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Q&A

WITH THE **EXPERT**

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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT HARDSCAPE



Q&A WITH BRIAN STEPHENS

Product Manager, A.M. Leonard Inc.

While landscapes and hardscapes are designed to complement each other, the fundamentals of achieving each type can be quite different.

A.M. Leonard's Product Manager Brian Stephens discusses keys to effectively add hardscaping to your list of services.

1 As a landscaper, why should I add hardscape installations to my services?

Hardscaping is what transforms a picnic in the grass into an outdoor kitchen on a new paver patio. Installing hardscapes can be rewarding, and not only in a sense of accomplishment. Efficiently installing hardscape features can be very profitable, and provides a competitive advantage over the next landscaper in town. Many hardscape powerhouses started as landscapers! And to this day those hardscape companies are not just builders, but often offer a landscape maintenance plan along with their hardscape installations. So for any landscaper looking to become more profitable, expand their business, and generate even more consistent work flow, adding hardscape services to your portfolio is a natural evolution.

2 What separates a landscaper from a hardscaper?

I interact with landscapers,

hardscapers, builders, and contractors almost daily. Any time I talk to a customer that identifies as a landscaper, I ask about hardscaping. A vast majority of them state that they do some hardscaping, but prefer not to. The conversation usually leads to it not being a profitable venture. Their main issue ends up being that they struggle with one phase or another. So how does a hardscape installer finish a 500 sq.ft. patio, profit 40% - 60%, and back the job with a lifetime warranty? The answer is not just equipment, but more importantly, techniques.

3 What techniques do I need to study to make hardscaping efficient and profitable?

The first key technique to proper installation is surveying the elevation of the land. All outdoor surfaces need to be built with "fall" to direct water off or away. You will need to be able to monitor fall throughout all phases of an install. Next, whether it is

a paver patio, stone walkway, retaining wall, or concrete drive, the most important part of any hardscape installation is a good foundation. Using the proper amount of base material for the project is what separates a lifetime warranty job from a call-back job. Finally, screeding: Screeding seems to be a missing link for many. This step prepares a surface on top of the base (with fall) and can be done using common ½" steel pipes and a straight edge. Using a rotary laser or smart level to set the screed rails, you create a smooth surface with fall that will accept the pavers. Once achieved, all pavers can be laid without having to constantly check elevation.

4 I have essential landscaping tools, do I need additional tools and equipment for hardscaping?

In regards to the hardscaping techniques we just discussed, yes. There are several (affordable) pieces of equipment

that are essential to a correct and efficient install. In relation to the first techniques we discussed, a rotary laser or smart level is a must for any hardscape installation. It might be tempting but, a regular box level won't cut it. You will need to monitor elevations throughout every phase of your project. Installing anything without a way to check elevations is like working in the dark. The next essential is a plate compactor, this is crucial for preparing the foundation of your project. If you don't compact you will get called back. A daily rental rate for a plate compactor is very affordable, so there is no reason to cut corners here.

5 How do I transition into hardscaping?

Start small, with common features. Small to medium size paver patios are great practice. And those installation methods absolutely apply to larger jobs. If you are not familiar with the techniques mentioned above, do your research and draw up a plan of your own. Before installing for a customer, I highly recommend you find a good spot to try this on your own terms. Just remember to call 811 before you dig.

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"RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB." Providing the best in tools and supplies since 1885, A.M. Leonard's product managers and sales staff focus on how industry professionals can wade through the masses of products and techniques available and choose the best solutions for their hardscaping project.

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Q&A WITH KEVIN KEHOE

Founder, The Aspire Software Company

1 What is the chief challenge for owner-managers over the next five years?

It's something we rarely think about as we're so focused on labor shortages these days. But it is very real: the costly shortage of middle management. The fact is any organization aspiring to profitable growth must rely on middle managers*. Without these people, owner-managers must make and execute every decision.

90% of companies in the industry generate less than \$1MM in annual revenue. The reason is straight forward. These enterprises have no middle managers. The owner makes and executes all decisions, and \$1MM is the limit for this type of "organization". Where the real opportunity lies is within companies larger than \$1MM who earn net profits of less than 6%, which is 80% of the organizations in this revenue range. Why are their profits so low? The standard answer is lack of systems—but the real reason is a lack of effective middle management.

2 Why are middle managers less effective than they should be?

Middle managers are tasked

with (1) making strategic situational decisions, and (2) holding accountable those who execute the work accountable. Lacking timely, accurate information makes it impossible for these individuals to first decide, "what do we do in this scenario?"—and without access to this data, they have little time to then determine, "how is this supposed to be done?".

As a result, they are less effective than they could be, and their compensation reflects this. Herein lies part of the problem in recruiting and keeping good middle managers. They aren't paid enough. It's a fact that the enrollment in university landscape programs—a potential source for middle managers—is declining. Parents, who frequently foot the bill, aren't inclined to spend a lot for their child to get a degree where the long-term earning and promotion potential is lower than other professions.

At the same time, the industry can't pay more without real productivity gains. As a result, there's a painful, potential shortage of exactly the people required to grow profitably. That's the bad news. The good news is that every crisis presents an opportunity.

3 What is the opportunity?

Owners need to invest in middle management and the technology they need to be successful. Today, 95% of companies spend less than 0.5% of revenues on business management software.

At the same time, they're spending 20%–40% on labor, 15% on machines, and 20% on middle management-related overhead. Less than 1% is being spent on the one investment that can significantly improve middle management productivity and compensation.

Middle managers require a tool that provides the information they need to make timely and accurate decisions. In most companies today that information is delivered days after the fact and inaccurately. As a result, these individuals are making "gut feel" or what worked for me last time decisions. This approach leads to mistakes, owner frustration, and the owner once again making all decisions.

Dedicated middle managers who want to succeed compensate for their lack of information by spending time collecting and producing their own reports—time that

should be invested in coaching, training, and motivating people. I estimate that middle managers spend 40% of their time in meetings and data collection in an attempt to make the right decisions. This is not a recipe for personal or company success.

4 What is the solution?

Business management software is changing the game for middle managers. Companies who invest in software empower their middle managers to be more productive (and can pay them better and retain them longer). Effective middle managers make better decisions and reduce the cost of both labor and machines. The result is a better bottom line for the owner and an end to less concentrated and slow decision-making processes—a killer of profitable growth.

The future of our industry lies in the hands of middle management. While they need software and systems to succeed, an investment in business management software is still relatively small when compared to all other investments. And, at the same time, it creates the potential for out-sized returns that are NOT provided by equal investments in labor and machines.



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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT FUNGICIDES



Q&A WITH JEFF VANNOY

Senior Product Manager, BASF

Xzemplar® fungicide from BASF provides the ultimate control of brown and large patch – preventatively and curatively. By combining the fast-stopping power of a contact fungicide with long-lasting preventative action, it offers continuous, reliable protection for lawns and landscapes.

1 What key benefits can Xzemplar fungicide from BASF bring to my lawn care disease program?

Xzemplar fungicide is an innovative SDHI class of chemistry with strong activity on the most prevalent diseases found in lawn care — brown patch and large patch. It gets into the plant quickly and begins providing preventative control immediately.

2 What type of formulation does Xzemplar fungicide come in? Are the packaging sizes convenient for my business?

It is a suspension concentrate (SC) formulation that is designed to be absorbed into the turfgrass plant quickly and translocates to protect against diseases. It is packaged conveniently in two sizes, a case with four (11.4 fl. oz.) bottles that each treat 43,500 square

feet and a bulk package with two (114 fl. oz.) bottles that treat a total of 20 acres of turf.

3 What is the common treatment interval for Xzemplar fungicide? Are there any products BASF recommends to tank mix with this product?

Xzemplar fungicide is designed to last up to 21 days on brown patch in cool season turf and up to 28 days on large patch in warm season turf. Insignia® SC Intrinsic® brand fungicide is an excellent tank partner to increase residual and significantly broaden the disease spectrum.

4 What is the ideal timing for Xzemplar fungicide to control brown patch in cool season turf?

Weather patterns can vary significantly from year to year, but when daytime temperatures reach the mid-80s and humidity starts to increase to summertime levels,



it's time to apply Xzemplar fungicide preventatively. In many cases, that would include an application starting around Memorial Day with the last application in September. Check your local Turf Extension department for more information.

5 When applying Xzemplar fungicide, what is the recommended

amount of water per 1,000 square feet?

It's recommended that it be applied with a minimum of 1-2 gallons of water per 1,000 square feet. If disease has already set in, using more water per application is recommended, i.e., 2-4 gallons per 1,000 square feet.

Always read and follow label directions. Insignia, Intrinsic and Xzemplar are registered trademarks of BASF.

Xzemplar® Fungicide

BASF
We create chemistry

FOR CONTROL THAT'S SPOT-ON

Take back control with Xzemplar fungicide from BASF. With long-lasting preventative action, it helps lawns stand up to brown patch and large patch no matter the season.

Learn more at <https://betterturf.basf.us/markets/lawn-care.html>

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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT ATTACHMENTS



Q&A WITH GLENN DANUSER

Co-owner, Danuser

1 Can you give us a little background on Danuser?

Danuser was established in 1910 and we're now in our fourth generation as a family owned business. In our early days we built attachments for industry leaders like Ford Motor Company and J. I. Case Company. Today we still make and sell attachments under our brand name.

2 How does a 110-year-old company remain competitive in the attachments business?

Remember how you made it this 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. Most importantly, having good customer service has been critical to our success.

3 You've always been known for your 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?

Customers asked us to build a tree puller for years. We didn't want to build the same

tree puller design as other manufacturers, so Engineering and Sales got together to discuss different ideas and expectations. After several months of testing, we came up with different ways to make the job easier. We also realize that customers have various sizes of skid-steers and tractors so our design needed to work with a wide range of host vehicles.

4 So how does a landscaper know the best brand to buy?

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.

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

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.

6 Can you give us a sneak peek of what Danuser has in development for in 2020?

We are releasing a new auger system this spring with our own planetary. The New EP Auger System is ideal for various industries including landscape and construction. We're very excited to be able to launch our own planetary that meets our demand for quality and performance. We have a few other exciting things in development that will be arriving in the next eight to twelve months so stay tuned!

GOOD ENOUGH WON'T DO IT MUST BE RIGHT!



Danuser, an industry leader in agriculture and construction attachments, is a family-owned company that was built in 1910 with the philosophy, "Good enough won't do – it must be right." With over 100 years of experience coupled with the latest in manufacturing technology, Danuser prides itself on building the very best attachments with superior technologies, also maintaining the core belief that good old fashion field research yields the highest performing, most reliable attachments available today.

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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT
RECESSION STRATEGY



Q&A WITH
MIKE RORIE
CEO, GoLawn

Could the coronavirus pandemic put the U.S. into a recession? Go iLawn's CEO, Mike Rorie, discusses how your landscape business can strategically play offense and defense to help weather an economic downturn.

1 Why should I have a recession strategy?

Crisis and economic uncertainty is like walking in fog. You can only see a few feet ahead. And the normal information you need to make confident business decisions isn't visible.

Fortunately, each step you take reveals more information and lets you see a bit further. It's important to slow down and take careful steps to move forward until the fog lifts. A recession strategy helps you navigate the fog and safely get through to the other side.

2 How do you start preparing a recession strategy?

Think both offense and defense. Offense is taking strategic action to grow your business with smart marketing and sales. Defense is about taking strategic action to conserve cash, protect customer relationships and reduce low ROI expenses.

REMEMBER, SMART DIMES BEAT DUMB DOLLARS, ESPECIALLY IN A RECESSION.

Please note, too many companies just act defensively during a recession. This can make a bad situation worse. You've got to do both.

3 What's a defensive example?

Reduce service cycles, don't eliminate them. If customers are tightening budgets, provide proactive solutions to work with them.

For example, if you used to mow 28 times you might mow 20 times. This would be the minimum of work to keep the customer's turf in a

healthy state. Look for ways to give your customers more for less without dropping your profit margins. Reduce. Don't eliminate.

4 What's an offensive example?

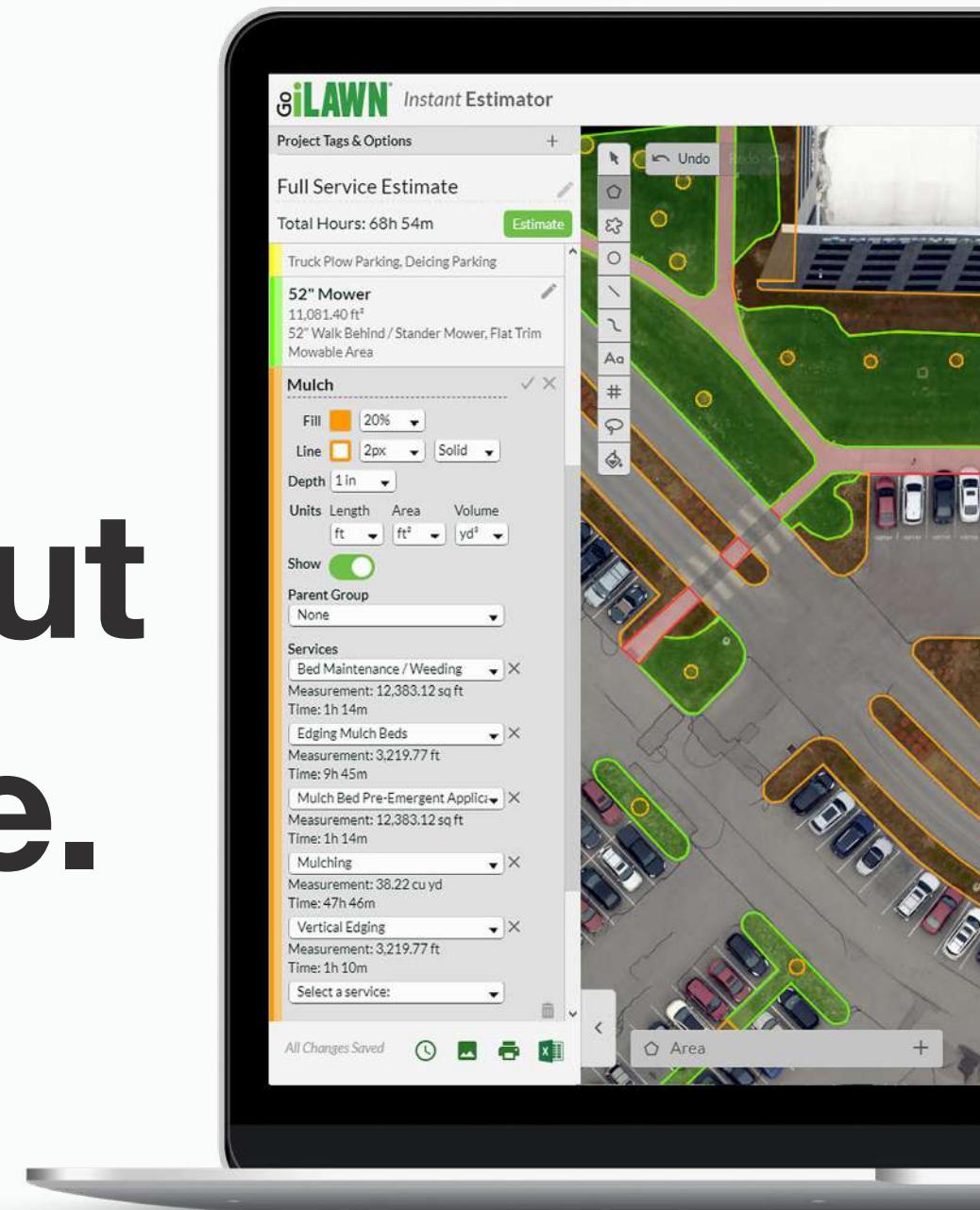
Systematically and cost effectively increase your marketing and sales activity. It's pure math. Let's say it normally takes you 10 proposals to win two customers. In a recession, you may need double or triple the prospects to win two customers.

Remember, smart dimes beat dumb dollars, especially in a recession. Many Go iLawn customers use our "view all parcels" tool to quickly find and measure all the prospects around their current jobs. They use our system to sell more jobs in less time by putting the law of averages on their side.

5 How can using Go iLawn benefit landscape contractors during a recession?

Go iLawn helps companies systematically play smarter offense and defense during a recession. Being cloud based software it lets you control your costs and be productive from any location. Plus, our just released Instant Estimator technology brings a new level of speed, accuracy and reliability to the estimating process. It's a powerful tool you can use to find, measure, estimate and win more profitable work in less time, in any market condition.

It's
About
Time.



Go iLAWN Instant Estimator™

What if you had access to a new and innovative Property Intelligence System? One that lets you precisely measure property while simultaneously estimating job time and materials - in real time.

Would you use it to gain a competitive advantage and win more profitable work faster than ever before?

How can you find out? [Get Your Free 14-Day Trial at GoLawn.com](https://www.golawn.com)

Q&A WITH THE EXPERT

SOIL HEALTH



Q&A WITH NICK diLORENZO

National Product Manager, Horizon Distributors

Winter is starting to surrender to Spring, and it is that time again where we are looking at what nutritional programs that we are going to use to support the plant material on our landscapes.

1 What type of fertilizers should one consider?

Many will continue to use “what we have always used” without consideration for new technologies that are available that offer advantages over cost. And often means products they perceive to be a better value because it’s the cheapest price per bag. But in reality, the bag that may be more expensive actually saves them money. The best solution for landscape professionals this spring is a slow release fertilizer, like TurfGro Plus 23-0-4. The slow growth provides more nutrition for the turf, and means less applications for the season.

2 So, what is fertility exactly?

Fertility is the combined effects of three major interacting components: the chemical, physical and biological characteristics of the soil. Soil chemistry is concerned with the availability of elements for plant growth in a given soil. Soil texture is the primary physical property

that affects fertility. A heavy clay soil has different properties and therefore requires different fertility decisions than a sandy or loamy soil. The biology of the soil is most often forgotten and often missed when selecting a fertilizer. Our soils are alive and feeding them with nutrients that sustain that life improves the health of the plants and turf. The biological components convert the nutrients to useable forms in the soil to relieve compaction and retain more water. A microbially active soil holds 4x more water - 16,000 gallons for every inch of soil per acre.

3 So how do you go learn the composition of the soil at your properties, and more importantly, do I have any potential liabilities with my current program?

I always recommend doing an irrigation suitability test and then a soil test, especially if it is a new property too. There is no better way to understand the needs of the soil.

4 Why both?

Because it is just a matter of time before your soil takes on the characteristics of the water, especially in the hot summer months when we irrigate frequently. In my travels across the United States talking to customers, I find that the biggest liability in our customers’ business is their water, and most don’t realize it. Water quality is more significant than many realize. Even if you know your soil’s chemistry and don’t consider the effect of the water, your solutions won’t have the same impact.

5 How much does a soil test and irrigation suitability test cost?

Typically, a reputable lab would charge about \$70-\$100 per water sample, and a good soil test that measures chemical status, texture, and biological runs about \$120 per cup of soil. Our soils are dynamic and they are ever changing, and to deliver the professional-quality turf your clients expect it is essential to know the chemistry of that soil. Horizon partners with several labs, and we’d be happy to help get them started.



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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT

IRRIGATION



Q&A WITH DAN PUTHUFF

Irrigation Product Manager, Horizon Distributors

1 Labor or Water Conservation – what is the bigger driver in the Residential Irrigation space right now?

Given that this is an election year, I am going to dodge that question by saying that both topics are really important! And the good news is that technology improvements in irrigation products allow for both labor efficiency while managing water more effectively.

2 Can you elaborate on that point?

Sure. Over the last several years, almost every irrigation manufacturer has come to market with a “Smart” Controller – meaning the contractor or homeowner can now connect to their irrigation systems remotely. In the residential space, this connection is primarily through a WiFi network with some manufacturers offering Cellular or 900Mhz Radio as an option. For the contractor this means that they can save time by remotely managing irrigation systems versus being on-site to make system changes or troubleshoot problems. Specific time-saving benefits offered by most manufacturers include the ability to manage/



program multiple controllers and receive diagnostic information via alerts for electrical issues including faulty wiring and solenoid shorts.

3 OK, I understand the labor savings benefit of a Smart Controller but what about saving water?

Horizon is a proud Distributor Partner of the EPA WaterSense program and all of the Smart Controllers we stock meet the WaterSense criteria for efficiency and performance. From a Water Conservation standpoint, these controllers pull weather or moisture data – either from an onsite weather station or moisture sensor, or from the internet. The controller then automatically adjusts system run times based on a predetermined algorithm that aligns with plant material needs, soil conditions, etc. These automatic

weather adjustments translate into water savings. In addition, several manufacturers now offer flow meters/sensors that constantly monitor for low-flow and excess-flow conditions caused by broken lines or heads. These events trigger alerts on the Smart Controller app which allow for a quick shut-down of the system (saving water and preventing property damage) and an easier diagnosis of the issue (labor savings).

4 What is Horizon doing to help your customers upgrade to Smart Controllers?

We have an entire “Get Connected” media campaign designed to get the word out and our Sales Center and Field Sales team are constantly educating our customers on these products. Homeowners are installing Smart Controllers and

our customer, the landscape contractor, can either be a part of the process or it will happen without them. For example, many smart controller companies are marketing directly on Amazon or their own websites and selling directly to the homeowner. We want our contractors to be a part of this decision process and bring the message of Smart Controllers and Water Conservation to their customers.

5 Any last thoughts?

Horizon is a wholly owned subsidiary of POOL-CORP, the largest distributor of Pool and Backyard products in the world. Through the Horizon, SCP, SPP and NPT networks, we offer product, service and labor solutions for any irrigation, landscape and pool application. We would love the opportunity to help you Get Connected!



Run out for irrigation parts, swing by for fertilizer and stop in for trimmer line—all without leaving your chair.

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Q&A WITH TROY SMITH

Manager, R&D Testing and EFI, Kawasaki

Kawasaki Electronic Fuel Injection (EFI) engines precisely match power to load as you mow, for constant blade speed in tough conditions. But power isn't the only thing these engines do well. From fuel efficient performance to routine maintenance, EFI engines offer several advantages over their carbureted counterparts.

1 Are EFI engines generally more fuel efficient than carbureted engines?

Generally speaking, yes. To stay fuel efficient while still meeting power demands, EFI engines use fuel injectors to control their fuel consumption at very precise levels. These EFI-controlled fuel injectors open at exactly the right time to deliver the precise amount of fuel needed in that moment. On the other hand, carbureted engines normally rely on an engine vacuum to draw fuel from the carburetor bowl. This works well but is almost always less precise and typically consumes more fuel.

2 Do EFI engines perform better than carbureted engines? If so, why?

Yes. Not only do EFI engines have more control over fuel efficiency and spark timing, some also control airflow to various parts of the engine via electronic throttles. With this additional control, the EFI system can help enhance performance by adjusting

spark, fuel, and air timing in the engine. This helps the EFI engine respond to changes in load and power faster than a carbureted engine, which is limited by fixed spark timing, fixed jetting, and the mechanical response of the engine's governor controlling air flow.

3 Is EFI engine maintenance harder to perform?

Though EFI engines have many of the same mechanical components as carbureted engines, EFI engines feature electronic tech and sensors that can help identify issues and reduce servicing time when using a diagnostic tool. The diagnostic tool looks at the information provided by these sensors and instantly determines what needs attention. Maintenance then moves to the repair procedure found in the service instructions. All told, this self-diagnostic capability can help reduce engine downtime, allowing EFI-powered equipment to be back in service potentially



more quickly than a carbureted engine's more traditional maintenance methods.

4 Do EFI engines have the same life span as a carbureted engine?

Not only are Kawasaki EFI engines tested to the same stringent standards as our proven carbureted engines, they also receive rigorous electronic testing to help

ensure our EFI engines will continue to perform at high levels for a very long time. Additionally, our EFI engines constantly monitor their sensors. If something is not normal, it will notify the operator with an engine service light. A prompt response to this notification can help ensure minimal downtime and service cost – helping prolong the life of the engine.

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THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF ANY MACHINE IS THE POWER BEHIND IT.

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Find us at KawasakiEnginesUSA.com.



Q&A WITH LISA GONZALEZ

Senior Product Marketing Manager, Lytx

For many lawn and landscape firms, terms like machine vision and artificial intelligence conjure up visions of a future where computers are taking over humans. **Lisa Gonzalez is a Senior Product Marketing Manager at Lytx.** She explains how these groundbreaking technologies use video to help landscape companies operate more efficiently, keep their landscapers safe and provide better customer service.

1 What is MV+AI?

It's the guardian for your vehicle and your landscaper. Machine Vision (MV) lets you see and recognize objects and human behavior using images. It's like eyes that record events as they happen. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is like the brain. It takes all that information and presents it to you as actionable insights that you can use to improve your business - whether it's related to safety, service or your bottom line.



2 How does MV+AI apply to distracted driving and protect your fleet?

Distracted driving is a critical issue for landscape businesses because of the need for landscapers to communicate throughout the day to get their work done. That's why so many companies have policies around the use of handheld devices while driving. But it's hard to know whether your landscapers are sticking to your policies because you can't be everywhere at once. That's where MV+AI can help.

3 How is AI trained to analyze risk level?

At Lytx, our AI is informed by more than 120 billion miles of driving data. This gigantic data set has trained Lytx's algorithms to understand and interpret just about every scenario, including different times of day, road conditions and road types that a landscaper could encounter. With this data set, Lytx has been able to create powerful algorithms that recognize driving risk and provide you supporting video clips that allow you to see the true risks in your fleet.

4 How does MV+AI work to improve safety and reduce claims?

Our MV+AI technology has been created specifically for driving applications can scan for road hazards, evaluate the environment and driving conditions, and alert drivers to potential risks. By identifying driving behavior that's correlated to collisions, MV+AI can help landscapers take proactive steps to prevent accidents. MV+AI can help fleet managers identify landscapers who need coaching to improve their driving behaviors, thereby reducing

injury and auto liability claims.

5 What else can MV+AI do for landscape companies?

MV+AI can be trained to reinforce courteous driving habits such as following distance. Your landscape vehicles are your mobile billboards, and your landscapers interact with more potential customers when they are driving than when they are providing service. MV+AI can help make sure they are driving in a way that reflects your brand and protects your reputation.

Equipping Your Business for Success with Video

With the right technology and data-driven insights, you can gain a more holistic view of your fleet operations, manage your safety culture and make dramatic improvements to safety, productivity and costs. Help ensure your entire fleet gets home safely with video.



COLLISIONS

With video telematics, you know exactly when, where and what happened.



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Video evidence helps you confirm your fleet's compliance to regulations.



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Operate smarter with the ability to predict risk and maximize efficiency.

Visit lytx.com/lawnandlandscape to learn how you can optimize your fleet.

Q&A WITH THE EXPERT

SPREADER/SPRAYER



Q&A WITH TOM JESSEN

President, PermaGreen

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

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 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?

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?

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?

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

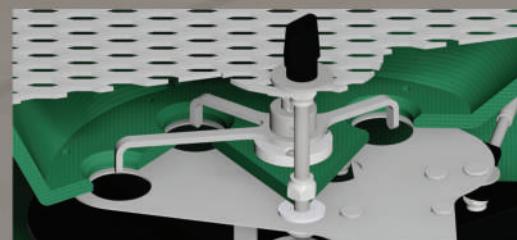
both small and large properties. If you want to specialize in sports turf with wide-open areas with no trimming, then a larger-capacity machine might be good for you.

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 When should I use edging?

A well-planned landscape design is created by a series of lines. Whether these lines are curved or straight, it is imperative to the design that they remain crisp throughout the project's lifetime. In order to maintain the lines that create the landscape design, it is necessary to use a proper landscape edging.

The correct usage of landscape edging can save the user time, labor, and money over the lifetime of the project, as well as ensure the design remains visually appealing. Without the presence of an edging, a landscape design can begin to migrate

over time, causing the design to lose its original intent.

With this in mind, edging is important in every project where two different textures or media meet. It is important in these situations to maintain the line of separation and keep each adjacent media in place. This is beneficial to both the structural integrity and the visual aesthetics of the project.

2 What is the best material for edging products?

There is a large variety of materials used in landscape edgings manufactured in today's market. In order to achieve maximum performance, it is important to understand the difference in

the various edging materials, including their limitations.

Years of performance has proven that aluminum is the best choice for nearly all edging installations. Aluminum is a durable, easily formed, lightweight metal that is perfect for landscape use.

Aluminum is non-toxic, has excellent corrosion resistance, and is 100% recyclable. Because aluminum is a tough metal that will not rust, rot, or crack, it is extremely well suited to resist the demands of Mother Nature, professional lawn maintenance, and home power equipment. When properly installed, aluminum edgings and restraints will never need to be replaced and

will remain beautiful for the life of your project.

Other popular materials such as steel and plastic edgings have various troublesome issues, including aesthetic, strength, durability, and longevity issues.

3 Does one type of edging work for every application?

Edging is definitely not a one-size-fits-all type of product. Each application can have unique characteristics and needs, making it important to use an edging that can meet these demands.

We have seen a single project call for up to 7 varieties of edging to achieve all of its various design needs.

While using a single product for every application would simplify logistics, forcing a one-size-fits-all solution onto an application introduces manifold inefficiencies into the landscape/hardscape construction arena.

When choosing the best edging for any application, there are many decisions to make, but choosing the right product the first time will save a lot of time and labor. Landscape edging is an important part of maintaining your design, and should not be a decision taken lightly.



EVERY LINE MATTERS TO US

OUT OF RESPECT FOR YOUR LINES, OUR EDGING WORKS

We believe in the importance of lines in every landscape design, and have dedicated ourselves to creating products that will maintain those lines for generations. We have designed, engineered, and manufactured the world's best application-specific aluminum edging and restraint products that perform at the highest standards in the industry.

Your lines matter to us because they matter to you.

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landscapes > hardscapes > green build



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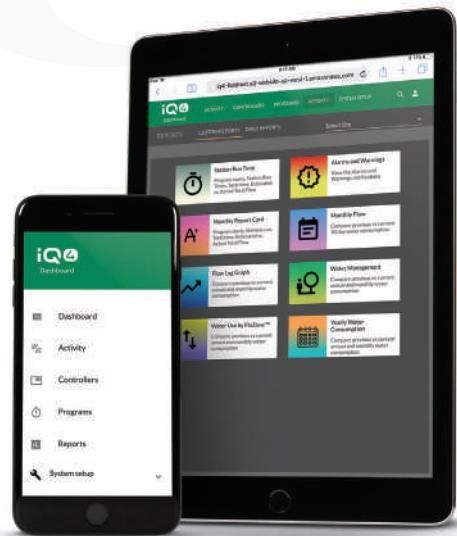


Q&A WITH THE EXPERT IRRIGATION CONTROLLER



Q&A WITH RICK MALKIN

Product Manager, Rain Bird



daily weather data to automatically adjust their systems to apply only the minimum amount of water required by plant material. They keep the control of the system in one location, so coordinating water management among multiple irrigation specialists is much easier.

Central control systems also make it possible to quickly react to potentially disastrous situations. For example, when a pipe breaks in an irrigation system, it can waste a large amount of water and lead to costly landscape damage. Central control systems can monitor piping systems and react immediately to reduce or eliminate waste and damage.

Many water managers with large irrigation systems must report water use and savings, a task which is easily done with a central control system using automated reports and notifications. An easy-to-use central control gives you the ability to quickly and easily apply irrigation theory to your system and generate water savings for your project without costly, extensive training.

3 Rain Bird recently introduced the new IQ⁴ central control

platform. What features make this new system special or unique among its competition?

IQ4 can be used on irrigation projects of any size. This new system is easy to use with a modern, user-friendly interface that water managers can quickly learn and master, unlike other systems that require extensive training and complex programming. Along with Rain Bird's ESP-LX controller line, IQ4 manages each station to irrigate based on daily evapotranspiration (ET) rate. The user identifies a weather source, and IQ4 takes care of the rest, adjusting station runtimes each day to only water what the plants require, resulting in significant water savings. Each irrigation system can be fitted with flow-sensing equipment which IQ4 uses to look for pipe breaks or clogs and respond to them immediately. Water managers can choose from IQ4's broad range of reports and provide water use information to their supervisors or local water agencies as needed. IQ4 also sends notifications to alert users when there's a potential issue so they can fix it before it becomes a major problem.

1 What are currently some of the most significant challenges to efficient irrigation at large sites like school campuses, HOAs, parks and sports fields? Efficient irrigation starts by coordinating your irrigation control system and your water application equipment – rotors, sprays and drip systems. After you've developed an optimum watering schedule, being able to control your irrigation system remotely allows you to meet the challenges of managing irrigation at these larger sites.

Some of the most significant challenges facing water managers at large sites include adjusting irrigation runtimes to match the current weather,

multiple coworkers adjusting irrigation runtimes – often without notifying others – reacting to problem situations and tracking water use. An even bigger challenge is having the right water management tools that are also easy to use. A system that is too complex or difficult to master will many times be neglected and not produce efficient water use as planned.

2 Central control systems are designed to make managing irrigation at commercial sites easier. Can you please explain what they are and how they work? Central control systems allow irrigation managers to use

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RAIN BIRD



Q&A WITH NICOLE REATHERFORD

Digital Marketing Manager, Real Green Systems

1 If a client has a limited budget, what digital marketing services do you recommend them utilizing to start growing their business?

For clients with limited marketing budgets, I suggest looking for programs with added value - like helpful services that are bundled together. I always recommend reputation management, which should include reviews and online listing management. Reviews and online listings are crucial when it comes to marketing your business, and managing them is made much easier with a program that enables you to track and handle them both on one platform.

Reviews, specifically Google reviews, are so important: They attract new customers, provide a gauge to measure the happiness of current customers and, reviews play a factor in Google's Search Algorithm, which can help your site get more organic traffic. Try carving out some time during peak season, when the lawns in your market look the best, to ask for reviews. If a customer says no don't be afraid to ask again.

Organic Search or Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is how your website shows up

TRY CARVING OUT SOME TIME DURING PEAK SEASON, WHEN THE LAWNS IN YOUR MARKET LOOK THE BEST, TO ASK FOR REVIEWS. IF A CUSTOMER SAYS NO DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK AGAIN.

"naturally" when a potential customer enters keywords or phrases into a search engine. This space is constantly changing, so staying on top of your information is essential; plus, with larger companies taking up the top placements on listing sites like Yelp, Angie's List, Yp.com and Home Advisor, it's critical to be found on those sites as well.

2 How does paid media help grow a business and when is a good time to run a paid media campaign?

With 90% of people starting their shopping journey online, the goal of digital marketing is to get found, drive interest and create a favorable action like a form fill or a call. Paid media is a great way to make sure

your company comes up on Google during peak times of year. It will drive traffic to your site through paid ads that may display in searches on Google and other search engines, or social networks like Facebook and Instagram. Since we are a Google partner we can provide a custom quote that shows the search volume in your area along with a recommended budget. We pride ourselves on being very transparent with the cost of your campaign and provide analytics tools as well as a call tracking number to listen to calls. There's a reason our customers come back year after year: Our paid search campaigns delivered more than 9,000 conversions and generated nearly 10,000 calls.

3 What role does automation play in digital marketing strategies?

Automating processes makes accomplishing your digital marketing goals easier. Setting up campaigns to run in the background and managing communications to your customers using triggering flags to automatically send estimates, after-service emails and pre-pay notifications is not only effective, but it helps save valuable time

that can be spent on other aspects of your business.

4 How do traditional print and digital marketing technology work together?

It's always more powerful when you can market your business across several different channels. You can create and send a postcard campaign or prepay letter that will point customers to a link or offer code on your website. Once they visit your site, you will have their data, which you can then use to upsell them additional services.

5 What makes Real Green Systems digital marketing strategies successful?

We know the industry, our specialists are dedicated to their craft, we are a Google and Facebook partner, and we offer tools that other agencies can't. In addition, all of our products are designed to work together, creating a comprehensive suite of solutions. Companies come to Real Green Systems because of our incredibly talented team and our wide range of expertise. As a manager, it's very important to me to have folks on the team who are passionate about their work and helping our customers grow.

Get found. Get sales.

Multi-channel digital marketing delivers your service message right where your ideal audience lives: their phones, tablets and laptops.

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Keep track of all your marketing campaigns with the Command Center dashboard from anywhere on any web-enabled device.



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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT INSECTICIDES



Q&A WITH MATT GIESE

Technical Services Manager, Syngenta

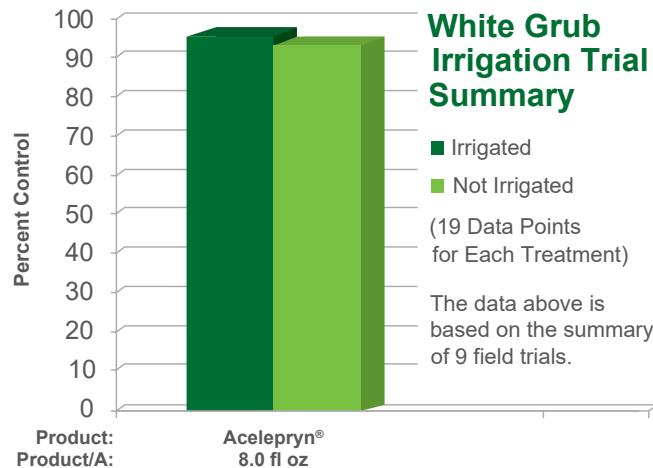
1 What benefits does Acelepryn® insecticide offer lawn care operators (LCOs) to give their business a unique advantage?

Acelepryn offers season-long control of multiple insects with one application including the longest-lasting grub control on the market. This length of control can help reduce call-backs from homeowners. It can also be applied early, in April, without the need to water in, so LCOs can rest assured their customers' lawns are protected from the start. In addition, Acelepryn has shown no adverse effects on non-target organisms, such as honeybees and butterflies, and can be applied to landscape ornamentals.

2 In addition to controlling grubs all season, what other insects can Acelepryn prevent?

Along with controlling grubs, Acelepryn can protect lawns from additional insects like billbugs and turf caterpillars. While less common than white grubs, these insects can still cause substantial damage.

Billbug larvae feed inside the grass stem then drop to the soil surface to feed on the crown and roots of the plant,



making them difficult to spot. Damage is identified by tufts of turf that are easily pulled from the surface and usually appear in late June through early August, so preventive applications targeting larval development are key. Meanwhile, by foliar feeding, caterpillars (including sod webworms, fall armyworms and cutworms) can cause patches of damaged, dead or dying turf that rapidly increase in size, causing severe damage one blade at a time. Preventing infestations will severely limit turfgrass damage and speed up plant recovery.

3 How does Acelepryn work to protect lawns from these key insects?

Acelepryn is powered by chlorantraniliprole, a unique, alternative ingredient that

provides long-lasting control. Once applied, the treatment moves into the soil and roots, and up into the plant stem, protecting turf from insects below the surface that you cannot see. Unlike most other products for lawns, irrigation or rainfall is not required after a treatment is applied, which can save you time and avoid homeowner noncompliance.

4 Some expensive applications occur early in the season.

Does Syngenta offer any financial solutions?

A key benefit of Acelepryn is that one application can provide the season-long control you and your customers need. In addition, as part of GreenTrust® 365, customers can defer payment until July with Sum-

merPay™ terms. This provides flexibility to manage expenses more easily throughout the season. For instance, if you qualified for GreenTrust 365, you can use Acelepryn for grub control between April and mid-June, and you can choose to pay any time before July. Also, if you purchase 10 gallons or more of Acelepryn, Syngenta offers a volume discount.

5 What other tools and resources does Syngenta provide to help LCOs grow their businesses?

Syngenta offers free marketing materials for LCOs to use with customers to help explain services that control grubs, as well as turf diseases, fire ants and mosquitoes. To order these materials, visit GrowWithSyngenta.com. In addition, we have soil temperature maps and growing degree day tools available to help monitor for common insects found in specific areas. They can be accessed at GreenCastOnline.com/AgronomicAlerts.

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SEIZE SEASON-LONG CONTROL

Acelepryn® insecticide performs all season-long.

One application provides the longest-lasting control of grubs, billbugs, turf caterpillars and more.



Offers an alternative to pyrethroids and neonicotinoids with an innovative mode of action



Has shown no adverse effects on beneficial and non-target organisms like honeybees*



Offers the flexibility to apply early without the need to water in

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Insecticide

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*Jonathan L. Larson, Carl T. Redmond and Daniel A. Potter, SCI. September 2011.

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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT
COMPACT UTILITY LOADER



Q&A WITH JAY THAKER

Marketing Manager, Toro

1 What do you think the future of the compact utility loader sector will look like? What are some trends you anticipate?

With major advancements in technology in the compact utility loader (CUL) sector, we anticipate that technology with a purpose will continue to be a topic of discussion in the equipment we will see moving forward. Specifically, we believe there will be a rise in electric equipment in the marketplace. For example, the brand-new revolutionary e-Dingo 500™ provides an unprecedented combination of power, versatility and durability with zero exhaust emissions. It's safe to say that this battery-powered e-Dingo doesn't sacrifice quality or performance. Our engineers wanted to build the e-Dingo to allow contractors and construction professionals to reap all of the benefits and power of a standard CUL with zero exhaust emissions.

2 What are some of the main features of the e-Dingo?

There are several features of the e-Dingo that we think will help contractors to increase efficiency and performance. For example, not only is this

revolutionary all-electric CUL extremely powerful, but it also reduces labor and time, when compared to traditional hauling methods, thanks to a maximum rated operating capacity of 515 pounds. The list of benefits for the e-Dingo doesn't stop there. When our team thought of building this machine, maneuverability was also a hallmark of the new e-Dingo. Toro's 4-Paw® independent 4-wheel drive system and true spin-turn performance allow for outstanding control in tight spaces.

3 What attachments are available for the new e-Dingo?

Simply put, most attachments that a contractor would use on a standard Dingo compact utility loader are also compatible with the new e-Dingo. Some of those attachments are: a standard bucket, narrow bucket, light materials bucket, adjustable forks, multi-purpose tool, hydraulic breaker, grapple, leveler, utility blade and an auger attachment — just to name a few. With such a wide range of attachments at the contractor's fingertips, the e-Dingo proves to be as versatile as it is innovative.

4 Can you tell us about what features are engineered into the new e-Dingo in regard to sustainability?

In addition to building a powerful machine that features zero exhaust emissions, the e-Dingo also allows operators to work in several power modes to conserve energy. For example, the Auto Idle feature automatically saves energy by powering off the motor after it's been idle for a certain amount of time. Additionally, the e-Dingo shifts to low idle after five seconds of non-use and shuts

off when it's not in use for over 30 seconds. When users want to restart the machine, they can instantly restart it by double-tapping the traction control lever.

About Jay Thaker

Jay Thaker is the rental marketing manager at Toro. Thaker holds a Bachelor of Electronics Engineering degree from Oxford Brookes University and is responsible for marketing strategy and execution, channel development and product development. Additionally, Thaker leads the expanded marketing and development efforts of Toro's electric product development projects and works closely with channel partners and end-users to ensure Toro products meet their expectations.



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