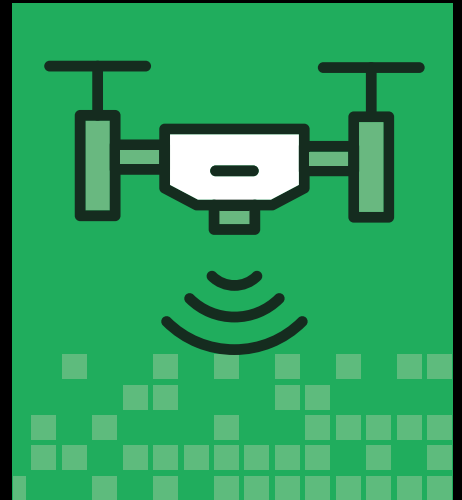


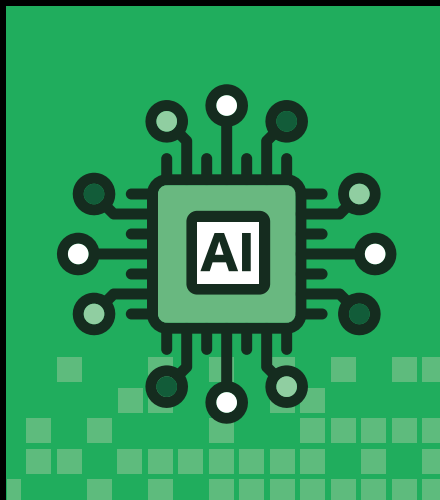
Lawn & Landscape®

JUNE 2025
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TECH REPORT 2025

Software, AI and **all-things-digital**
are changing your work world.





Jon Gohl
Director of Customer Experience,
Aspire

//
Whether it's maintenance, construction, and anything in between, Aspire allows you to make faster, smarter decisions, optimize your resources, and ultimately, boost your profitability."



A partner for continued success

We all know the landscaping industry is constantly evolving, and it's only getting more complex. At Aspire, our goal is simple. We want to help your business run better and ensure its long-term success.

Aspire isn't just software. It's a platform built by people who know this industry inside and out, and it's designed to provide real visibility and total control over your operations. We know how frustrating it is to deal with inefficiencies, disconnected tools, and guesswork. That's why we built Aspire: a centralized hub that delivers real-time job costing, connects teams and workflows, and provides immediate visibility into every aspect of a landscaping business. Whether it's maintenance, construction, and anything in between, Aspire allows you to make faster, smarter decisions; optimize your resources; and ultimately, boost your profitability. We're also committed to supporting scalable growth, whether you're opening another branch or scaling through acquisition.

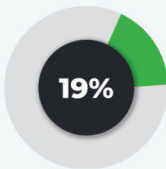
But we're not here just to sell software. Aspire's dedication to driving success in the landscape industry extends well beyond our technology. We believe in fostering professional growth, knowledge-sharing, and community through initiatives like Aspire Academy and our annual Ignite conference. We're also actively investing in the industry's future through our Aspire in the Classroom initiative, which is cultivating the next generation of skilled landscape professionals. We don't see ourselves as just another vendor. We aim to be a true partner, continually innovating and making refinements based on your feedback and what matters most to you, through our Customer Voting Portal and supported by a rapid release cycle.

Bottom line: we are here for you. Aspire gives you the tools, support, and community to not only adapt, but to thrive. We have the tools, support, and community to empower this industry and your success, and are committed to you reaching new heights of success.

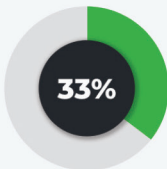
Jon Gohl
Director of Customer Experience, Aspire

Manage, measure, and grow with Aspire

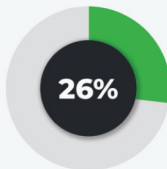
End-to-end software for landscape pros



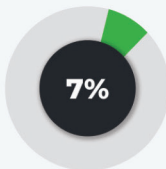
Faster work estimates*



Faster job cost calculations*



Faster work ticket management*



Higher profits*



Scheduling



Job Costing



Estimating



CRM



Invoicing



Reporting



You can't afford not to have Aspire. We grew 42% last year in what some would consider a down economy. Our projection this year is to grow another 20%.

Marty Grunder, Founder & CEO, Grunder Landscaping



Ready to see how Aspire can help your business?

Scan the QR code to learn more.



*The results are based on a survey of customers using Aspire for at least one year; your individual results may vary.

An ever-changing landscape


Software, AI and **all-things-digital** are changing your work world.

By Kristen Hampshire

Every year, Lawn & Landscape produces a Technology Report. Every year, there are similar themes and leap-frog advances. Integrating business management software is really hard. It requires commitment and an all-in mentality, not to mention engaging key staff. This is a constant. AI can help write job descriptions and muddle through rote tasks like training manuals that you’ve been putting off — tasks you’ve assigned to AI before, perhaps. Now there are new ways.

You might just change your business processes to align with software that makes your whole operation run smoother with more data gathered and better decision-making. And, speaking of decisions, there are choices to make as you inevitably start with one solution, navigate the next and hopefully find an integrated engine that enables revenue-generating growth.

It’s a lot. Ready to unpack?



About this survey:
Editor’s note: Based on about 150 respondents. Data was collected April 15-24, 2025. Not all totals will equal 100% due to rounding.

Ready to Launch?

Implementation isn’t easy, but the payoff is huge.



IMPLEMENTING THIS ROBUST, all-things, industry-relevant business management platform was a cinch! — said no one. But the rewards of fully committing, engaging your team in the process, enlisting in vendor support and going through what can be painful motions of migrating data unveil eye-opening realities for businesses that positively change the way they operate.

The old “no pain, no gain” push is true with tech. Here’s a look at the gains these landscape leaders have realized.

An Up-Scale Move. When Derek Taussig dug into integrating a green-industry focused business management software platform, his Manhattan, Kansas-based business had already hit seven figures in revenue. The data collected throughout the years on disparate apps, software solutions and even sticky notes felt like a mountain of, “How?”

But there was a sort of “sherpa” to help. Taussig, owner of an eponymous landscape maintenance business, landed on the all-in software through a consultant who knows it like a second language. So, he knew he’d get on-site support, candid advice and an integration strategy.

“What we were doing before was broken and my team also knew we needed something different,” Taussig says. “With our size, we needed something all-inclusive that everyone could access from their phones.”

Since committing to total software integration, completed in 2020, Taussig Landscape has more than tripled in revenue, grown from 35 to 50 employees and executed an acquisition because the systems table was already set.

Taussig says his goal was always to get ahead of emerging technology, but that’s not so easy.

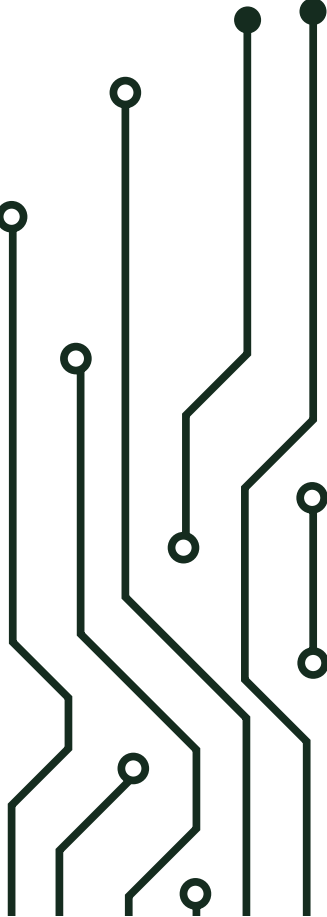
When he first adopted the new software, operations were about 50% integrated. That wasn’t enough. “You really have to embrace it fully,” he says. “I fought (the software) the first year, and we didn’t use it for clocking in and clocking out of jobs. Then, those jobs weren’t getting billed properly and we couldn’t cut down on job cost on the back end.”

When a peer from the area came to tour Taussig’s operation, he saw notes stuck to a board in the shop and asked, “Why aren’t you using the app all the way? All these problems will go away.”

Cue the lightbulb. Then Taussig recognized how full implementation and really sticking to it would solve another common revenue-draining scenario. A crew pulls up to a client’s property, mows and maintains it, then a neighbor pops out and asks, “Would you mind?”

Sometimes they were little jobs like edging. Other times it was a full service.

“In the past, we were not capturing that work in billing,” Taussig says. “But now that we are fully integrated, crews have



Do you feel the technology or software you use as a company makes you more attractive to potential customers?
(provide feedback below)

64%
YES
.....

36%
NO

“Our IT infrastructure increases our productivity, I’m not sure potential customers see that. They call us based on our reputation and experience.”

“Our outward facing website is catching up but we don’t have an app yet. Next step to upgrade our appeal is an app for customers to use.”

“Many of the smaller, part time lawn care companies in the area, like us, only use a handful of different technology, often relying on word of mouth as their go to for advertising. We utilize a website, multiple social medias and a CRM that only the larger companies in the area also do. We feel it makes us more visible to our community, they don’t have to look for us.”

“Our clients are highly educated and use a lot of tech in their lives. They expect us to meet them in that area.”

“It makes it easier for people to do business with us and easier to visualize artistic concepts. It makes us more efficient, saves client’s time and money and makes us safer.”

to clock in and clock out and attach every job to a task.”

If there is no job created in the system, they allocate the time to “no job task” and the office catches that time and can bill the new customer accordingly. This system works for existing customers, too. “We can catch that Jim asked for two yards of mulch that we threw in at the end of the day,” Taussig says.

He can’t exactly figure out how much captured revenue the company is reeling in, “but it more than pays for the software.”

Also, going all in “frees up mind space,” he says. “Once I sell a job, I put it on a wait list and I don’t have to remember. It gets scheduled. This has allowed us to grow in scale and forget a lot less things.”

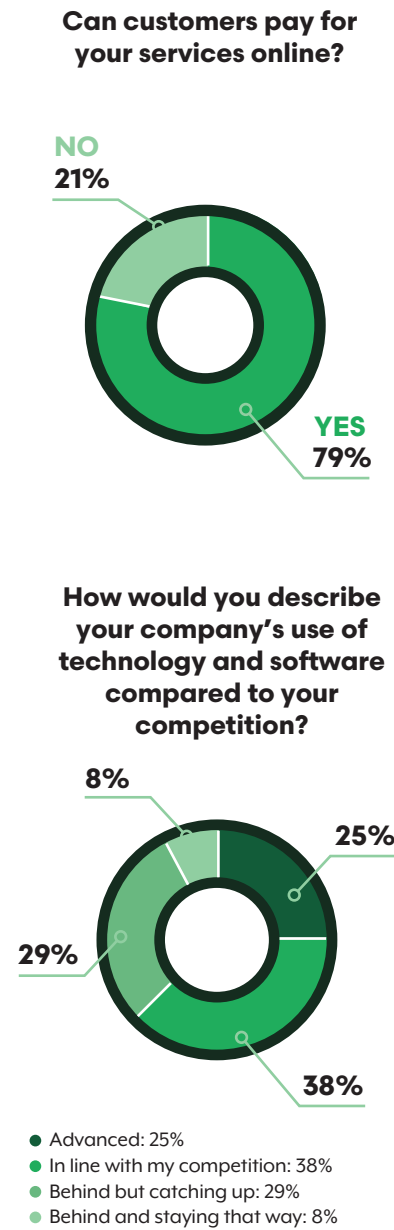
A Techie Perspective – Retrofitting Operations. Spruce Acres Landscaping is an encore career for Greg Loewen, who started the Manitoba-based business after years in business and IT consulting for Fortune 1,000 companies throughout the United States and Canada.

From the beginning, Loewen’s design/build firm was data-driven. “It all started with collecting lots of information on the customers and tracking leads, though we were capturing all of that information in rudimentary tools,” he says.

But those tools, mainly Google Workspace, worked and Loewen still relies on the productivity/collaboration suite. After some time, Loewen adopted a simplified field management system for proposals, invoices and receipts. As the business evolved and expanded, Loewen knew it would outgrow this software, so he began vetting green-industry specific options.

Last December, he went all in with a full CRM business management solution that includes scheduling, time tracking, job costing and more, bringing all operational pieces onto a one platform. Before selecting this software, Loewen reached out to industry peers in his network and asked for candid feedback on the program and integration pains.

“That process of talking to a couple local people was very enlightening,” he says of



an over-arching theme: implementation takes longer and is more challenging than you think. Knowing this prepared Loewen to get support from the vendor.

Soon after he began migrating data and working through the platform’s processes, Loewen recognized that some of the company’s systems and even job responsibilities would not align with the way the software works.

“Don’t expect the software to change to match you — you need to change to match

the software,” he says, adding that “change is hard for everyone.”

Sure, there are some customizable features. But the system architecture isn’t built for a complete renovation. The other tools Loewen had been relying on were more flexible, so he customized the tech to suit the way Spruce Acres conducts business.

“It’s a decision-making process where you have to say, ‘This is how we did this task before, but the software doesn’t have configurable aspects for that particular thing, so we have to do it differently,’” Loewen says.

For example, Loewen had to reassess some employees’ roles. “Now, salespeople have a much bigger hand in creating estimates,” he says. “Before, they gathered information to put together a bid and brought it into the office. Then we established a proposal for them to deliver.”

Loewen still reviews proposals before they go out the door, but the software’s templates and job costing tools give salespeople turn-key, accurate estimating details. “It’s a huge process improvement for us,” Loewen says. “We can generate more proposals, more accurately, more quickly.”

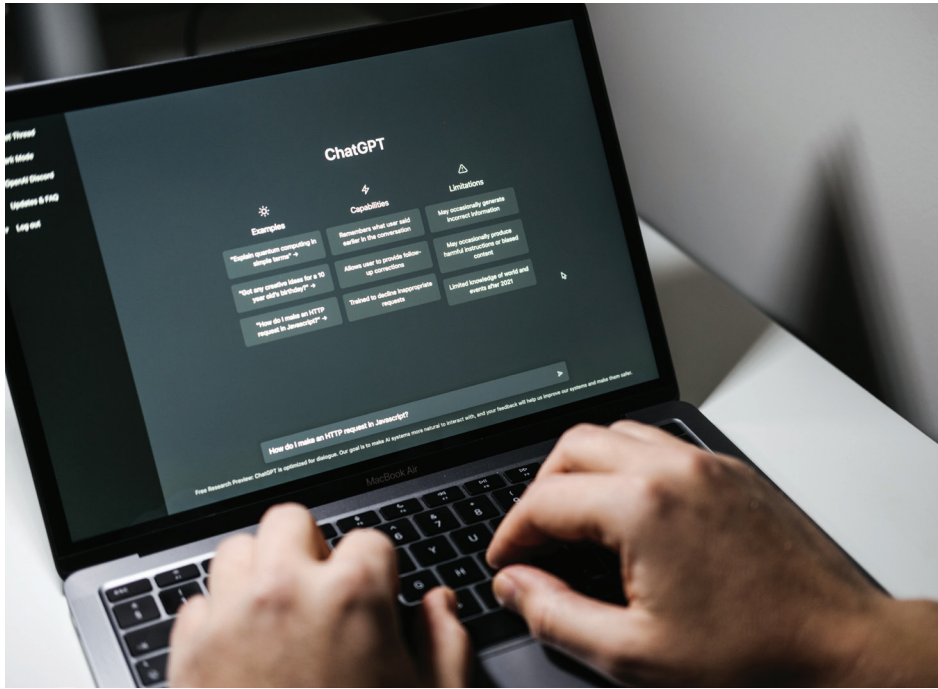
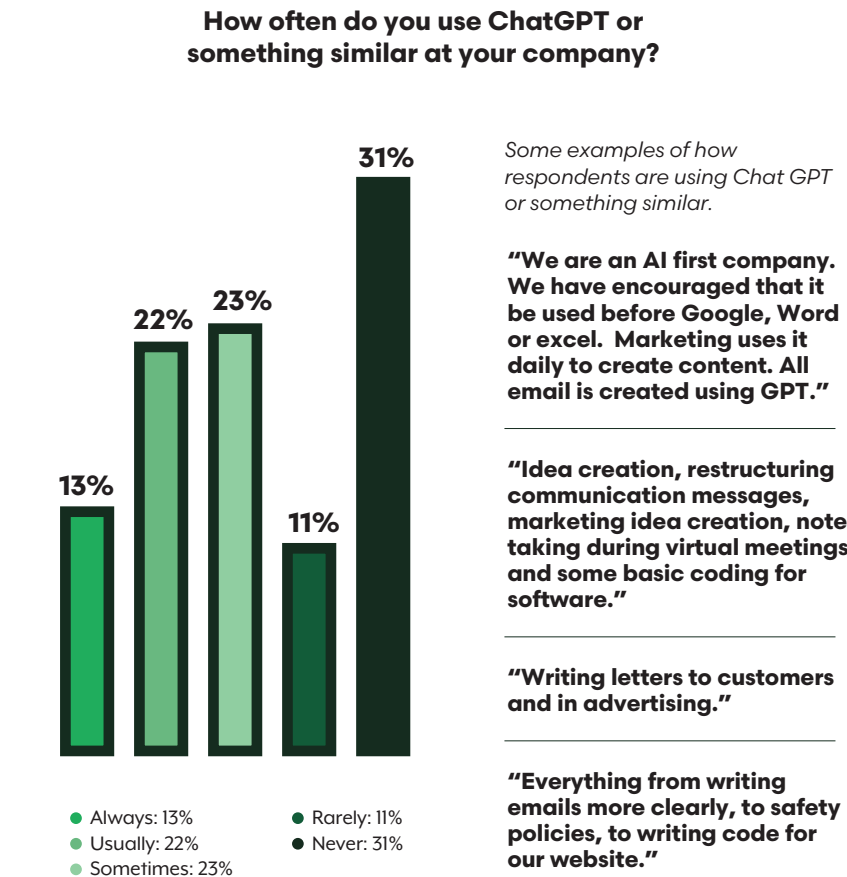
Loewen expects that at least half of the company’s proposals will be ready to deliver to potential clients within hours or a couple of days rather than a week or longer.

Spruce Acres is intently focused on hospitality, so Loewen wasn’t initially thrilled with the proposal template, he admits. “Anything we would produce that is customer facing was very tailored to individual clients. But with this software, we had to accept the structure for a proposal.”

There’s give and take when adopting a new platform, Loewen says — advice he has given businesses across industries during his IT consultant days.

Overall, he says, “We have found tremendous value in collecting customer information and using that to inform decisions.”

Aligning Sales and Production. After a botch job with onboarding a business management platform some years ago, Ted Ventre approached implementation with





Having a good software is key to boosting your bottom line as it helps the sales staff better qualify customers and bid work.

During the last software chapter, “anyone could manipulate the numbers,” Ventre says. “If they felt pressure from customers and wanted the sale, they could tweak the cost.

They’d want to win the business but weren’t thinking of the production side.”

Now, sales is more connected with how field operations function. “They are not off on their own trying to sell a top-line number to meet commission goals,” Ventre says. “They are invested in budgeting correctly from a money and time perspective, so crews are successful.”

In fact, salespeople are rewarded differently now that this software is in place. “Compensation is based on how jobs perform, not on dollars sold,” Ventre says of the paradigm shift from a previous owner’s structure. “This ties everyone together. We’re all focused on the same results — completing a job with a targeted gross margin.”

As a result, Hively Landscapes has grown its top line without increasing overhead, elevated profitability and established greater accountability across the organization.

“Our salespeople have gotten better at qualifying customers, and they are wasting less time chasing pretend dollars,” Ventre says of focusing on sweet-spot clients that fit the company’s niche, which is estate gardening.

Because Hively Landscapes’ play a dual role of selling and designing, Ventre says some are sensitive toward pricing and “not always great about talking dollars and cents” as they follow a passion for horticulture. “Giving them a tool they can rely on and have confidence in helps because they have years of data telling them what a job will cost,” he says.

Ventre also points to purchasing and how the software enabled Hively Landscapes to stock materials just in time versus holding and caring for an inventory of plants.

Meanwhile, numbers are constantly updated and reviewed, Ventre adds. “We

look for trends and where we are successful or missing targets. If every time we build a curved wall out of a certain material, we are missing the budget, what’s going on?”

These reviews steer pricing updates.

Reflecting on how the business management platform has changed operations for the better, Ventre says roles are more defined, from purchasing and sales to operations and admin. Processes are more established, and protocols help every team member understand his or her part in the big picture of serving clients.

There’s No ‘Easy’ Button. At Avalon Landscapes in Meridian, Idaho, employees were still clocking in and out with paper cards. Kristy Clark had to extract cost codes from the hand-written tickets and input the information into a basic, cloud-based accounting program. “When you’re on paper, you’re not even going to see where your jobs sit in the books for a couple of weeks,” Clark says.

The 24-year-old commercial landscape and construction business has a portfolio of large-scale, high-profile projects like Idaho Power, the humane society, hotels and schools. But until a couple years ago, Avalon’s office was automated in an elementary fashion — or not at all. (Pencils and erasers were popular.)

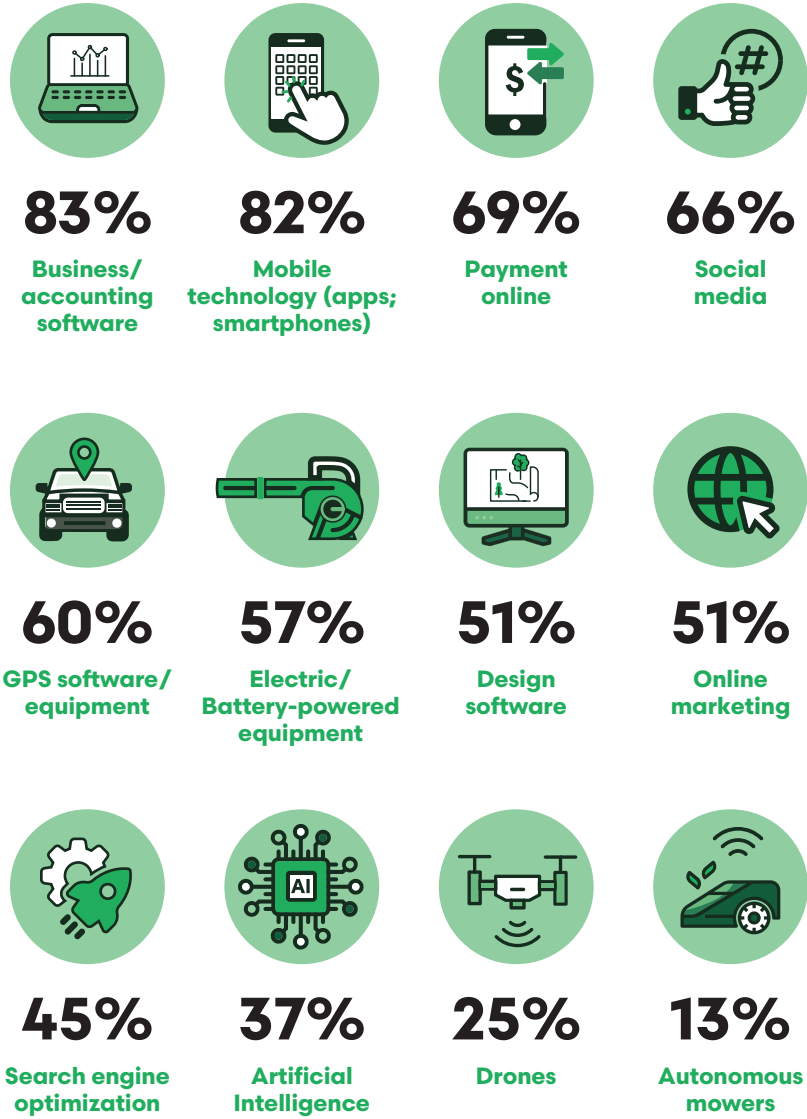
Today, Avalon operates on a fully implemented, large CRM and business management platform and employees track job time on their mobile devices. (The company policy is BYOD, bring your own device.) “Now, our crews can check on their costs, look at estimated versus actual and they’re making adjustments every day and staying ahead of the numbers rather than falling behind,” Clark says.

Getting to this point for the business of 88 employees was a grind.

“There’s no ‘easy’ button,” quips Mike Martin, general manager.

This is especially true when you’re implementing two new platforms at the same time — a CRM system from scratch and going from basic accounting program to a more robust QuickBooks, which “talks” to the business software.

Which of the following do you use at your company?



Do you have a website (not counting social media pages)?



“Don’t expect the software to change to match you — you need to change to match the software. Change is hard for everyone.” — Greg Loewen, Founder, Spruce Acres Landscaping



He realized the business needed to adopt a business management platform back in 2012, but Avalon Landscapes got serious in 2020, scoping the software market for contenders. They pulled the trigger on one vendor’s product, then pulled back realizing they needed to suspend the contract to migrate accounting data to QuickBooks. When the request was denied. Martin’s gut reaction: This just isn’t right.

The search for a CRM continued. One of Martin’s key priorities when vetting a half-dozen vendors was how the system would capture real-time costs. Once deciding on a platform, the pandemic hit and in-person implementation support was off the table.

“Kristy was in constant Zoom meetings or webinars, and at the same time she was working with payroll and our CEO to onboard QuickBooks,” Martin says.

All this started with inputting data from timecards, spreadsheets and the old accounting program.

“You have to just dig in — and it’s a long, bumpy road,” Martin says, adding that there was no “sandbox” to create test properties and test clients, and no “back button” if you make a mistake. A service ticket had to be issued.

However, there are benefits to this red tape. “People can’t fraudulently go into the system and make changes,” says Martin.

As for adoption, crewmembers were

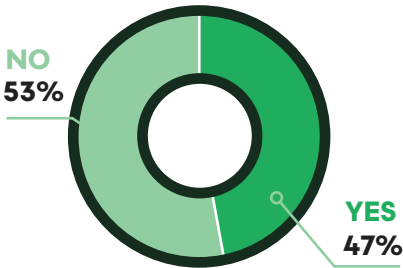


mostly accepting of the technology, says Alex German, director of operations. “We do have guys who don’t like touching their phones, which can be a good quality to have because they are focused on their work. We do have some workarounds for those employees because we want to make sure everyone’s comfortable and they are not feeling so much pressure that they don’t want to be on the team.”

Year 1, in-field usage of the app for clocking time on jobs was about 50-50, German says. Now, most have adopted the system and are comfortable using it.

Microsoft Teams is another platform employees are embracing as a collaborative conduit for connecting the office and field, and crews with one another. “With having so many employees and so many accounts and services, we utilize Teams to make sure our communications are

Do you have a person dedicated to social media?



always transparent,” German says, noting that employees can post pictures of what they see and complete on sites.

Avalon Landscapes organizes Teams groups in various ways — by a foreman and team, department, and even scope of who’s responsible for what on a project, such as hardscape, plant installation, irrigation and so on. German says, “There are checks and balances for everything.”

And there are high-fives.

“We send notifications to say, ‘happy birthday,’ or, ‘happy anniversary,’” German says. “We can also make sure everyone is notified to fill out documents for benefits.”

ABOVE: According to our report, 51% of respondents utilize design software. That’s up from 47% in our 2021 Tech Report.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SPRUCE ACRES LANDSCAPING

All a ‘Bot’ It

How AI is giving us shortcuts and timesavers

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE is pretty much backstage wherever we go digitally. When you start a new email and begin typing a sentence, stop for a second and there’s a suggestion on how you might finish the statement. The list of AI on the radar goes on. But some specific AI tools have proven especially helpful for marketing, business proposals and even sending a gentle reminder to tough clients.

Here’s how AI is working for some industry leaders.

Training Programs, No More Procrastination. “I used AI to build a state-certified chemical application training program I’ve been putting off for years. I copied, pasted and built a beautiful program in 10 minutes and it is state-approved. I input the rules and attached training manuals, using ChatGPT,” says, Derek Taussig, Taussig Landscape, Manhattan, Kan.

Know Your Role. When Avalon Landscapes shifted job positions to better align with its business management platform, AI was helpful for writing new descriptions for roles. It’s also a time-saver for updating policies and procedures, says General Manager Michael Martin.

Additionally, Google’s Gemini (for-

merly Bard) helps employees who speak English as a second language or who want a professional AI eye to smooth out language to write emails to clients when need be. But the design/build company does not use AI tools for creating proposals since every project is different and not exactly measurable like mowing 1,000 square feet for X dollars per hour, says Director of Operations Alex German.

“I used AI to build a state-certified chemical application training program I’ve been putting off for years. I copied, pasted and built a beautiful program in 10 minutes and it is state-approved. I input the rules and attached training manuals, using ChatGPT.”

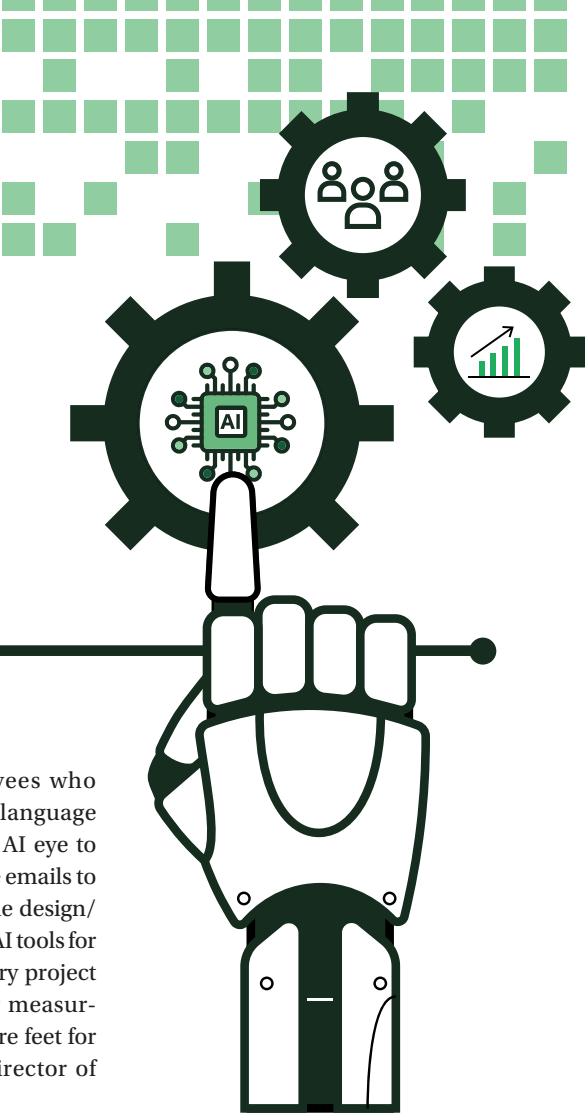
— Derek Taussig, Taussig Landscape, Manhattan, Kan.

To Market. Greg Loewen from Spruce Acres Landscaping wanted to run a marketing campaign on the double. He knew his budget (small) and the ask (big). He went to his marketing firm and they admitted, the ask was a challenge. But, rather than quoting long lead time, the alternative was to glean data from multiple tools, feed it into AI and give the ‘bot license to generate copy.

“Not so much the visuals,” he says. It’s all about how you construct questions for AI. As in, how would you describe a service offering for this target customer in this location with these qualifying factors. “It was their first time doing this, and they triangulated the results,” Loewen says.

Bottom line: success. **L&L**

The author is a freelance writer based in Ohio





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