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2024 BEST PLACES TO WORK

This year, 23 companies scored high enough to make the 2024 list. We feature some of the winners inside.

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Build for the future



We're proud to once again be a part of the Best Places to Work program, highlighting companies who share our commitment to building a positive future for the green industry. WorkWave is dedicated to supporting companies like yours who not only want to push boundaries and embrace cutting-edge technology, but who are working to create sustainable, healthy and positive working environments — something that is increasingly important as our industry continues to evolve.

The green industry has always been a dynamic one, with frequently shifting competitive terrain, a rapidly changing market environment and a demanding, discerning customer base. Add to those challenges the ongoing effects of industry trends and advancements — a continued focus on acquisitions and mergers, the influence of private equity and an increased reliance on AI and automation — and you have a portrait of an industry in near-constant flux. This is why it's more important than ever for green industry companies to find, hire and retain the best talent available. When your organization prioritizes employees, fosters trust and growth, and creates an environment where talent can thrive, you have created something special: a best place to work.

Our company prides ourselves on our industry knowledge and rich history, but we are equally focused on the horizon. We are constantly exploring new avenues to enhance our offerings, from streamlining the sales process to revolutionizing equipment and marketing strategies. One of our most exciting developments is the upcoming launch of our Customer Notifications product, an essential tool that will not only separate marketing and transactional emails but also ensure compliance with tightened email regulations. By prioritizing the delivery of your most important communications, Customer Notifications empowers you to stay connected with your clients in a meaningful way.

In addition, we recently introduced our brand-new Dynamic Routing technology, the first solution of its kind designed specifically for the green industry. This revolutionary solution optimizes routes, reduces fuel consumption and improves efficiency, ensuring that your operations run smoothly and cost-effectively. As we look to the future, we are exploring a range of AI-enabled technologies, from chatbots to customer service enablement to satellite measurements. These innovations hold the promise of transforming our industry, providing new insights and driving growth for years to come.

Our software is not just built for lawn care; it's built for your growth and your future. With RealGreen by WorkWave, you can trust that you're getting the real deal — solutions designed specifically to meet the evolving needs of your business and propel you toward success. Congratulations to this year's honorees on the impressive businesses you are building and the valuable contributions you are making to our great industry. You should be proud of your accomplishments.

All the best,
David F. Giannetto
CEO of WorkWave

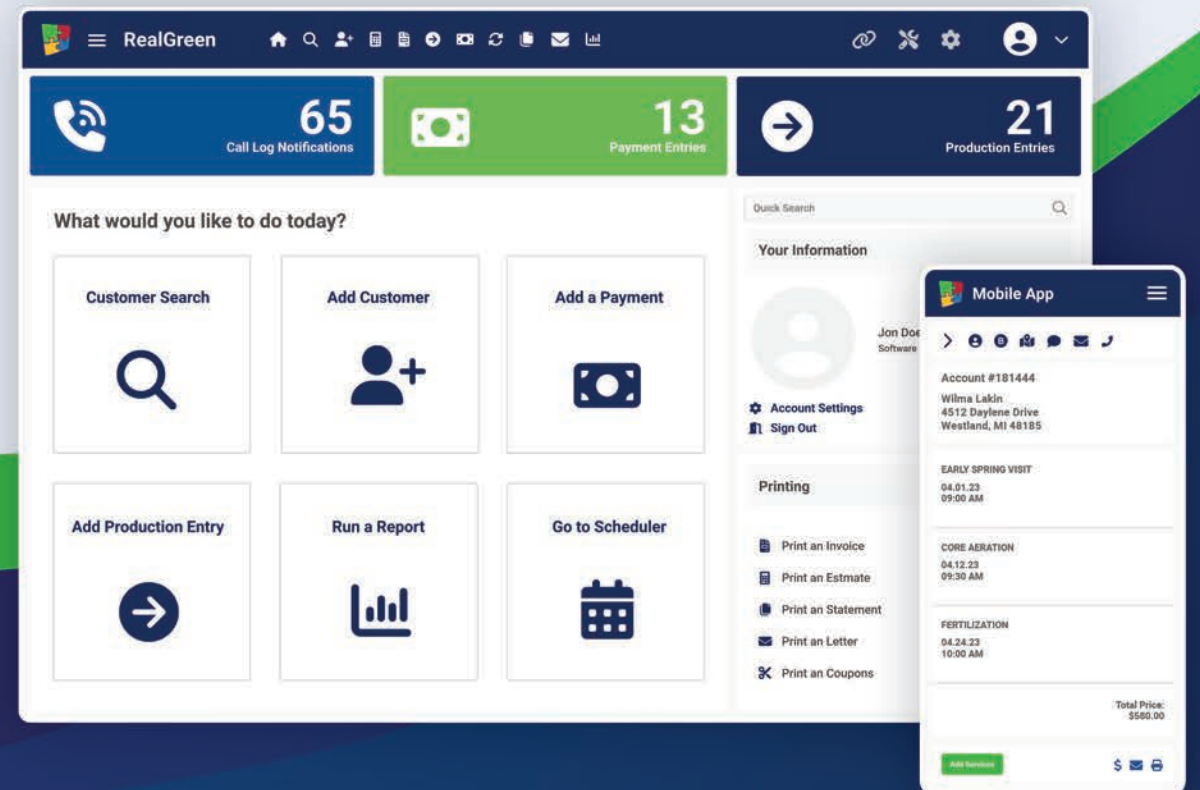


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SUCCESS IN THE CENTENNIAL STATE

Over the course of two decades, **Fisk Lawnsapes** is hitting its stride as an employer of choice.

Story by Jimmy Miller • Photos by Thistle and Pine Photography

Ben Fisk started Fisk Lawnsapes in 2002.

Back when Ben Fisk serviced neighborhood lawns with a used mower he bought at Goodwill, he learned the most valuable lesson in business — relationships are key.

Creating relationships with clients is critical, like when Fisk sold his first landscape installation job to someone who already paid him to mow her lawn. She trusted Fisk because of his track record of solid maintenance work.

The job also helped Fisk create relationships with others in the industry. He met folks who knew how to stamp concrete for edging and others who designed landscapes as a living. His friend's dad even loaned Fisk a skid loader.

But perhaps no relationships mattered more than those Fisk had with his employees. Two decades later, Fisk still looks back on that job and knows there are things he'd do differently, like his plant selections or where he placed them.

Even still, the biggest takeaway was that he'd need to start thinking about the quality of the people representing his company.

"I hired my friends at the time, as any good high schooler would do. Some of that did not go so well. I cared about it more than they did," Fisk says. "As I look back on that job, one of the takeaways is, it's often about who you know. A relationship is how business gets done."

Today, Fisk Lawnsapes in Colorado Springs, Colorado, employs 45 people and is on pace to pull in \$4.5 million in revenue this year. It offers its employees a matching retirement account, mental health services and additional compensation for external training that the company also reimburses.

Fisk admits it's been a process finding the right team and implementing all these changes. He estimates he's conducted over 1,000 interviews with prospective employees over the last 22 years, but he believes the old adage is true — Rome wasn't built in a day.

"Culture is not built overnight; it has been a gradual change," Fisk says. "There's still been times... we've hired the wrong person, but with each of those, we've done a good job autopsying that."

CATCHING THE RIGHT CANDIDATES. When Gene and Diane Carroll moved from their HOA in New Jersey all the way out west to Black Forest, Colorado, they found Fisk Lawnsapes to help build up their dream home.

First it was a retaining wall, and this summer, it'll be additional outdoor lighting and pouring cement in the back by their greenhouse.

Their last impression from landscapers came from the guys who serviced their property in New Jersey. Diane says she could tell they didn't care about the role they played in keeping the properties beautiful.

"You can tell they like working with Ben," she says of the Fisk Lawnsapes employees, adding that they've been such a pleasure to work with, she's invited them inside for lunch. "I've been very happy with their work."

Gene adds that just recently, when he called Fisk to schedule their new summer project, Fisk came out himself to walk the property with the Carrolls to understand the scope of the project.

OVERALL RANKINGS

RANK	COMPANY LISTING	US/GA EMPLOYEES
1	Frederico Outdoor Living	17
2	LawnSavers Plant Health Care	20
3	Fisk Lawns LLC (DBA Fisk Lawnsapes)	33
4	Western Landscape, Inc.	35
5	Good Nature Organic Lawn Care	50
6	Go Green Lawn and Pest	40
7	Mullin	140
8	Don's Lawn	32
9	Ziehler Lawn Care	23
10	Reinhart Landscaping & Snow	75
11	WillowGrove Landscape LLC	17
12	The Pattie Group	64
13	Para Space Landscaping Inc.	157
14	Encore Landscape Management	198
15	Gras Lawn	70
16	Stephens Landscaping Professionals	53
17	Alki Point Partners, LLC. dba Classic Nursery & Landscape dba Classic Landscaping + Nursery	32
18	Garden Design Inc	81
19	Senske Family of Companies	896
20	Monarch Landscape Management	141
21	Heath Outdoor, LLC	44
22	ProGreen Turf & Landscape Inc.	44
23	Visterra	526

ABOUT THE RANKINGS

Lawn & Landscape partnered with the Best Companies Group to find out who are the Best Landscape and Lawn Care Companies to Work For. Best Companies Group surveyed employees on the following areas: leadership; corporate culture and communications; role satisfaction; work environment; relationship with supervisor; training, development and resource; pay and benefits and overall engagement. The companies below met the score requirements to be on the list.

2024
**BEST PLACES
TO WORK**
FISK LAWNSCAPES



Fisk Lawnscape employs 45 people and projects \$4.5 million in revenue this year.

“For the landscapers (in New Jersey), it was a job, it wasn’t a business. They were hired and they just did their work. There was no loyalty,” Gene says. “(Fisk) didn’t just send somebody here. He came himself to see it.”

Fisk brought in Katelyn Milanes earlier this year to help him bring on more star employees. Milanes worked in New York City for five years, working in advertising across platforms like social media and television. When she moved out to Colorado, she didn’t know she’d become Fisk Lawnscape’s director of culture and employee engagement.

There’s been a learning curve in learning the company — and in learning the green industry itself. Milanes says the passion she feels industry-wide is especially magnified at Fisk Lawnscape, where she immediately noted the enthusiastic leadership team in her first interview. She noticed they knew every single team member and their own personal interests and families.

“I was also really drawn to this healthy core value system that we have in place, and we have a really impressive code of conduct that elevates Fisk in the industry for sure,” she says.

BUILDING THE PLAYBOOK. That code of conduct includes lessons Fisk drew from the book “The Ideal Team Player” by Patrick Lencioni, which outlines a model that emphasizes “humble, hungry and smart” employees.

“I read that book five or six years ago,” Fisk says. “That completely revolutionized how we run as a company.”

Fisk uses the model when interviewing candidates. He admits humility is hard to gauge, but he can quickly find folks who seem arrogant versus those who want to keep crafting their skills. The hungry speaks specifically to work ethic — “we want employees who bring 110% every day” — and the smart is all about having emotional intelligence when dealing with clients and those around the office.

“Can you understand a client’s face when they don’t say anything, but they don’t like a tree you just put in?” Fisk says. “Will you then ask emotionally smart questions to fix the problem?”

Fisk adds that they’ve tacked on other core values like character and competence. He says hiring prospects don’t need green industry experience if they’re coming in as general laborers, but anyone they want to hire for a foreman position must have that experience.

It’s not a completely foolproof plan: there have certainly been bad hires since Fisk started applying this model.

“Desperation hires are never good hires,” he says. “As my company was growing, we needed people, and we needed people bad.”

At one point, they had three open jobs and just three applicants. They hired them all and came to regret it. Today, when he goes to hire, Fisk says leadership asks themselves if they’re hiring out of desperation or because it’s a good fit.

This one question has helped dramatically — earlier this spring, Fisk Lawnscape had five candidates who made it to a second round of interviews and a couple who advanced to the trial workday out in the field. Fisk says they only offered a role to one crew lead position but didn’t hire elsewhere.

Ben Fisk says he’s conducted over 1,000 interviews in his 22-year span working in the green industry.

“We’d rather be a foreman short than hire the wrong foreman,” Fisk says.

HONESTY HOUR. Milanes remembers the interview process herself. She says her interviews with Fisk and with the company’s Chief Operations Officer, Jacob Stankich, included some questions that left no room for anything but complete transparency. She was coming from a position working at an influencer marketing firm, so the Fisk Lawnscape leadership team pointed out that her possible new role included lots of human resources responsibilities.

“(They asked), ‘How do you plan on navigating a new role that you have not previously worked in before?’ or ‘How do you plan on learning things where we don’t necessarily have other people where you can learn these specific tasks from?’” Milanes says, adding that her role was freshly created and she’s the first one to fill it at the company. “Those types of pointed questions were really great for me because they’re raw and honest.”

That honesty, in turn, also empowered Milanes to ask tough questions of her own, like embracing the fact she didn’t have much HR experience and asking, “What about that concerns you most?” or “Why would I not get this job if we didn’t move forward today?”

“Being able to have those honest back-and-forth conversations really elevated our level of trust between myself and Jacob and myself and Ben,” Milanes says. “I would say from a communication perspective, transparency is key.”

ON THE FLY. Milanes likens her role — which she started seven months ago — to building a train as it runs.

That means she’s helping Fisk Lawnscape roll out some new initiatives in addition to what they’ve already done to land on Lawn & Landscape’s Best Places to Work list. This includes their new Core Value Champions and High Quality Craftsman programs.

For the first program, the leadership team is trying to highlight employees who live out the company’s core values. “We will get the opportunity to celebrate our crew members when they’re succeeding in these core value areas,” she says. “Then on the flip side, we also are getting the opportunity to provide resources and support to the crew



Fisk Lawnscape has renovated a 1917 farm house for company use.

SMALL EMPLOYER CATEGORY
(15 - 49 US/CA EMPLOYEES)

RANK	COMPANY LISTING	US/CA EMPLOYEES
1	Frederico Outdoor Living	17
2	LawnSavers Plant Health Care	20
3	Fisk Lawns LLC (DBA Fisk Lawnscape)	33
4	Western Landscape, Inc.	35
5	Go Green Lawn and Pest	40
6	Don's Lawn	32
7	Ziehler Lawn Care	23
8	WillowGrove Landscape LLC	17
9	Alki Point Partners, LLC. dba Classic Nursery & Landscape dba Classic Landscaping + Nursery	32
10	Heath Outdoor, LLC	44
11	ProGreen Turf & Landscape Inc.	44

Likewise, the High Quality Craftsman program will enable Fisk Lawnscape’s best employees to lead lunch-and-learns, and Milanes will help bring in expert speakers to talk about different aspects of the business.

The company also added a mental health benefit last year, where they offer 10 sessions of therapy entirely covered by the company.

Fisk Lawnscape even offers a 3% IRA match and a clear pay increase structure, rewarding tenure at the company. Fisk adds that they now offer to pay for certifications, whether it’s National Association of Landscape Professionals, Irrigation Association or somewhere else. Anyone who receives certifications also gets a pay raise.

Beyond that, Fisk adds that they offer a corporate membership to a climbing gym. They also have a remodeled 5,000 square foot shop positioned in a farm house built in 1917. “It’s just an incredible blessing for our team space,” Fisk says, adding that they bought that space around 2016 and had to do quite a bit of renovating.

“I think if you start with culture, a lot of the other things fall into place,” Fisk says. “We’ve done a lot of intentional work around that the last three or four years, wanting to be a destination company.” **L&L**

The author is an associate editor with Lawn & Landscape magazine.



PHOTOS: THISTLE AND PINE PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO: THISTLE AND PINE PHOTOGRAPHY

ONLY AS GOOD AS THE TEAM

Good Nature Organic Lawn Care has grown to eight branches by building a strong foundation of team members dedicated to the same core values.

By Kim Lux

For one of Good Nature Organic Lawn Care’s longest standing employees, the company being named a Best Place to Work seems only natural.

“It validates what I’ve known for a long time,” says Lawn Specialist Dan Norris. “It’s a great place to work. One of the biggest things is that the people here all have a similar mission. A lot of companies have mission statements to be a great company, but ours is to make the world a better place and to lessen chemicals going into our water and environment.”

Good Nature is in Cleveland, Ohio and was started over two decades ago by Founder Alec McClennan in 1999. For a long time, it was McClennan, Norris and maybe one or two other employees as the fledgling business tried to take flight in the organic lawn care space.

Nowadays, the sustainability-forward company is up to about 50 employees across eight branches canvassing the Midwest.

DAYS GONE BY. McClennan says his drive to start an organic lawn care company started at a young age.

“I grew up in the country and was kind of an indentured servant to my parents,” he jokes. “My dad always dreamed about having a nice lawn. He’d go buy all the stuff and I was the guy who had to do it all.”

It wasn’t until after one high school biology class that McClennan says he didn’t want to use the products his father was purchasing.

“He told me then I had to figure out something else,” he says. “So, I went to the library and started learning about other ways to take care of grass.”

Fast forward to McClennan graduating from college, and rather than pursuing an engineering degree like he originally planned —



Alec McClennan founded Good Nature Organic Lawn Care in 1999.

TEAM PHOTO: STEPHANIE ANTAL

PHOTO: STEPHANIE ANTAL / SIGNAGE PHOTO COURTESY OF GOOD NATURE

McClennan decided to go into business for himself.

“I made a list of businesses that I could start, and an organic lawn care company was something I thought people would be interested in,” he says. “I had a sales job and started the company in my spare time. It was a fun challenge.”

Norris says he remembers being there from the beginning.

“I’m going into my 23rd year with the company. When I started, basically we had one truck and one other person working here,” he says. “I had no lawn care or landscaping background. I needed a job, but I wanted to be in something that was sustainable and organic.”

Through Good Nature’s decades-long history, Norris says the company’s culture has only continued to improve.

“A lot of things have changed over the years,” he says. “From the very beginning, Alec was always conscious about trying to hire good people and treating them fairly. He was trying to build a culture of togetherness and working as a team.”

But building a thriving culture isn’t easy — especially for a young company just starting out.

“When we were a really small company, we didn’t offer health insurance, a 401K or a lot of those things that are somewhat expected of most companies,” Norris says. “All that has come to fruition. We have a 401K and a company match with the 401K. We have health insurance... we have paid vacation and there’s just a lot of things that evolved over the years.

“Maybe 20 years ago I wouldn’t have said it’s a Best Place to Work, but I did always believe in the mission and the goal of the company,” he adds. “That’s really important to me.”

CRITICAL CORE VALUES. Norris and McClennan say what helped build the culture up at Good Nature was establishing solid mission statements and core values.

“We have our core values, our mission and our customer service vision, and those are the things we always refer back to,” McClennan says.

Norris adds the company has made it a habit to have monthly meetings where

MEDIUM EMPLOYER CATEGORY (50 - 99 US/CA EMPLOYEES)

RANK	COMPANY LISTING	US/CA EMPLOYEES
1	Good Nature Organic Lawn Care	50
2	Reinhart Landscaping & Snow	75
3	The Pattie Group	64
4	Gras Lawn	70
5	Stephens Landscaping Professionals	53
6	Garden Design Inc	81

the team discusses the core values, what they mean to them and how they can live by them. Good Nature’s core values are as follows: Improve continuously, Care, Sustainability, Attitude, Focus on the clients and Effective communication.

“We have an acronym — ‘I C SAFE’ to describe them,” Norris says.

But it’s not as simple as just naming off the core values or their acronym. McClennan says the true value comes in employees working, and living, by these values.

“We try to recognize people who are living those core values,” he says. “There’s a moment for that in all our weekly meetings. We also evaluate people on core values as well when we do our monthly scorecards. It’s a way to be consistent with it.”

Annually, six Good Nature employees receive Core Value Awards — one for each of the values instilled in the company.



Employees at Good Nature are reviewing the core values as a team monthly, and applying them on the job daily.

“We let people vote to see who is most exemplifying each core value and at the end of the year we give out those awards,” McClennan explains. “It’s a big deal to be chosen from your peers. It really means something.”

One core value Norris feels has struck a chord with every employee is sustainability.

“I think some people came to the company not necessarily with sustainability in mind, but they’ve adapted and bought into that culture just because of how much we talk about it,” he says.

Whether its sustainability, attitude or another core value, McClennan says by focusing on those, he hopes it helps crews out in the field stick to a kind of moral compass.

“You make a million decisions every day and we try to give them some guideposts so they can think about how Good Nature would hope they’d handle it,” he says. “If they know our core values and our mission...they’ll make the right decision.”

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION GUARANTEED. Customers seem to be pleased with the way Good Nature crews are using the core values out in the field.

“I love that we get a lot of positive feedback from our clients about our team members doing things and going out of their way to make the customer happy,” McClennan says.

“I think that’s a result of us being pretty selective about who we bring in but also doing the best we can to make our employees’ experiences the best possible.”

Rob Hermanowski says he's enjoyed the work Good Nature has done on his Cleveland, Ohio, area home for decades now.

"We've been a customer of theirs for over 20 years," he says. "We were looking for a more organic lawn care system. We've stuck with them for the long-haul now, and we've been very happy."

While Hermanowski says he knew signing on with organic lawn care would be an investment, the evidence in Good Nature's effectiveness was evident when he and his family took a break from services.

"Maybe five years into it, I recognized this wasn't the cheapest option out here, and wondered what would happen if we cut back a bit," he recalls. "So, we did, and I regretted it greatly because our weed control issues got severely worse. But it ended up serving as proof that what they were doing was really helping."

One thing Hermanowski says he appreciates most about the company is its knowledgeable staff and their communication.

"They've always been very communicative in regard to letting us know when they're going to be out or when they were just out, and what to expect," he says. "The employees all come off as both happy and knowledgeable. They should be proud of working for a company like Good Nature."

Norris says it's keeping clients like Hermanowski and others happy that's led to the success of the company.

"We always say if we treat the clients right, they're going to treat us right," he says. "We want to treat the clients like we would want to be treated and we want to be a good company to work with. That's why we have so many good Google reviews and we've had so many referrals."

"In the lawn care industry, that can be a little tough," Norris adds. "There are so many things that are out of our control. There's always a percentage of clients who leave you every year, but it seems like we are losing less than the industry standard."

McClennan says he feels it's all reciprocal — happy people make people happy.



"For us, the happier the people are, the better job they do," he says.

ALL FOR ONE & ONE FOR ALL. Happiness may be synonymous with culture when it comes to employee satisfaction, but for McClennan, culture has become too much of a buzzword.

Instead of focusing on culture, McClennan says he and Good Nature prioritize connection.

"In today's world, it's harder to connect in real life with people. So, we do a lot of things that are almost like forced connections," he jokes.

"Every branch has a meeting once a month where we take the afternoon and some kind of team building activity. A few times a year we try to bring everyone together. So once a year we'll do a river float trip down the Mohican River with people from all the branches."

Norris says the fun times don't stop on the riverbank or when the crews get out of the office setting, either.

"In the offseason, we have training classes that not only help educate us in terms of work-related things, but we

also have the Smart Dollar Program, which helps people manage their money," he says. "We've also had fitness classes and things to help people live healthier lifestyles. There's a lot of things like that going on."

McClennan recalls one of the best connections at Good Nature coming from the coronavirus era.

"Every week, we have a whole company virtual meeting," he says. "Everyone is on the call together. That is something we started during COVID, but it turned out to be a really good thing for us. It's a place where people can share what's going well and where the struggles are."

"We try to recognize people as much as we can for when they do great work then, too," McClennan adds.

McClennan says it's those kinds of things that keep someone from thinking a job in the green industry is only temporary.

"Instead of people looking at this as a stepping stone job, they're looking at it as 'How can I make a career out of this?'" he says. And it's that mentality that's fueled growth at Good Nature since the beginning. McClennan says he's continuing to focus on growth and expansion as a way to give back to his staff.

"We have to grow to provide opportunity for our people," he says. "We find good fits for people and the growth makes that more possible. The kind of people we like to have are the kind of people who want to grow personally and professionally." **L&L**

The author is associate editor with Lawn & Landscape.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GOOD NATURE

SPACE TO GROW

Para Space Landscaping gives employees numerous opportunities to grow within the organization and beyond.

By Kim Lux

After nearly 45 years in business, Para Space Landscaping, based in British Columbia, has learned the secret to its success starts with its employees.

President Jeff Foley says the team is the foundation of everything the company does — whether that's training programs, paying for employees to earn accreditations, offering classes on life skills or even pricing jobs higher to fairly compensate its staff.

"It's cool," Foley says of being named part of the Best Places to Work. "It means a lot. I'm always proud of the work we do, but the bottom line is, the work is done by our team. I feel like our best asset is our team, and that really is the service we provide. It's about amazing people who are really knowledgeable and skilled and who give our customers a great experience."

ALL WALKS OF LIFE. One key component to the Para Space team's success is its diversity.

With over 150 employees, 55% of employees are millennials, 8% identify as Hispanic or Latino, 18% identify as Asian and 40% of the company's executive team is female.

"I think because our team is so diverse, it opens up our company to be more appealing to lots of different types of people," Foley says. "We have a lot of people who come from a lot of different backgrounds. I think because they can see other people like themselves working here, and succeeding here, often in prominent roles, it helps us from a recruitment standpoint."

Foley says this mix of life experiences and cultures has helped Para Space operate more creatively and contributes to the company's growth.

"With diversity, you get a lot more ideas, and I think when you're a company that's trying to be innovative — having people with different



Jeff Foley credits Para Space Landscaping's success in part to them prioritizing training and education.

backgrounds and levels of experience, and also differing opinions, can really help to lead to more innovation, and help increase processes and things like that," he says.

Like Foley mentions, diversity doesn't end with ethnicity but blends into work experience and backgrounds as well — as most employees come from outside the green industry.

Enter Erin Beynon, a landscape maintenance supervisor, who left a life behind the screen to join the company.

"I've been at Para Space for three years," Beynon says. "I actually started mid-pandemic. Before, I was working in the gaming industry, and it was a lot of sitting at your desk for 15 hours a day. I used to do a lot of traveling for that job and then the pandemic hit, and I wasn't traveling. I was sitting at home."

It was while sitting at home that Beynon decided to finally pursue a lifelong dream and try a new career field.

"It is possible to play too many video games," Beynon jokes. "I just really wanted to get into a new career, and I always wanted to landscape. It had been something that I always wanted to do but never got the chance to."

With the pandemic raging on, Beynon thought landscaping would be a great way to be outside before

2024
**BEST PLACES
TO WORK**
PARA SPACE LANDSCAPING



Para Space University seminars help employees earn accreditations and advance their careers.

the world returned to “normal” and she’d find a new path.

“I thought this was just temporary, and let’s give it a shot,” she recalls. “Something temporary has turned into something permanent.”

But Beynon isn’t the only example of diverse backgrounds. Nedy Calumno, an irrigation technician, also lived an exciting life before making his foray into the green industry.

“I’m from the Philippines, and I came here in 2017,” he says. “I never had any landscaping experience. I worked in scuba diving.”

Eventually, Calumno says his love of water was worked into his role within the company.

“Right now, I am an irrigation technician, but when I started here, I was in landscaping maintenance,” he says. “I decided to transition to the irrigation department because I love the work.”

CARING FOR THE CREWS. Along with diversity, Foley says the culture is another critical element to Para Space’s success.

And the best thing Foley says he can do to promote the culture at the company is to ensure everyone is appropriately compensated — and sometimes that means justifying higher prices to cover labor costs.

“One of my goals as a business leader is to try and increase how our work is valued from a public perception standpoint,” he says. “I think that those of us that are in the industry recognize that a lot of what we do is fairly difficult. It’s also a lot more technical than some people recognize. So, I think when you stack that up against the other trades, I really feel like our work should be worth as much as everyone else’s.”

Foley says the company also strives to provide exemplary benefits and other perks to its employees as well. Some of those perks include fun-filled outings for the staff.

“We have a really active event schedule throughout the year,” Beynon says. “Para Space covers all of the event costs and it’s usually a pretty big mix. We’ve done go-karting, bowling, a yearly golf event and a family picnic. There’s a pretty good variety.”

Aside from all the fun, Beynon says she really appreciates the company’s collaborative culture.

“The culture here is great,” she says. “Everyone wants to do well, and everyone is super motivated. Coming in from an environment where I was at my wits’ end and working inside all day for a not-really rewarding career, to switch into this, was great.”

Beynon says she feels it’s that culture that keeps Para Space employees dedicated.

“If the culture is bad, you’re not really going to keep people around,” she says. “When the culture is good and people are happy, vibrant and social, that’s what drives the company to the next level.”

Foley says that’s why Para Space is more concerned about hiring culture fits than individuals with tons of industry experience.

“It’s no secret that staffing is tough these days,” he says. “We recognized a while ago that great people really want to work with great people. That tends to be the No. 1 criteria when we’re hiring. Lots of times we’re hiring people based on values.”

With most people coming in fresh, Foley says fostering a learning environment is essential.

“Because we’re hiring people based on values and things like that, we’ve had to develop a training and accreditation program,” he says. “I think that’s something that’s really valued by our team. For a lot of folks, they’re entering an industry that they don’t have experience in, and it gives them a great way to develop skills and advance their career.”

CAREER ADVANCEMENT. Training at Para Space has several levels and doesn’t just stop once an employee has been there for a few weeks. Education is ongoing and something all employees prioritize.

And because so many employees are working to better themselves, Foley says customers are willing to pay for the valued knowledge.

“It’s one of our differentiators as a company. When we’re bidding on contracts, we really talk to our prospective clients about the caliber of our team and how well accredited they are,” he says. “I think it’s something that sets us apart, and it gives our clients a lot of confidence in choosing us — even if we do cost a little bit more than the competition.”

But not only does this emphasis on education improve the bottom line, it helps with efficiency as well.

“It also allows us to operate a lot better,” Foley says. “We have a great on-the-job training program that allows us to get new staff members with not a lot of experience upskilled and proficient on the job really, really quickly.”

LARGE EMPLOYER CATEGORY
(100+ US/CA EMPLOYEES)

RANK	COMPANY LISTING	US/CA EMPLOYEES
1	Mullin	140
2	Para Space Landscaping Inc.	157
3	Encore Landscape Management	198
4	Senske Family of Companies	896
5	Monarch Landscape Management	141
6	Visterra	526

The training doesn’t stop there though; any employee at Para Space gets the opportunity to go back to school without ever leaving the company’s headquarters.

“We have Para Space University, which is kind of a micro-credentialing program that helps people develop some more advanced education within the industry,” Foley explains. “The effect we’ve seen from that is people are able to take on more significant roles and we’ve even seen people transfer from one department to another because of the education they’ve gathered.”

Para Space University is a series of seminars and short courses that are offered after hours. The program is voluntary, but Foley says its widely attended.

Calumno says it’s those seminars that helped him climb the ranks.

“At Para Space, we have lots of opportunities if you want to advance your career,” he says. “Irrigation was something I wanted to do, and I didn’t have any experience, but Para Space gave me this chance. They got me the qualifications and the training.”

And it’s never too soon to start training for the next level. Beynon says she took full advantage of the educational opportunities right away.

“I was already working for the company for about two months when I got an email from the company about an opportunity to go to school,” she says. “Para Space sent me to do a certificate program, which was really awesome. That expedited me gaining knowledge and expedited me being able to move up in the company.”

Shortly after, Beynon became a landscape lead.

“At the time I was thinking, ‘That’s good enough. I don’t need to go any further,’” she says. “But really as I gained more knowledge, I thought, ‘Why don’t I just be a supervisor?’”

Not everyone is looking to continually move forward. Some are happy right where they’re at.

“The company is always asking us about our future goals are,” Calumno says. “They want to move us up within the company, but for me I am happy where I’m at right now. I started from the very bottom and am now a senior irrigation technician.”

In addition to the industry-specific seminars, some help teach valuable life skills as well.

“There’s a bunch on fitness, nutrition, personal finances and dealing with stress,” Foley says.

“Most of our seminars are taught by our managers, but for those ones, we bring in some external experts in those fields to help teach those ones.”

SATISFIED CUSTOMERS SPELLS GROWTH. Para Space’s customers are also benefiting from the education and expertise developed.

It’s kept one client with them for decades.

“I’ve been working with Para Space for 20 years now,” says Terry Li, director of property management at Rancho Management Services. “Their standard of care is really high.”

Li adds he also respects the company’s hands-on approach to serving its clients.

“They’re very proactive, so I don’t have to worry about it,” he says. “There’s no finger pointing. It’s a very proactive type of management where I don’t have to look at the landscaping and go, ‘You missed this’ or, ‘You missed that.’”

Additionally, Li appreciates Para Space’s culture and emphasis on employee advancement.

“All their managers have been there for a while,” he says. “It seems like it’s always the same staff I’m working with, which is unlike a lot of landscaping companies. You know if someone’s going to be there, they’re going to be there for a while. You can tell they really promote from within.”

When it comes to cost, Li says Para Space earns their way.

FREDERICO OUTDOOR LIVING

AND STILL CHAMPION ...

FREDERICO OUTDOOR LIVING took home the top spot on the Best Places list for the second year in a row.

We did a full length feature on the company last year, which you can read by visiting bit.ly/lawnfrederico.

We caught up with owner, Adam Frederico, to find out how they stayed at the top of the list and what the company is up to in 2024.

“We continue to increase our capabilities in the design group and have four full-time designers now.

To improve transparency in our organization, we have doubled-down on our implementation of the tools and disciplines within Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS), a popular operating framework for growing businesses. This has improved our abilities to get everyone on the same page with our vision — rowing in the same direction.

We continue to focus on continuous improvement and getting feedback from the team. It’s important that we hear the needs of the team and grow the company together. We recently rolled out a new benefit which fully pays for primary care doctor visits for our team members to go to a local clinic focused on providing care to Spanish-speaking members of the community.”

“I take over a lot of mismanaged build-ings, and if price wasn’t a consideration for some, they’d have 100% of my contracts,” he adds. “Some of my clients choose according to price, and they don’t see the value, but the smart clients get it. And they go with Para Space.”

Foley adds better serving their clients, who are expanding across Canada, is the focus for Para Space’s future.

“Maybe we’ll be starting some branches in some other areas that are developing. That would open up even more opportunities for people who are looking to advance their role or advance their career,” he says. **L&L**

The author is an associate editor with Lawn & Landscape magazine.



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