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Q&A

WITH THE **EXPERT**

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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE



Q&A WITH KEVIN KEHOE

Founder, The Aspire Software Company

1 What is business management software (BMS)?

A: BMS is an integrated cloud based system for running your company from sales to invoicing. The system houses all your information and transactions maintaining a complete history of every estimate, time sheet, purchase and invoice. It is mobile so you can work from anywhere, keep everyone on the same page and improve communications and execution. Best of all it becomes your standard operating procedure so you can maximize efficiency and deliver best in class customer service.



2 Why should I invest in it?

A: BMS is the single most important investment you will make in the next decade. Scaling profitably without a BMS is impossible. Your customers are going to demand faster responses, immediate communication and proactive account services. Your people are going to demand it also – especially the new generation who likes working for tech-wise companies. You can't manage from a month-end P&L anymore without losing money because you

are making decisions that are too late to matter. In short, without a BMS you will find it hard to stay competitive and make money.

3 How much is the investment and the return?

A: BMS is delivered as SaaS (software as a subscription service). The fees for Aspire for example are based on a small percentage of revenue. So, whether you pay by revenue, user or something else within

five years, all modern BMS software will employ a SaaS pricing. ROI is immediate and measurable in reduced hours, materials, and administrative overhead ... instead of "throwing bodies at the systems problem" you will pay a small fee to use software. The increases in productivity and reductions in costs outweigh the fees.

4 What should I look for when investing in software?

A: The first requirement

is capacity as you want a software partner with the staffing, finances, and product road map to grow with you. Second, you want full integration and mobility that ties sales, service, scheduling, purchasing, shop and the office together. Third, you want a cloud based platform that delivers frequent upgrades, API's and plug-ins. Last, you want full user documentation and support where you can get help when you need it.

5 When should I think about investing in software?

A: If you produce more than \$2MM in annual revenue and are using outdated technology requiring multiple applications, lots of paper, and data re-entry, you should consider a BMS. Further, in today's world, the most expensive option is writing your own. Just ask those who have tried this approach. Once upon a time that may have been an option, but today the cost to write and manage your own makes little sense when there are people who have already done this for you. It is far better to work with them and focus on what you do best.



Winning the Game with Software



WHY A SOFTWARE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM MATTERS

- It puts you in control of your company.
- It turns nickel and dime savings into real profit dollars.
- It turns B players into A players.
- It maximizes accountability and morale.
- It turns the average customer into a loyal customer.

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The **Aspire** Software Company

Q&A WITH THE EXPERT

WARM-SEASON WEED CONTROL



Q&A WITH LAURENCE MUDGE

Manager, Bayer Green Solutions Team

1 What is the foundation of a strong weed control program?

A: Maintaining healthy turf with sound cultural practices and the right balance of pre and postemergence herbicides is essential to a strong and efficient weed control program.

Some lawn care companies look to cut back on preemergence herbicide applications by either lowering the rate or skipping an application. This can create a lot of inefficiencies, because technicians may need to make multiple applications of a postemergence herbicide to achieve the desired control. In warm-season climates, using a preemergence herbicide like Specticle® can provide up to 6 months of control, which saves time and labor by reducing the number of applications needed to achieve optimal results.

2 What makes a weed control program profitable?

A: Many lawn care operators will consider cost per acre when choosing an herbicide – but I typically advise them to instead look at cost per month of control per acre. When you look it this way, you can see that the true price includes

the cost of the product and the labor for the initial application, any repeat preemergence applications, and any postemergence applications. A product may be less expensive upfront, but if it requires more applications or delivers lower performance – what you make up for in price, you can lose in labor or customer satisfaction.

The key thing when it comes to weed control is making sure that you have a high-performing, cost-effective preemergence herbicide, like Specticle as the foundation of your program. For various reasons, it is possible that there are weed escapes. If this occurs, a broad spectrum postemergence herbicide like Celsius® can be deployed. As the herbicides work in tandem, you can manage hard-to-control weeds like doveweed and, ultimately, maximize efficiency each time a technician is onsite.

3 In which situations are postemergence herbicides particularly useful?

A: One unique example is dallisgrass. It is notoriously difficult to control, but recent research has shown that 2-3 spot treatment applications of Tribute® Total herbicide in bermudagrass and zoysiagrass can offer good results.



This photo shows turf with one side (left) treated with preemergence herbicides and the other side (right) untreated.

It's best to target the initial application of Tribute Total for late summer or early fall, when dallisgrass is still actively growing but not yet under stress. Then, make a second application four to six weeks later as the dallisgrass begins to recover. In the spring, if the dallisgrass clumps show signs of regrowth, make a third application.

4 What are some important considerations in building an herbicide program?

A: Herbicides are among the most complex chemistries in lawn care. There are many pre and postemergence herbicide options with many modes of actions to choose from. Plus, all products have their strengths and weaknesses.

Navigating through these herbicide choices can be daunting. Weed resistance is becoming a growing concern, given that there are not many new herbicide modes of action available. Choose preemergence solutions, like Specticle, which has proven performance in managing hard-to-control weeds.

A strong, well thought out preemergence program can improve profitability by reducing postemergence applications and callbacks and ensuring customer satisfaction. Occasionally you will have an unavoidable break-through or certain weeds that are not controlled by the preemergence herbicide. In these instances, postemergence weed control is absolutely critical to control these outbreaks.

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Together, We've Got This

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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT ATTACHMENTS



Q&A WITH GLENN DANUSER

Co-owner, Danuser Machine Company

1 Knowing that Danuser was established in 1910, how does a fourth-generation family owned business not only survive, but thrive in the attachments business?

A: Remember how you made it that long and strive to maintain the same philosophy moving forward. You must be willing to embrace change. Maintaining quality and designing innovative attachments has been a large part of our success and continued longevity.

2 You're best known for 3 point post hole diggers like the F8 but recently you've launched several other attachments, an example is the Intimidator Tree & Post Puller. Where does the inspiration for something like the Intimidator come from?

A: Customers asked us to build a tree puller for years. We didn't want to build the same tree puller design like others so Engineering and Sales got together to discuss different ideas and expectations. After hours and hours of testing, we came up with other ideas and different ways to make the job easier. We also had to realize that some

customers have small skid-steers and others have larger ones. So, we had to take that in consideration.

3 So how does an operator know the best brand to buy?

A: Ask others in the same industry, talk to your equipment dealer, and check their social media for what customers have to say. Customer service is very important. Send them an email for suggestions and ask questions about their products. How and when they get back to you gives you an idea of what you can expect after you become a customer.

4 How can these attachments save landscape contractors time and money?

A: Most of our attachments can do more than one task. Some are one-person operation which allows other employees to do other jobs or tasks to save time and money. Our attachments are low maintenance which helps you spend more time serving customers.

5 Can you give us a sneak peak of what Danuser has in development for in 2019?

A: We are working on a 3rd plant expansion which will add more manufacturing space. We have at least 3-4 new product ideas that we are keeping close to the vest, so stay tuned!

6 What steps does Danuser take before a product launch to ensure a high-quality product?

A: We test with several methods. We test the strength and functionality of the product.

Then we move up to testing in a similar environment. Then we will test in an actual setting with a large machine trying to produce field failures. After all is complete, then it goes out to several others for hours, weeks, months, and sometimes years before we consider it ready for market. Before it is launched, it goes to my farm for final testing. We are a firm believer that we need to do all the testing instead of letting our customers do it.



Danuser is a fourth-generation company that produces low-maintenance attachments designed to save you time and money.

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INTIMIDATOR TREE & POST PULLER

A true land-clearing, obstacle-removing attachment for your skid-steer or tractor, the Intimidator is ideal for removing trees, shrubs, bushes, rocks, and other obstructions on the jobsite. Remove larger trees, even with smaller skid-steers or tractors, using the replaceable excavator bucket teeth and vertical jaw saw teeth to dig and cut roots.

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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT

IMMIGRATION UPDATE



Q&A WITH KEVIN LASHUS

Board Certified Immigration Lawyer, FisherBroyles, LLP

1 How does one get involved in Immigration Law?

A: After graduation from The University of Texas School of Law, I was one of Senator Cornyn's hires when he was Attorney General of Texas (before he became Senator). After three years representing the State as a litigator, it became time for me to follow my wife to the Bay Area for her Post Doc. On September 7, 2001, I interviewed with DOJ INS and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California . . . then, September 11th happened. The gentleman I interviewed with from the U.S. Attorney's Office was Robert Mueller . . . and, he was immediately tasked with becoming the FBI chief. I accepted the job with DOJ INS on September 14th and have been an immigration attorney ever since: 6 years as a terror prosecutor and the past 12 in private practice.

2 You may have the largest H-2B law practice in the country; how did you get into the H-2B business?

A: Because of my experience with DHS ICE, I primarily marketed our practice as a verification compliance (Form

I-9) practice: I-9 audits and criminal-related immigration defense. Many of my first clients were in the landscaping maintenance/landscape installation industry. We protected our clients from losing large segments of their active workforces with supplemented temporary foreign workers. We've now expanded the practice to represent landscapers with DOL audits, new corporate formation, and permanent residency for their temporary workers.

3 How has the H-2B practice evolved over the recent past?

A: We've run up against a bunch of new challenges. First, the agency decided to artificially inflate the market wage for workers (wages are still higher than market wages in most markets); and, now we're dealing with

the new reality: we've lost an entire generation of craft workers. Kids coming out of High School today have been tracked to apply and attend college. We've closed vocational schools and no longer have kids interested in apprenticeships with craft artisans, like landscape managers, architects, and horticulturalists. My clients are telling me that kids would prefer work at local coffee shops or retail rather than learn a lifelong trade. It seems like this generation has decided certain jobs are below them . . . combine that with record un- and underemployment rates, and there are just not enough available workers across many industries—not just landscape maintenance. As a result, the visa category has been significantly oversubscribed; way too many employers for too few visas.

4 It appears that the Legislature understands that the more visas show be allocated because it keeps giving discretionary authority to the Homeland Secretary to release the visas. Do you know why more visas haven't been released?

A: I don't. It doesn't make political sense to our clients. USCIS is issuing visas based upon a random lottery as the visas are allocated. It would seem to me that this is a relatively easy fix. This isn't an immigration issue; it's a labor issue. My clients would tell you: their H-2B workers are loyal, they're law abiding, they want to work as much as the clients will work them, AND they always, always return home because they want to come back year over year. Most H-2Bs have no interest in becoming a U.S. Citizen. They want to legally work in the United States and save up enough to spend the rest of their lives in their country of origin with their families. The workers are willing to sacrifice years away from their families to make enough money that they can eventually return and live comfortably for the rest of their lives. This is a program that works. We gotta fix it.

**MY CLIENTS ARE TELLING ME THAT
KIDS WOULD PREFER WORK AT LOCAL
COFFEE SHOPS OR RETAIL RATHER
THAN LEARN A LIFELONG TRADE.**

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Kevin Lashus
FisherBroyles, LLP

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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT

PROPERTY MEASUREMENT



Q&A WITH MIKE RORIE

CEO, Go iLawn

Property measurement is an essential function that impacts the performance of every landscape business. **Go iLawn's CEO Mike Rorie** discusses how you can optimize property measurement to increase profit, reduce expenses, save time and gain competitive advantage.

1 What's the biggest property measurement mistake?

A: Not having a strong system. Think about it. Property measurement is the foundation your entire business is built on. You use measurements to build your estimates, build your sales proposals, build your budgets, build your operations... So if you have a weak measuring system, it weakens every aspect of your business.

2 How should I start strengthening my property measurement system?

A: Start with increasing the Speed, Accuracy and Efficiency of your system. In today's world, this means using an online measuring tool like Go iLawn.

It lets you quickly, accurately measure and estimate

properties before spending an unpredictable (and costly) amount of time and fuel visiting them. You'll immediately add valuable cost controls and productivity advantages to your measuring process.

3 Who should do the measuring?

A: Salespeople can measure, but I don't think they should. Smaller landscape companies can quickly train non-experienced, lower cost labor (admins, part-timers, even students) to provide accurate

YOU'LL IMMEDIATELY ADD VALUABLE COST CONTROLS AND PRODUCTIVITY ADVANTAGES TO YOUR MEASURING PROCESS.

property measurements using online tools.

Larger companies might hire a dedicated measurer. In both cases, well paid salespeople are freed to focus on their higher value, profit producing work.

4 What's a way measuring can provide competitive advantage?

A: Beyond knowing your real numbers, think visual communication. Remember, a picture says a thousand words... Impress your prospects by "showing them" how your measurements relate to the specific work you'll perform on their property. It sets your proposal apart from competitors and lets you demonstrate immediate value to your potential customer. You can also visually communicate with your crews by creating sitemaps. It establishes immediate understanding of

the work to be done, promotes productivity and prevents problems. Effective, mistake free operations is the ultimate competitive advantage.

5 What are the benefits of using Go iLawn?

A: There are too many to list here. But a big one is Retention. Go iLawn gives you the ability to retain all your property measurements, images and information in the cloud. These measurements become your "property intelligence" assets.

You can access and update them at anytime, regardless of who did the original measuring.

It creates a visual record of the work you do for customers over the years. Periodic review of your customer's sitemap provides a unique platform and opportunity to sell them additional value added services and help retain them longer.

It's Your Property Intelligence™ System



- **FIND & MEASURE** parcels and property with precision - anytime, anyplace.
- **SEE EVERYTHING** with multi-angle aerial imagery and satellite imagery views.
- **ORGANIZE & EXPORT** areas and measurements with automatic calculations.
- **RETAIN & ACCESS** your properties in the cloud for easy reference and updating.



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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT

WORK TRUCK



Q&A WITH GLENN ELLIS

Senior Vice President Customer Experience, Hino Trucks

1 What do landscape professionals want to know about Hino Trucks?

A: That first and foremost, we provide an Ownership Experience that is second to none. We provide an experience that allows our customers to, day in and day out, turn a profit. We consider the ownership experience every day, in the design of the vehicles themselves, but also the support we offer for each and every truck. Some good examples of this are our Hino INSIGHT platform and our HinoCare Program. Both of these total support platforms come standard on every Cabover truck Hino makes.

2 What is Hino INSIGHT?

A: Hino INSIGHT is a 3-part system: Telematics, Remote Diagnostics, and Case Management. Telematics I'm sure you know all about the standard benefits like fuel, idle time, PTO usage, and live vehicle tracking. What's unique about the Hino INSIGHT Telematics is our unique features like monitoring DEF level, DPF Status and preventative maintenance scheduling. These are the benefits of a standard, fully integrated solution that only Hino offers.

Integrating Remote Diagnostics and Case management into the solution is where the benefits start to stack up. If a fault code does occur, Hino has a team of people in our INSIGHT Diagnostic Center (IDC) working to be the intermediary between the Customer, Dealer, and OEM to get that truck to a service facility. It's this active process that can really save fleets time and money.

3 What kind of measurable benefits are fleets seeing with Hino INSIGHT?

A: Oh, there are a ton of benefits. The easiest to see is the up to 25% decrease in fuel

costs. We can attribute this to an up to 30% reduction in idle time, 10% drop in daily mileage and driver scorecard related items like; harsh acceleration, excess speeding events etc. We have also seen up to 20% increase in fleet utilization and 15% boost in workforce productivity. It's all of these incredible benefits that convinced us to make Hino INSIGHT standard.

4 What Hino truck models are landscapers buying and why?

A: Of course that depends on the application, but our 195DC is really popular with landscape companies. The 195DC has a GVW of 19,500

WE PROVIDE AN EXPERIENCE THAT ALLOWS OUR CUSTOMERS TO, DAY IN AND DAY OUT, TURN A PROFIT.

lbs. and is the double cab configuration of the 195 so there is room for bigger crews. The maneuverability of the 195 is second to none. Fleets love the visibility and all the creature comfort standard items like A/C, cruise control, power windows and door locks, overhead storage compartments, and 80 degree door openings.



TELEMATICS AND PREVENTIVE CARE ARE STANDARD: 2 MORE REASONS HINO IS THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR YOUR LANDSCAPE BUSINESS:

At Hino, we think it's about more than just delivering a class-leading truck... a lot more. That's why we support our product with a host of benefits and features that remain unmatched in the industry - from a 5 year, 200,000 mile warranty and 24/7 roadside service, to available preventive maintenance plans and Hino Insight, the industry's first fully connected vehicle platform with telematics, remote diagnostics and case management... standard.

We call it the **Ultimate Ownership Experience. POWERON**

Learn more at www.hino.com/landscape

1 year full Insight Telematics, 5 years Remote Diagnostics and Case Management and 2 years of preventive maintenance are standard on Hino Models 155, 155DC, 195, 195DC

Q&A WITH THE EXPERT

SOIL HEALTH



Q&A WITH NICK DILORENZO

National Product Manager, Horizon Distributors

1 We all know what fertilizer is, but really, what is it?

A: Fertilizer supplies plants nutrients they need that aren't readily available from the soil. There are 16 essential elements that are responsible for plant growth. Some elements are supplied by Mother Nature: OXYGEN, CARBON and HYDROGEN. Fertilizer mostly consists of the elements (macronutrients) that provide a growth response: NITROGEN, PHOSPHORUS and POTASSIUM. Together these macronutrients provide the primary nutrition by plants required for growth. Then finally micronutrients are added to the product, which include the other 10 elements that are needed in lower amounts. These micronutrients help with internal processes that support plant growth and plant health.

2 What kinds of fertilizer are available?

A: There are many types of fertilizer out there to support plant growth:

- **Quick release nitrogen fertilizer** – quick green up requiring more applications each season (every 4-6 weeks).
- **Slow release or controlled release nitrogen**

fertilizer – nitrogen is released over time, extending the feeding period to the plant (lasts 8 – 24 weeks, depending on product).

• **Organic fertilizer** – contributes to soil fertility by providing nutrient energy to the microbes in the soil.

While all these products do provide food to the plant, not all of them contribute to soil fertility.

3 How do I know which one to choose?

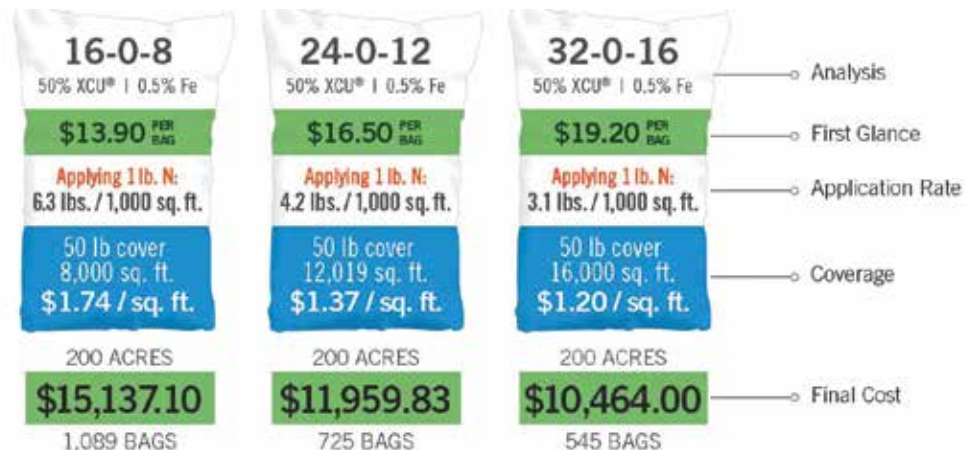
A: Start with what you are growing and how you want it to grow. Turf foods and ornamental plant foods usually differ in their ingredients and how they work. For ornamentals, it's not economical to be fertilizing

monthly so a balanced ratio (i.e., 15-15-15) with a slow release nitrogen is your best choice. For turfgrass, if you want a quick response, use a water soluble quick release nitrogen product. But with that you get consequences like fast growth, high yield, thatch buildup, root deterioration, and frequent applications. Instead I recommend using a slow release product that extends the feed and limits most of these liabilities. Not only is this type of nitrogen release healthier for the plant, it reduces labor costs through less applications. Finally, consider the release characteristics of the fertilizer. You don't want to use a product in the heat of the summer that releases with

heat and water or use an organic in the early spring when soils are still cold.

4 Any final thoughts?

A: It's so easy to get caught up in the cost per bag when selecting a fertilizer. But if you really want to maximize your profitability you need to be looking at cost per application or per season. Sure, that quick release may be a few dollars cheaper but you will have to apply it 2 – 3 times more often for the same results as the higher quality slow release fertilizer. Factor in labor costs, and you can see the better choice is often the slow release. Your local Horizon professional can help you make the right choice for your application.



TurfGro PLUS Premium Fertilizer

Fertilizer with attitude.

Implementing the best performing fertilizer program means meeting the needs of a particular zone, all year round – and those needs are different across the country. That's why TurfGro Professional Fertilizers are formulated for your region— your soil, turf and plant needs.



Now introducing TurfGro Plus Premium Fertilizer, offering unique enhancements to improve water retention, soil health, and the overall look of your turf.



There are 5 types of TurfGro Fertilizer to suit your situation. Look for the following label colors to point you toward the appropriate products to meet your needs:

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Natural Fertilizer

Original Fertilizer

Slow Release Fertilizer

Ornamental Fertilizer



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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT

IRRIGATION



Q&A WITH DAN PUTHUFF

National Product Manager, Horizon Distributors

1 Last time, we talked about trends in the Irrigation space – specifically smart home automation and the effect of the labor shortage on business. Has anything changed?

A: These two trends continue to impact the industry – there is a strong need for contractors to find areas of efficiency and profitability to drive their businesses.

2 Other than “getting connected” to a site, what is another area of opportunity?

A: I see drainage as an excellent point of leverage for the residential contractor to expand their services. The #1 home improvement project that triggers a drainage system is a landscape project. While the contractor is on site, there is an excellent opportunity to talk to their customers about the need to protect their landscape and patio investment by installing a drainage system. 90% of the time, a property owner will take the advice of a contractor – they just need to start having the conversation.

3 Is Drainage profitable?

A: Yes, especially since it

I SEE DRAINAGE AS AN EXCELLENT POINT OF LEVERAGE FOR THE RESIDENTIAL CONTRACTOR TO EXPAND THEIR SERVICES.

allows a contractor the opportunity to increase their average invoice without a return trip – this ties into labor efficiency. The contractor is already trenching to install or renovate an irrigation system or digging to plant landscape material – adding a drainage system is an easy add-on.

4 How can a contractor get started installing drainage systems?

A: There are a lot of great tools in the market to help contractors with drainage diagnosis and solutions – one of our primary vendors, NDS, the leader in drainage solutions – provides an interactive Home Drainage Center tool on their website (ndspro.com) that solves the major drainage problems and also provides a parts list. They also have over 100 youtube videos on product, calculation, diagnosis and installation. Our knowledgeable sales force and store personnel can also help.

5 A contractor can find drainage products anywhere – why buy at Horizon?

A: The typical Big Box store only carries a few drainage SKUs. At Horizon Distributors, we recognize the importance of carrying a full line of drainage products to help our customers save time and get the job done quickly. By partnering with NDS on their Destination Drainage program, we have identified the top products to stock in each location. Stop by your local Horizon store and let us show you what we can do!



Offering the industry's most comprehensive selection of landscape and irrigation supplies, Horizon is the one stop shop for over 27,000 green industry professionals. We carry professional-grade products in irrigation & drainage, landscape, safety, lighting, outdoor living, outdoor power equipment and equipment parts & service.

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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT ENGINES



Q&A WITH TROY SMITH

Manager, R&D Testing and EFI, Kawasaki

Kawasaki EFI engines precisely match power to load as you mow, for constant blade speed in tough conditions. Only Kawasaki EFI engines combine all the advantages of a fully integrated electronic governor (eGov), cutting-edge ECU control, and open-loop technology.

1 Why does Kawasaki opt for open-loop control rather than closed-loop control?

A: Kawasaki looked at all the variables to determine which technology would deliver the desired results. We always start by looking at the needs of lawn care professionals. In their demanding world, they need plenty of power and unfaltering dependability. Our open-loop system, paired with our electronic governor (eGov) and ECU achieves the results lawn care professionals want; power and reliability.

2 What is the difference between open-loop versus closed-loop?

A: A Kawasaki open-loop system uses a defined map to manage the air/fuel ratio on the front end of the fueling process. With an open-loop system, there is no O2 sensor. Kawasaki uses advanced engine control algorithms to maximize accuracy of fuel control.

A closed-loop system is more complicated in that it needs to add an O2 sensor to measure exhaust. It then

uses that reading to constantly adjust the air/fuel mixture to correct for any error in fuel control.

3 What about fuel efficiency?

A: Fuel efficiency is important to lawn care professionals. So, which system is more fuel efficient? This is a loaded question – literally. One source of efficiency loss is the

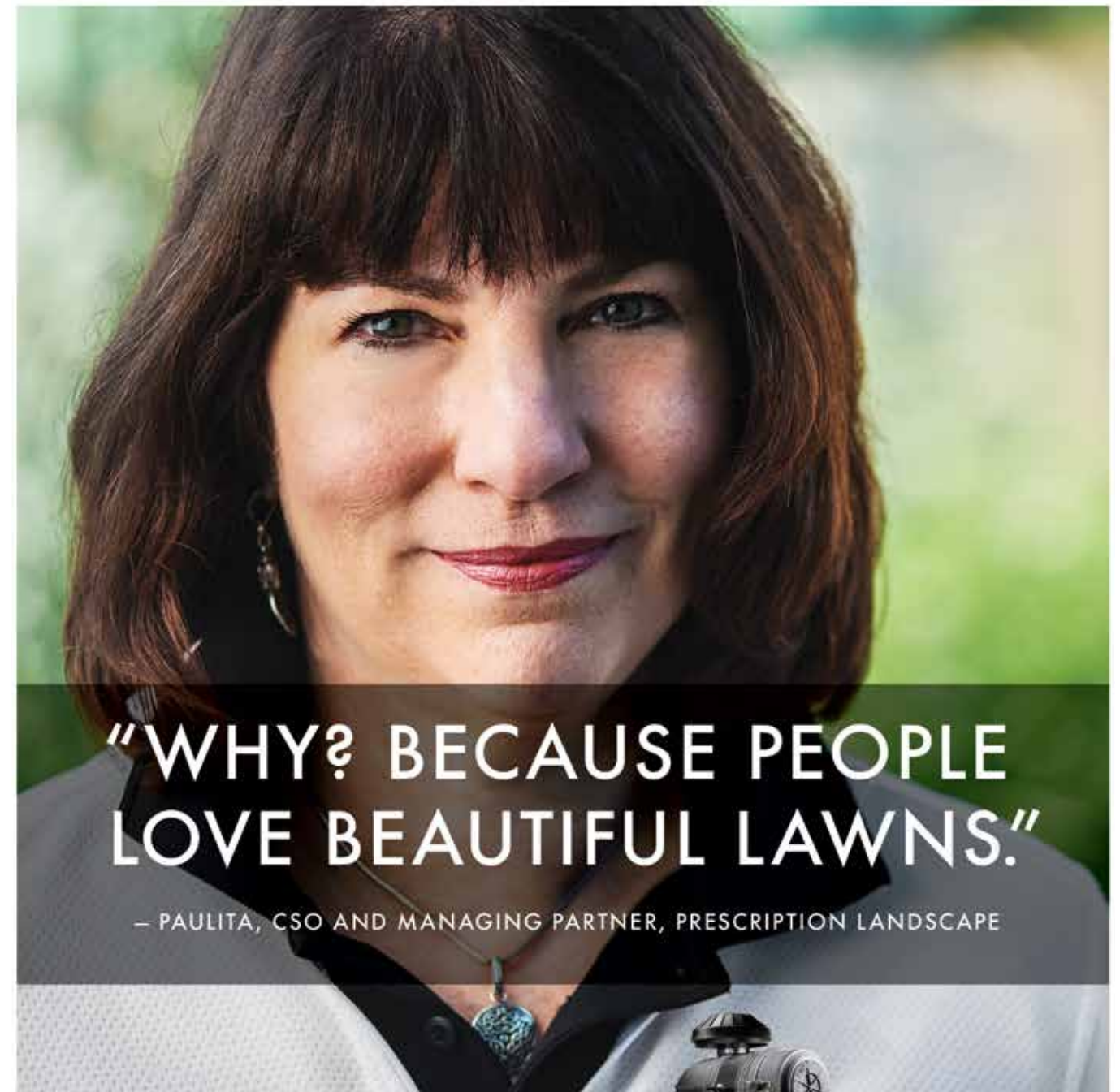
need for rich air/fuel ratios. Tested under identical conditions, the open-loop system exhibits air/fuel ratios similar to a closed-loop system. In fact, when compared at 50% load, air/fuel ratios between open and closed systems are almost identical in the engines tested. Therefore, closed loop or open loop alone does not equate to engine fuel efficiency. It's only one of the

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TO DELIVER
OPTIMAL
RESULTS UNDER
THE MOST
DEMANDING
CONDITIONS.

many contributing factors.

4 What is the maintenance advantage for open-loop?

A: Our goal is to deliver optimal results under the most demanding conditions. The design of the open-loop system requires fewer parts so there's less to go wrong. A closed-loop system requires more parts and thus more maintenance.



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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT FERTILIZER



Q&A WITH JEREMY BIGLER

Landscape Channel Manager, LebanonTurf

It is hard enough gaining new business, don't jeopardize it because you are running short on man hours to get all of the work done. ProScape® combination products, from LebanonTurf, take time savings to the next level so you can be successful in maintaining all of your properties and continue to grow even with labor challenges.

1 Why should I use a combination product?

A: By applying a fertilizer and one or more pesticides in one application you are reducing labor costs compared to individual applications. This reduction in application time allows you to do more with the time that you do have.

2 What exactly should I be looking for in a combination product?

A: First you want to make sure the pesticide(s) in the product match your application requirements. Timing is important for products that have more than one active ingredient, make sure you know when to apply. You also want to make sure that the fertilizer is high quality and matches the actives so you don't have to be applying fertilizer 4 weeks later.

3 My customers expect to see me every 6 weeks, how do these products help me?

A: Every visit does not

need to involve a fertilizer or pesticide application.

Follow up visits could be used to spot treat troubled areas, apply a micro nutrient product or it could be time used for an add-on tree and shrub program.

4 What specialty combination products are available today?

A: • ProScape Pre and Post Emergent + Fertilizer – for pre and post emergent weed control.

• ProScape Acelepryn and Dimension + Fertilizer – for insect and pre emergent weed control.

• ProScape Starter Fertilizer with Mesotrione – a starter fertilizer with pre emergent weed control to use while seeding cool season grasses.

5 Where can I find more information about these products?

A: You can find more information at www.lebanonturf.com/combination or call us at 1-800-233-0628

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Do more in less time with ProScape Starter Fertilizer with Mesotrione. Apply both fertilizer and weed control that is effective when establishing new turf. Your grass gets off to a great start, freeing up time for other jobs and customers. For more information, visit LebanonTurf.com or call **1-800-233-0628**.



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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT

HIGH RESOLUTION AERIAL IMAGING



Q&A WITH TIM FRANK

Vice President of Global Growth Marketing, Nearmap

1 How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros time?

A: Lawn care and landscaping professionals spend considerable amounts of time traveling to job sites. They do this at various stages of business – from prospecting and canvassing neighborhoods, to estimating and quoting, installation, service and on-going maintenance. Nearmap's high-resolution aerial maps provide crystal-clear images of job sites from either top down or oblique view angles, so landscapers can target new business, create estimates, and bid accurately and quickly all from the office. Less time on-site means more time finding new business.

2 How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros labor?

A: With Nearmap's MapBrowser, landscapers can search and view HD aerial maps for addresses or areas of interest on-demand from a standard web browser. However, in contrast to free satellite maps, Nearmap's imagery is updated often and several times sharper, allowing you to inspect details about the site without visiting it in



person. More importantly, MapBrowser includes powerful tools that allow users to make precise measurements, as well as annotate, directly on top of the imagery.

3 How do your products or services save on materials or fuel?

A: By using Nearmap's MapBrowser, landscape professionals can accurately quote for the proper amount of materials and be able to determine any objects that may add time or effort. This can all be done from the comfort of your office – saving on fuel and travel time to jobsites. For example, if an average field worker earns \$14/hour and makes four site visits a day

with vehicle running costs of \$0.56 per mile, in a year's time this would equal almost 1,000 site visits and close to \$15,000 in expenses. If you were to trim off a third of those in-person site visits and replace them with virtual site visits using Nearmap's high-res imagery in MapBrowser, you will have saved around \$7,000. It adds up very quickly.

4 How do your products or services help generate additional revenue?

A: Using Nearmap, landscapers can scan entire neighborhoods to identify new business opportunities in minutes. All locations captured by Nearmap are geo-indexed, meaning users can

drop a pin and quickly pull-up address details, coordinates, and even the time and date the image was captured. A landscaper can then target those addresses directly and provide up-to-date imagery of prospect properties for clear and concise quoting.

5 In what other ways do your products or services make companies profitable?

A: When you need validation that your services have improved a landscape, or proof that a problem with the lawn existed prior. Nearmap historical imagery can be compared to current aerial maps to prove your point, retain customers or win new business.

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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT

SPREADER/SPRAYER



Q&A WITH TOM JESSEN

President, PermaGreen

1 Why are more companies using ride-on spreader/sprayers?

A: Ride-on spreader/sprayers can help you maximize production, apply more accurately, cut labor costs, and retain good employees. People sometimes make the mistake of thinking that spreader/sprayers are only good for big properties. But with the right machine, you should be able to treat accounts of any size, every day, from the very smallest to the very biggest. That's how a spreader/sprayer can deliver maximum efficiency, maximum profits and offer a fast return on your investment.

2 How do spreader/sprayers help reduce labor costs and issues?

A: A good rule of thumb is: One person with a ride-on spreader/sprayer can do the work of two or more people walking twice over a lawn (first to spread, then to spray). This time savings is crucial for a one-person operation. Companies with multiple technicians can retain their best employees by providing better working conditions and a more enjoyable, long-term career.

3 Can a spreader/sprayer deliver more accurate applications and quality results?

A: Absolutely. A good spreader/sprayer should address several quality-robbing variables, including: Human error, proper calibration, ground speed, product distribution and overlap of the spread and spray patterns. First and foremost, ride-on spreader/sprayers reduce error-causing fatigue. The ease and extent to which they address the other variables differs from brand to brand. Keep in mind that the better these variables are controlled, the less chance there will be for operator error and service calls.

4 Does a spreader/sprayer make financial sense?

A: For startups and single-person operations, it can be your best investment, making you instantly competitive, especially when it comes to pricing and quality of service. For businesses with multiple technicians, it's a no brainer; the right spreader/sprayer will dramatically cut your overhead and make you more competitive. Furthermore, spreader/sprayers can offer a business the ability,



THE RIGHT SPREADER/SPRAYER WILL DRAMATICALLY CUT YOUR OVERHEAD AND MAKE YOU MORE COMPETITIVE

confidence and time to grow their operation.

5 How do I know which spreader/sprayer is right for me?

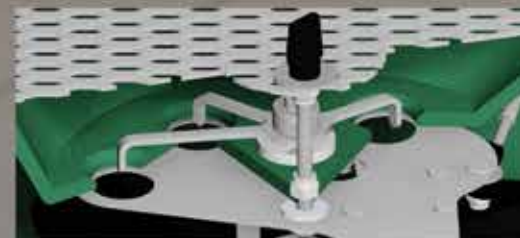
A: If you want to treat a mix of residential, commercial and sports fields, you need an all-around machine that has the size, speed, maneuverability, and spread/spray trimming ability to

excel on both small and large properties. If you want to specialize in sports turf with wide-open areas with no trimming, then a larger-capacity machine might be good for you. In any case, it is wise to choose the spreader/sprayer that both makes you money every day and makes it easier for you or your employee to deliver quality applications, every time.

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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT

EDGING



Q&A WITH DANIEL MARTIN

Director of Marketing, Permaloc Corporation

1 Should I be using a different edging for straight runs as opposed to curved lines?

A: We've all been there. Trying our best to make edging that is running parallel to a structure look straight. No matter how hard we try, the waves between each staking point remain painfully obvious. The human eye is designed to pick up those anomalies.

That's why when doing straight lines with edging, it is important to use an edging that was created for that. Not only will the result look much better to those that will see it over time, but you will save yourself a great deal of time during the install. And in this business, time is money!

Edgings designed for straight lines typically have a feature built in that allows them to remain perfectly rigid, like a small "foot" on the bottom. They should still have built-in staking to assure that it remains in place and does not shift during the lifetime of the project.

2 How do I install a paver edging for permeable pavers when I can't drive a spike in?

A: As permeable pavers become increasingly popular, in



large part due to governmental regulations on stormwater management, many contractors are curious about how the installation steps vary from traditional installation over a compacted base.

With non-permeable applications, the edging is simply spiked into the compacted base using a spiral steel spike.

This provides plenty of holding power to keep the edging in place. However, permeable pavers require an open-graded base to allow the water to move through. This loose stone will not provide any "bite" for the spike to hold the edging in place.

A new system for holding edging in place on a

permeable base involves attaching the edging to a biaxial geogrid textile embedded between two layers of stone. The edging is attached using a capture plate and heavy-duty screws to assure that it will maintain holding power under the heaviest of vehicular loads.

3 What is the difference between residential edging and commercial edging?

A: The primary difference in edging grades is wall thickness. A thicker wall provides more vertical strength, allowing heavier foot traffic and larger maintenance equipment to traverse the edging.

It is important to match the thickness and depth of the edging with the circumstances associated with your installation. This checklist can include foot traffic, maintenance requirements, adjacent materials, soil type, etc.

It is important to note that landscape edging uses nominal thicknesses (similar to lumber), and not all edging companies provide the same wall thicknesses within the same nominal size. So be sure to do your research to make sure you are truly getting what you are paying for!



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SUSTAINABLE EDGING SOLUTIONS

Q&A WITH THE EXPERT MARKETING



Q&A WITH LINDA THOMAS

Marketing Director, Real Green Systems

Automated marketing isn't just for gaining new business. It helps retain customers, increase their value and win back cancels. An automated marketing campaign generates emails and letters behind the scenes, with little to no manual intervention, allowing your staff more time to concentrate on providing a superior customer experience and you more time to grow your business.

1 Will automated marketing help estimate acceptance?

A: Certainly. People won't always accept estimates the first time. Some never bother responding. While a variety of reasons exist for no response or rejection, nurturing these leads with a follow-up marketing campaign provides sales teams opportunities to overcome objections, gain positive responses and win sales. Automated campaigns allow you to set up digital and print drip communications and can boost estimate acceptance by more than 8%.

2 Can automated marketing improve retention?

A: Yes! Consistent communication is a retention cornerstone.

After-sale marketing is critical and becomes a more intensive education. Why do customers need to continue service? What additional services complement the initial sale? Are there any new conditions found on the property and if so, what services do you offer to remedy them? Your campaigns need to answer these questions on a regular basis.

After-sale marketing also includes essential customer care messages such as when you'll be on their property, reminders to open gates or ensure Fido, the kids and their toys are safely inside during service. Lawn care tips specific to each customer, payment reminders or a heads-up their on-file credit card is about to expire are also expected and appreciated. These automated communications may seem routine, but to your customers they indicate you care about them and understand them. They'll feel you've taken the time to know them and be more inclined to stay loyal, even if a discounted competitor pops up.

3 What's an easy way to increase revenue?

A: Upsells. Upselling services to existing customers through opt-in email, letter and

postcard campaigns increase customer value and your bottom line, without increasing territory or overrunning marketing budgets. So, routes stay tight; field staff generates more revenue per stop and marketing ROI increases. You save time, fuel and vehicle wear with minimal spend. They are a simple and effective way to increase sales and keep your marketing budget in check. Upsells make sense for any service-based business. You have all your customer's data. You know which services they currently have and which additional services would benefit them going forward.

4 Do I need to keep current customers engaged?

A: Indeed. Maintaining engagement helps maintain your company's relevancy in customers' busy lives. Attention spans are shrinking, and the worst thing that can happen is losing customers because they've forgotten why they're paying you. A short digital newsletter in your automated marketing strategy helps keep customers engaged, allows you to reach them on their mobile devices and continue educating them

about your company, products and services. Further, personalize their experience with news and offers specific to them, especially why your service is vital, repeatedly reminding them of your company's value.

Start an automated customer appreciation campaign utilizing automated marketing. Consider sending a "thank you" email or postcard to your customers on service anniversary dates offering them a free or discounted service. Showing customers in a tangible way that their business is appreciated helps nurture customer loyalty and can result in them referring others to your business.

5 How can I win back canceled customers?

A: Marketing. Customers cancel for numerous reasons. Targeting automated digital and print marketing campaigns toward cancels allows your sales team to reconnect and provides opportunities to win them back. Offering special pricing provides added incentive. Because they were recently your customers, open rates are higher. Actual win-backs can exceed 7%, with minimal effort and expenditure.

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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT FRANCHISES



Q&A WITH BEN & STEPHANIE SCHOOT

Co-owners, The Grounds Guys of Myrtle Beach

1 What was business like for you before you became a Grounds Guy, how has it changed?

A: We had our landscape company for seven years before we reached out to The Grounds Guys. *I wanted a business, not a job.* However, the reality was that I left my job and went to another. We were doing okay, we had four or five guys working on two trucks, but there was no structure, no financial management. It was difficult to win commercial and HOA accounts as an independent. *We were always up against national brands, and most the time it was like hitting a brick wall, getting a hard "no" before we were even in the door.*

Prior to The Grounds Guys, I was on a mower by 7:30 every day, coming home dirty and missing events with my family. Often, I would have to shut down the crews early so I could run kids around or do errands for the business or the family. Often, I wouldn't take any salary from the business, we would just take a draw when we had a bill to pay.

It came to a point where we had to decide if we were going to continue with our business and look for a franchise, or

face the alternative; get out of business and get another job. That's when we started looking at The Grounds Guys.

Now, my wife, Stephanie is in our business. We are both able to pay ourselves a salary for the work we do in the business, and I work in the office and am home by dinner every day. I wore a white polo to work the other day, a white polo. I never could have done that before. *I now have the quality of life and time flexibility aspect that I wanted from business ownership in the first place.*

2 Why did you convert your business you worked for into a franchise?

A: We got that question a lot, until we started growing like crazy, no one asks us that anymore. Honestly though, we asked ourselves that question before we got started. What made the decision for us was when we traveled to the Waco Home Office and met the team and learned the system. *Before we made it back home, we were all in.* It was a big risk, but the good thing about that was that we were ready to take advantage of the systems to the fullest.

Also, having a national brand behind me made me

feel so much more confident going into talk to big commercial clients. In the first six months we were The Grounds Guys, we landed a national builder account that we still service today.

And having to turn in our monthly financials to Home Office keeps us accountable. We watch our labor percent, we watch our materials like we never did before. I never knew my profit margins on services or if I was over for man hours on a job. We talk constantly about our numbers and we focus on our budget and sticking to it every month.

3 What have you found to be the most beneficial about being a part of a franchise system?

A: We feel that networking with the other owners is the most incredible part of what we got when we joined The Grounds Guys. *Our friends and family can't fully understand what we do, and they don't necessarily get our problems within our business. But our fellow Grounds Guys owners completely understand everything we are going through.* There is always someone to talk to if you need help, you're never alone. Fellow owners have

become our biggest cheerleaders. Attending Reunion (our national conference) and meeting everyone and seeing the Top Guns get called up on stage is so motivating. Everyone is willing to talk with you and help you make your business better. They even invite us to come visit their locations to learn how they do it. What other business can you think of where you can call someone that has the exact model and goals as you and ask questions that will help to better your operation.

4 Any advice to Independent Owners?

A: To independent owners I would say, what are you missing? What do you need in your business? *What hats should you take off to help you meet your goals? Franchising isn't for everyone, but if you struggle with systems or accountability or finance management or goal setting, it might be a solution that you look into.* You still have to go out and do the work. You still have to build the relationships and get it done. If you don't want to franchise, just find the right people to help you somewhere. Everyone who runs a business needs support and help sometimes.



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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT

CONSUMER FINANCING / BUSINESS GROWTH



Q&A WITH JOSH ROBINSON

Design and Sales Manager, Todd's Services Inc.

1 What types of financing programs do you offer?

A: We began offering financing about 15 years ago. It was starting to trend at the time in other sectors, but not so much in landscaping. We partnered with a couple of lenders and got started.

We offer financing to residential customers which make up 90 percent of our business. The two plans that are most often used by our sales team are the 12-month, deferred interest; and then the term financing, which is 6.9 percent APR for 50 months.

There are two types of customers that tend to use financing. One that just wants to take advantage of a deferred interest period. Then there's another type of customer who does not have the funds at hand. We do talk about how they're going to pay for the project early on.

Before the crash, it was a higher percentage, but today about 10 percent of our customers take advantage of financing. That number is growing again. It seems to be

trending back to where people are borrowing again. They're being more careful now, but they are borrowing and taking advantage of financing options again.

2 Has offering financing helped you sell bigger contracts?

A: Our average project is probably somewhere between \$15,000 and \$20,000. Financing allows for second or third phases to be done now.

Sometimes a person only has the cash on hand to do one phase. For example if it's a new home and maybe they can afford the lawn and sprinkler system out of pocket (phase one), but they really would like to have their landscaping (phase two) done at the same time, too. Our sales team will ask them if they can put the value of the lawn and sprinkler system down now, and then we will go ahead and finance the landscaping over a period of 50 months.

Not only does this allow phases to be done sooner, but

it's a financial advantage for the customer because they don't have to pay for us to come back to their property, which can increase the price since there are associated costs with bringing our team back on site.

3 What other advantages does financing provide?

A: It's an advantage over a lot of the competition that doesn't offer it. Sometimes people will hire us because we offer financing. We do get a lot of calls simply because we have the words "financing available" on our website and in our advertisements.

In addition, sometimes customers are able to do the project sooner. It's very common for a customer to be waiting on a chunk of money, such as an end of the year bonus or holiday bonus. It allows them to do that project in May or June and enjoy their property during the warm season, rather than waiting until they get that money in December.

4 Have financing options helped increase overall sales?

A: We get some people that contact our company strictly because we offer financing. That obviously helps increase business. Also, because it allows people to do second or third phases of a project, that makes what might have been a \$30,000 job become a \$50,000 or \$60,000 job for us. It increases the size of the project the customer will be able to have done.

It also allows us to add to our customer base people who are on a weekly or monthly budget. They're able to spread the job out in monthly payments, so it gets us work that we might not have otherwise secured. Some people are monthly budget people, and they can look at that \$400 per month payment and say, 'Okay, I can make that work. I'm going to do this.' That's a customer that we're able to get with financing where we otherwise would not have had that customer's business.

This is just another way to capture a section of buyers. If you don't have financing as one of your tools in your sales tactics, you're going to miss out on customers.

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