. 22046; (704) 241-4004.

■ **Atlantic Seedmen's Association Convention**, Oct. 26-28, National Clarion Hotel, Arlington, Va. Contact: Dr. John E. Baylor, 298 E. McCormack Ave., State College, Pa. 16801; (814) 237-0330.

■ **Colorado Xeriscape '88**, Oct. 27-28, Airport Hilton Hotel, Denver, Colo.

Contact: Pat Miller, National Xeriscape Council, 940 E. 51st St., Austin, Texas 78751-2241; (512) 454-8626.

Nov.

■ **Professional Lawn Care Association of America Conference and Trade Show**, Nov. 7-10, New Orleans Superdome, New Orleans, La. Contact: PLCAA, 1225 Johnson Ferry Road, N.E., Suite B 220, Marietta, Ga. 30068; (404) 977-5222.

■ **New York State Turfgrass Association Turf and Grounds Exposition**, Nov. 8-11, Rochester, N.Y. Contact: NYSTA, Beth Seme, PO Box 612, Latham, N.Y. 12110; (800) 873-TURF or (518) 783-1229.

■ **Green Team Conference and Trade Show**, Nov. 18-20, Orlando, Fla. Contact: Martha Lindauer, Associated Landscape Contractors of America, See address above. LCI

Money from feds can train your workers

Green industry business owners seeking qualified employees may be eligible to have them trained for free under a government program.

It's called the Job Training Partnership Act, and it is a federal program administered by each state.

The money goes to the governor, and he or she sets up regional "service delivery areas."

(Ohio has 30 service delivery areas spread out over its 88 counties.)

These service delivery areas are formed among local governments, which administer the job training programs for "economically disadvantaged" people.

In my community the JTPA program sponsors job training for green industry workers through two local trade schools specializing in teaching such skills.

The students are sought out by newspaper ads placed by the trade schools, but they are tested and screened for eligibility by the JTPA.

Clever guy that I am, I called one of the schools (incognito-like) and had them send a brochure to my home.

The impressive-looking document lists courses in lawn care, tree care, nursery care, landscape management and several other subjects.

A highly enthusiastic woman on the phone at the school had me ready to sign right up.

If I were a student who qualified for the program, the feds would pay my complete tuition within 60 days of graduation, providing that I landed a job that pays at least \$4 an hour.

I would also have to keep that job for at least 14 or 30 days depending on the program.

Because the money is paid directly to the school, the educational institution has a built-in motivation to make sure its job placement efforts are on the ball.

The local JTPA planner in my area, Dan Fangman, says that 75 percent of the people who start the classes wind up with a job.

But that's not the best part.

Upon calling the regional office in Chicago, program monitor Paul Sherer told me that individual companies can work out a similar deal.

If you call your local service area and state a need for four or more workers, you may be able to train those new employees for free.

The government picks up all or part of the tab for salaries, uniforms, tools and other items.

(The levels of payment vary from state-to-state.)

"The company is reim-

bursed for the cost of having that person there in training," says Paul in Illinois.

He adds that this program can be especially helpful to a company owner who believes that his or her workers "should be trained the way I want them trained."

The JTPA screens the prospects and makes sure they qualify.

"That is not the worry of the lawn care people—that is the worry of the local service area," he explains.

The JTPA also saves the



JAMES E. GUYETTE
MANAGING
EDITOR

business owner from having to seek out potential workers. "They don't even have to do the advertising for the people."

You can't use the JTPA to pay for the training of your own recruits, however. "They

can't hire someone off the street who they think is poor," Paul points out.

But, you also don't have to take on people who you don't think are qualified to do the work.

"You have a chance in the interview process to pick who you want," says Paul. "Nobody is forced to take anyone."

Paul wants to emphasize that he is quite confident in the abilities of the JTPA staff to screen and select the best possible candidates for

the program.

"They're going to send you good applicants to begin with."

The JTPA programs are highly localized, so you might have to do some checking to track down the right contact in your area. A good place to start is with your local mayor's office.

If you participate in the JTPA, your firm may also get a break from the Internal Revenue Service. "The local service area will explain the tax credit," Paul concludes.

James E. Guyette

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NEW PRODUCTS



Newsletter available for customers of LCOs.

Focal Point Publications in Cincinnati, Ohio, is launching *Clippings*, a newsletter for LCOs to distribute to their customers.

The newsletter is published five times a year for delivery to LCOs as required by their application schedules.

Timely issues deal with information relevant to lawn care for early spring, late spring, summer, fall and late fall.

The newsletter is available completely written as a stock item, or with options for space to be personalized by each subscriber. A free planning kit shows the options available and related costs.

Clippings is written by an experienced LCO to help subscribers enhance their professional image, and to inform and keep customers in a friendly manner, according to the company. LCI

Circle No. 150 on service card.

ditioner directly into the root zone.

The tubing is made of galvanized steel and the hopper is polyethylene. It holds up to 10 pounds.

The device can provide one teaspoon to one-fourth pound of material per injection to a depth of one to ten inches. LCI

Circle No. 151 on service card.

Granular fungicide new from Lebanon

The new Lebanon Benomyl Lawn Fungicide Granules stop certain diseases all season long, according to the company.

When used as directed, the product controls dollar spot, large brown patch, fusarium patch, fusarium blight and striped smut.

It contains 1.6 percent Benomyl, and is on a cob base to spread easily.

According to the company, the material provides both curative (eradicator) and residual (protective) action for better control.

The product comes in 30-pound bags that provide up to 15,000 square feet of turf coverage. LCI

Circle No. 152 on service card.

Trimec-Plus controls grasses, broadleaves

Trimec-Plus post-emergent grass and broadleaf weed herbicide controls nutsedge, crabgrass, goosegrass and dallisgrass, etc., along with broadleaf weeds.

Made by PBI-Gordon Corp., Kansas City, Mo., the product was tested in 22 states and test-marketed throughout the South for use on Bermudagrass lawns, according to the company.

Trimec-Plus can be used on Kentucky bluegrass and Bermudagrass, plus tall fescue and zoysiagrass; it should not be used on St. Augustine, cen-

tipede or carpetgrass.

It is effective against oxalis, aster, knotweed, heal-all, spurge and ground ivy. LCI

Circle No. 153 on service card.

Increase business skills with booklet from LCI

A 68-page booklet from LAWN CARE INDUSTRY is filled with practical advice.

How To Grow Your Lawn Care Business is based on reports from the magazine.

Skills covered include hiring, advertising, marketing, management, client relations, promotions and buying. LCI

Circle No. 154 on service card.



New fertilizer injector works on trees, shrubs

LESCO, Inc., Rocky River, Ohio, is introducing a new granular fertilizer injector for use on trees and shrubs.

The Fertijector applies granular fertilizer or soil con-

LEASING

from Page 17

tual cash value. Who determines actual cash value? The fine print says who does it and how they do it. There's a lot of flexibility in that."

● "You should determine upfront whether you want to purchase the equipment at the end or turn it in and get a new one."

● If you end the lease early "you can get hit with a big penalty. It'll be down there in the fine print somewhere."

● Is the deposit reasonable, and under what conditions can it be withheld? "Sometimes they'll ask for an unrea-

'Avoid making deals when you're under pressure. Most everybody can sense that.'—Fuller

sonable deposit and then you'll have trouble getting it back." A standard deposit is an amount equal to the first and last payment, but some firms just ask for an amount equal to the first payment.

● Figure out the lease fee that you are being charged before you sign the papers. There are even computer programs to perform that task. "We did that to some of our leases and it brought tears to our eyes," Fuller laments.

● Become familiar with your leasing agent.

● Avoid making deals when you're under pressure. "Most everybody can sense that."

● Shop around. "Most leasing companies object to that, but I do it. I call four of them. It doesn't hurt for them to know you're shopping—it keeps them on their toes."

Fuller concludes that if you are careful about making a lease, "You can get some deals."

Leasing can help a contractor who needs to acquire expensive equipment. "It is a new option for the tree care business," reports Robert Felix, executive vice president of the National Arborist Association, Inc.

A bucket truck and chipper, when bought, can run up to \$70,000—but it can be leased cheaper. "It is a viable alternative."

Felix warns people to be sure they have the jobs available. "You've got to have the work to make the monthly payments. Don't lose sight of the fact that a lease is a long-term acquisition."

Use the tool, says Felix. A

piece of equipment "has to be income-producing every day for the length of the term."

Some companies have separate leasing firms that rent the equipment back to the turf management operation. That move can "give shareholders another way to pull money out of the corporation in addition to wages and dividends," says accountant John Byrne of Messick, Steffes and Krueger SC in Milwaukee, Wis.

Expect to pay additional accounting fees and legal costs to set up such a venture. "It's got to be a legitimate, arm's-length transaction," says Byrne, comparing it to the rules one must follow when a company is incorporated.

Depending on your situation, having your own leasing company can be good or bad. Check with the experts, says Byrne.

"It's not illegal, but it's very aggressive," says one contractor who has his own leasing company. He asks not to be identified for fear of inviting an Internal Revenue Service audit. Anyway, he adds, he just breaks even on it. "It's not a money-making proposition." LCI

History tells us throwing packages into the water can be a revolutionary idea.

Patriotic colonists really started something when they threw packages of tea into Boston Harbor back in 1773. Today, DURSBAN® 50W in water-soluble packaging is starting a new revolution in simple and convenient insecticide handling.

In handy 4-oz. packets that dissolve quickly and completely in water, DURSBAN 50W eliminates many problems which have been bugging lawn care operators for years.

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- **No package disposal problems.** The

packet dissolves as you mix, and the fiber container goes in the trash.

Just convenience... and lasting efficacy. No turf insecticide controls a broader spectrum of surface-feeding insects than DURSBAN 50W. And because it's a wettable powder, it keeps working longer than emulsifiable concentrates... without their solvent odor. And DURSBAN 50W has an established human safety record.

Join the revolution. Throw over your old insecticide and switch to DURSBAN 50W. Eight 4-oz. water soluble packets in a childproof fiber container.

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Circle No. 110 on Reader Inquiry Card

PUBLIC

from Page 1

LawnAmerica in July of 1987.

Environmental Industries, Inc. of Calabasas, Calif., the nation's largest full service company, also went public when it was formed in 1969. It became private in 1982.

LawnAmerica presently has branches in Lawton, Oklahoma City and Tulsa. It plans to expand into Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, Texas and Tennessee, says Vicki Bailey, vice president of finance. She is unsure whether or not franchises will be offered.

Bailey says the industry's future lies in large, corporate structures. "There are a number of issues rising in this industry that will make joining a corporate team desirable," she says, such as high insurance premiums, costly regulations and environmentalist pressures.

Don Piper, vice president of operations, notes the industry's future also lies in full service. He says many customers have indicated a desire to have professionals handle mowing and cleanup work in addition to chemical applications.

Approximately 20 percent of the company's revenues come from commercial accounts, he says.

Company president is Lee Ellis, who came to GreenLawn with a background in marketing in 1984.

LawnAmerica announced its public offering of 500,000 units at \$3.00 per unit on Aug. 24. Each unit consists of two shares of common stock and one common stock purchase warrant. LCI

CLASSIFIED

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LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

OCTOBER 1988

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1. CHECK BELOW YOUR PRIMARY BUSINESS AT THIS LOCATION:

A. LAWN CARE COMPANY: Read each choice before answering.

- 10** ☐ Chemical lawn care company
20 ☐ Mowing/management lawn care company and/or landscape contractor
30 ☐ Both chemical lawn care company and mowing/management lawn care company and/or landscape contractor

B. SUPPLIER

- 50** ☐ Chemical and equipment dealer and/or distributor

C. OTHER (specify) _____

2. WHAT IS YOUR TITLE? _____

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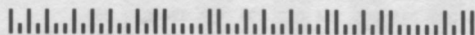
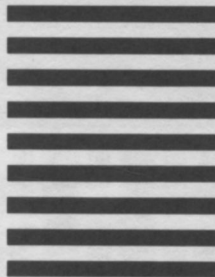
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