

## How landscaping businesses keep mobile workers on track with technology



# MAXIMIZING REVENUE THROUGH EMPLOYEE ACCOUNTABILITY

**L**ANDSCAPING BUSINESSES depend on the reliability and efficiency of their crews to stay competitive. While it's impossible to ride shotgun with every driver, it is becoming possible to increase accountability while they are in the field. Many landscaping businesses are implementing a new culture of accountability because they know one crucial fact - revenue starts and ends with their workers.

To increase accountability with a landscaping fleet's mobile workforce, the use of fleet management solutions can help

hold employees responsible for their work performance to maximize revenue. The technology can provide visibility into real-time locations, insight into when and how long employees are on the job site, the ability to identify and prevent sides jobs and confirmation of job completion.

**INCREASE FLEET VISIBILITY.** When vehicles leave the yard, where are they going and how do employees operate them? The reality is, without the right tools in place to track their locations and usage, there is no

way to know for sure. A lack of accountability in the field due to crews being "off the grid" often results in lower productivity overall. That's why fleet visibility challenges are often at the root of technology initiatives for landscaping fleets.

Incorporating technology to track vehicle locations at all times, pointedly monitoring when and how employees operate company vehicles, is the first step toward having real accountability in place for mobile workforces. Gaining an eye in the field to manage a crew's productivity through the

day helps ensure they perform jobs quickly and effectively. Using the aggregate of data from fleet management solutions, managers can coach employees so the business can generate more revenue. Perhaps the data shows that the crew is making too many stops at Home Depot throughout the day, or jobs are taking much longer to complete than they should. Gaining access to this information is the resource that's been missing to achieve the maximum productivity.

**ENSURE ACCURATE PAYROLL.** Payroll accuracy is a struggle most landscaping businesses encounter. When employees track their hours on paper timesheets, the room for error ranges from inches to miles. Without technology holding an invisible threshold of accountability, miscalculated labor hours can vary from 15 minutes a few days a week to much more extreme cases of forgery. In either scenario, it adds up to a substantial amount of unnecessary labor expense. Challenges with payroll discrepancies don't only increase costs. They raise other important questions such as, "how are employees spending that time while they are on the clock," and "how efficiently are they performing their jobs?"

Fleet management solutions help verify timesheets to ensure payroll hours are correct down to the minute. Landscaping businesses can use this information in different ways depending on their payroll process. It can be as simple as using a report to look at when crews start and end their day, or integrating the data directly into a payroll system to identify and fix discrepancies with the click of a button.

**PREVENT SIDE JOBS.** An opportunity cost for landscaping businesses occurs when employees perform side jobs with company trucks and equipment. There can be far-reaching financial consequences to a business when employees decide to pocket extra cash by completing services with company property. Allowing this to occur increases fuel expenses, wear and tear on vehicles and takes direct revenue away from the bottom line.

Side jobs most commonly take place during odd-hours, such as the weekends or after hours during the week, but can also happen during regular business hours

between jobs. Regardless of when they occur, side jobs take away from the services a landscaping business can complete. Outside of the potential to lose revenue on a specific job, the business will be held liable for accidents that take place in their company trucks, even after hours.

Landscaping businesses are using fleet management solutions to monitor odd-hours to know when vehicles are in use, both during the workday and after hours. A common way to track this activity is to set up alerts to know when vehicles are moving during a specific timeframe. By monitoring all stops the fleet makes during the day, including non-working hours, businesses can quickly identify potential side jobs and investigate the events to either verify or refute them.

**PROOF OF JOB COMPLETION.** In today's world, news of a bad customer experience spreads faster than ever. With the rise of customer review websites, it can be a downright struggle for landscaping businesses to bounce back from negative experiences recounted by previous customers. An age-old challenge for landscaping businesses is what to do when a customer calls to complain a service was not complete. If the

crew claims they were on site for an hour and the service was finished, it could turn into a matter of "he said, she said," without a way to verify the truth.

Fleet management solutions provide the information needed to confidently resolve customer disputes by looking at factors such as how long the vehicle was at the site. Using technology during disagreements helps vindicate drivers, along with providing a better customer experience in the process. When landscaping businesses use technology to protect drivers along with holding them accountable, it makes for a much more useful tool overall.

In the digital age, landscaping businesses can implement much stronger accountability than in the past by using fleet management solutions, and it's having a direct impact on revenue. Holding employees accountable ensures they are on the top of their game so that the business can be as successful as possible.

**About the Author:** Jenny Shiner is the communications manager for GPS Insight. She graduated from Arizona State University with a Bachelor's of Communication and is responsible for external marketing communication for all business segments that GPS Insight targets. Contact GPS Insight for more information on fleet management solutions.



Tracked landscape vehicle and equipment