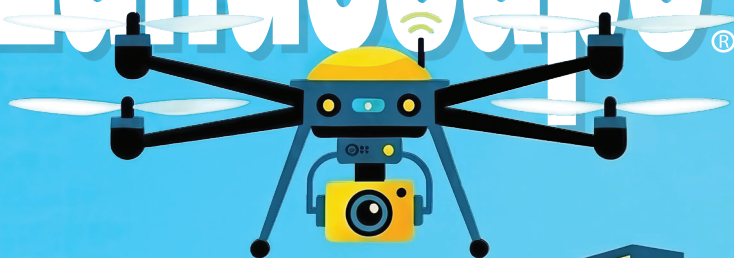


JUNE 2026

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Lawn & Landscape



TECH REPORT

2026



Innovation Built for the People Who Build Landscapes



Eli Zevin
General Manager,
Aspire



The landscaping industry is at an inflection point. Labor costs keep climbing, margins stay thin, and the gap between companies that run on real data and those still piecing together spreadsheets and gut instinct is getting harder to close. I've spent a lot of time talking with the owners, operations managers, and controllers who run these businesses, and the ones pulling ahead aren't just working harder. They've built systems that surface the right information to the right person at the right time and turn that information into action.

That's the lens through which we're building Aspire in 2026.

This year's roadmap is the most ambitious we've put together. More than any previous year, it's organized around a single question: what decisions does each person in your business need to make, and how do we make those decisions easier and faster?

For the account manager walking a property, Site Audit 2.0 will turn a site visit into a documented, photo- and video-rich enhancement opportunity in minutes, with AI drafting summaries and auto-generating follow-up so nothing falls through the cracks. For the estimator trying to win the right work at the right price, Smart Estimating will surface intelligent insights throughout the estimating process to help your team bid more accurately and confidently. For the operations team, Project Insights will give project managers visibility into how a project is tracking early enough to course-correct before a problem becomes unrecoverable.

The financial and back-office side of the platform is getting the same treatment. Automated Purchase Re-

ceipt Validation will use AI-powered matching capabilities (OCR) to automatically tie supplier invoices to purchase receipts, eliminating hours of manual reconciliation every week. Revenue Retention will apply AI modeling to your own data to surface at-risk clients before they call a competitor, flagging AR trends, declining service engagement, and stalled enhancement pipelines while recommending actions your team can take to save the relationship. And on the client-facing side, we're continuing to invest in our customer portal to reduce payment friction, improve cash flow, and reduce time spent chasing AR.

What's underneath all of this is a conviction that AI's value in a landscaping business isn't automation for its own sake. It's about removing the moments where your best people are stuck doing work that shouldn't require them: manually matching invoices, retyping site notes, or hunting down field data that should already be in the system. We're building toward a platform where routine work runs itself, and your crew leaders, account managers, and operations staff spend their time on the judgment calls only they can make.

We're grateful to serve this industry, and we take seriously the trust landscaping companies place in Aspire to build something worth their time. That accountability shapes every decision we make.

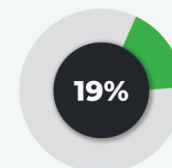
Here's to a strong season.

Eli Zevin
General Manager, Aspire

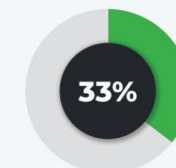


Stop guessing. Start knowing.

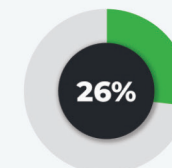
The landscape software that keeps every job, every crew, and every dollar under control



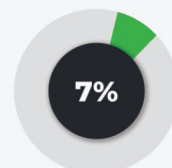
Faster work estimates*



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.



Speaking Technically

How AI, automation and smarter software are reshaping landscape operations from the office to the field.



By Kristen Hampshire

It “clocks in,” gets the orders for each property and reliably mows large commercial and industrial sites, no calling off. Meanwhile, a team member on the crew trims edges and handles detail work while precise striping on the lawn is underway.

The mower? It’s robotic and, for the last few years, a dependable part of Mark Fahlstrom’s maintenance crews. “It’s a team member who shows up every day, and I love it,” says the owner of Oasis Lawn, Landscape & Tree and Imagination Landscapes in Springfield, Missouri.

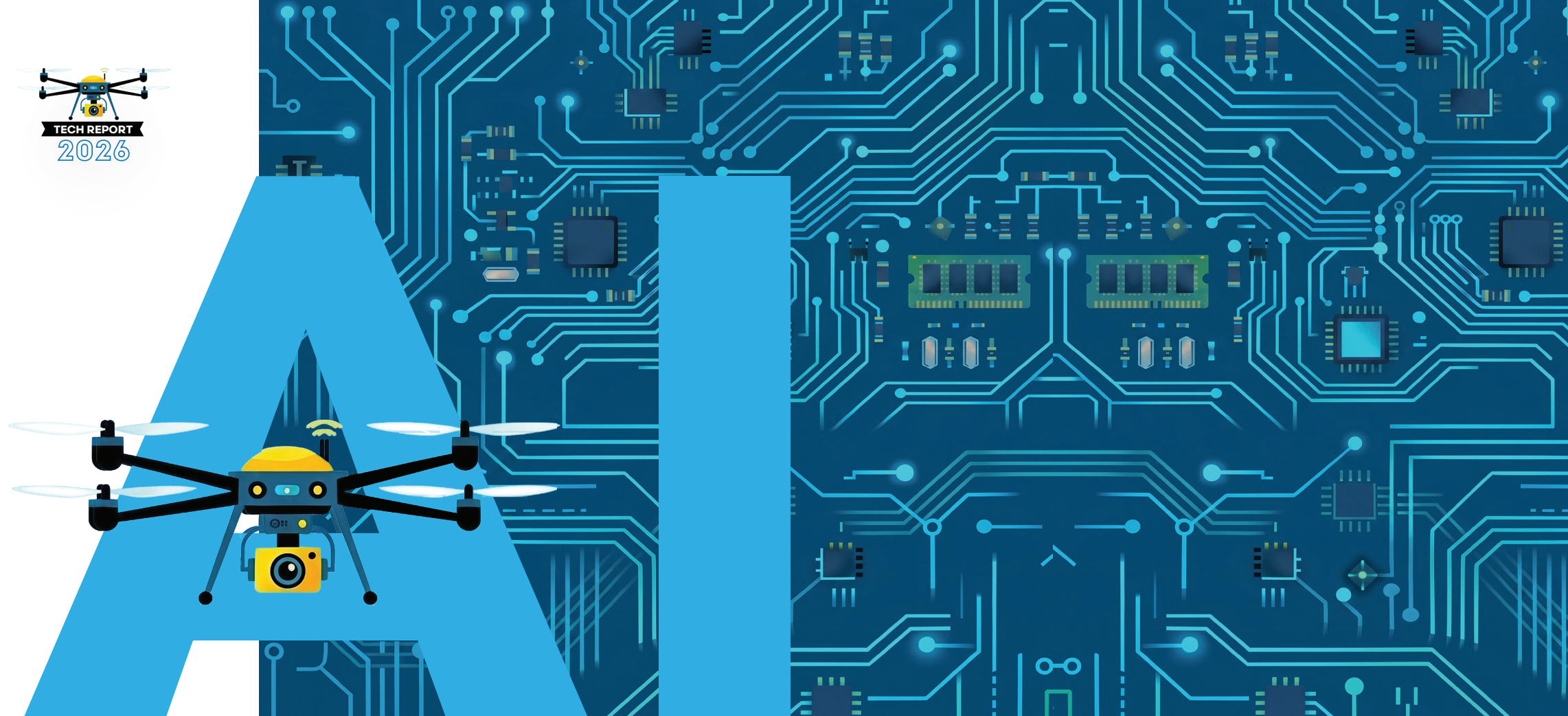
People are a landscape operation’s most valuable asset. And so is equipment, but all the better when Fahlstrom can leverage talent for tasks that polish properties and elevate customer service while assigning AI mowers to the rote work.

The 72-inch decks on the models Fahlstrom has been testing are suited for wide, open spaces. And the crew member doubles as an AI mower manager.

“They have an app on their phone and a remote hanging on their neck to control the mower,” Fahlstrom explains, estimating the autonomous machine does the work of three-quarters of a person.

AI is not necessarily replacing workers. It’s becoming a second set of hands, a digital assistant or, in some cases, an invisible business partner. Cory Shorette is training a ChatGPT-based virtual CFO to analyze numbers, track margins and build budgets.

STAFF ILLUSTRATION WITH ADOBE FIREFLY



AI, Lawn to Office

“WE SHOW UP THERE, set the mower where we want it to start and press a button and it starts mowing,” says Mark Fahlstrom of Oasis Lawn, Landscape & Tree and Imagination Landscapes. “My team member goes out with the AI mower, grabs a weed eater and does the finish work.”

The setup has reshaped the company’s labor equation. “Typically before, it was two guys and a truck with mowers,” Fahlstrom says.

Crews can control mowing direction, striping patterns and routes from a phone or remote worn around the operator’s neck. If the machine encounters an obstacle, the operator gets an alert and can quickly take over.

Fahlstrom is already eyeing the next wave for smaller properties.

“It can also assist in any M&A activity if we are looking at partners,” says the vice president of Landscape Endeavors in Colorado Springs. “It helped me build the 2026 budget with detailed overhead line items that we can adhere to,” Shorette adds, noting how this resource is helping him steer business decisions in real time.

From better leveraging CRM platforms to deploying AI for admin tasks, industry players are speeding up technology adoption. In Lawn & Landscape’s 2026 Technology Report, 73% of respondents said they rely on technology more today than they did five years ago.

The result is a better handle on profitability and efficiency that carves room for growth while helping cap uncontrollable costs like fuel and labor. Shorette says of amping up software use: “We are able to more clearly see revenue per service line so we can put in place better pricing models and make adjustments in real time.”

AI, ALL IN

Most lawn and landscape companies aren’t using AI to replace crews. Instead, they’re using it like Shorette, to cut through the office grind.

“Managers use it for emails to remain professional or construct a response to a difficult situation,” he says.

But a measurable win for AI at Landscape Endeavors is how Shorette “recruited” ChatGPT as a virtual CFO by setting up a project for the role in the paid version.

He learned how to do it from a peer group discussion that centered on utilizing AI to better your business. “I knew we needed more financial guidance, so I set up a bot and said, ‘You are my CFO. This is what our business does. These are the parameters.’”

And of course, from there, uploading financials, spreadsheets, budgets and other documents helped train the bot-CFO to really get Landscape Endeavors’ numbers. But there’s more to it and AI isn’t actually calling all the shots.

It informs decisions.

“I set up my profile to pressure test all information and double confirm all assumptions,” Shorette explains. “When I enter a request or an action



TECH PATTERN: STAFF ILLUSTRATION WITH ADOBE FIREFLY; PHOTO © WANAN | ADOBE STOCK



item, it provides an answer with a pressure test of how it checked against it along with additional assumptions that it may need to provide a better answer.”

Generative AI is just that. The content or feedback it generates builds on existing information.

“As business owners, we most likely know the right decision, but it’s nice to have a double-check and backup of your thesis,” Shorette relates.

Our tech survey respondents are readily using ChatGPT and other AI tools, with 32% reporting they “always” use the tool, and 11% relying on AI “usually.” Add to this 30% of occasional users, for nearly three-quarters of the surveyed population putting AI to work in some way.

The behind-the-scenes business tool helps write emails,

polish proposals, build SOPs, create job descriptions, draft marketing copy and organize internal communications. For many, it functions like an extra admin assistant that never clocks out.

Ultimately, AI adoption is less about robots replacing workers and more about helping companies run leaner and communicate with more transparency.

Isaiah Hanson, owner of Streamline Lawn Care and Spraying in Twin Falls, Idaho, attended some AI seminars in California, meeting with a programmer for one-on-one coaching on how to leverage AI beyond creating operations manuals or crafting client communications.

He’s looking into “a profit-producing machine” to unearth upselling opportunities.

PHOTO © P. ROSTOCK-STUDIO | ADOBE STOCK

Investing Carefully & Consistently

MOST LANDSCAPE COMPANIES are dedicating a modest slice of their budgets to software and technology, with nearly 60% reporting that 1- to 5% of expenses go toward software platforms and digital tools.

Another 24% spend between 6- and 10%, signaling that technology has become a standard operating expense rather than a luxury add-on.

What’s holding companies back from investing more? Cost topped the list, followed closely by implementation challenges. Contractors were far less concerned about whether software actually works.

In fact, many respondents appear convinced the benefits are real — if they can get systems deployed efficiently.

Training still largely happens internally. Nearly 48% ranked in-house training as the most effective way to get teams comfortable with software, while sending employees off-site for dedicated software training ranked last.

Technology’s role in hiring and retention remains mixed. Half of respondents said investments in software and technology help recruiting at least somewhat, while the other half reported little to no impact.

The strongest software use cases centered on operations and profitability:

84%

SOFTWARE FOR
PAYROLL/ACCOUNTING

75%

IT FOR JOB COSTING
AND ESTIMATING

61%

FIELD SERVICE AND
SCHEDULING TOOLS

58%

CRM AND SALES
TRACKING PLATFORMS

57%

PROPERTY MAPPING

55%

GPS AND
FLEET MANAGEMENT



STAFF ILLUSTRATION WITH ADOBE FIRELY

Hanson also invested in AI glasses so he could film himself performing tasks. He uploads these videos to an internal YouTube channel — an idea he gathered from a Lawn & Landscape Technology Conference. The videos are especially helpful for detailed processes like performing tree injections.

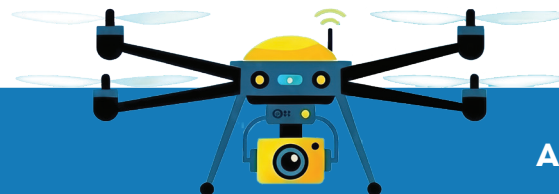
“Having my hands free with the AI glasses allows me to show them how to use the equipment and perform the service,” he says. “It takes away the guesswork and it’s always accessible so our technicians can refer to it whenever they need to.”

BETTER DATA, SMARTER DECISIONS

Route efficiency reduces fuel expenses. It expedites service, pleasing existing clients while making room for new ones. It drives profitability, and all these things combined mean Ben Gillenwaters can pass less of the cost of doing business on to customers, staying competitive in the saturated Florida market.

“We can get in front of customers much more quickly because there’s a tech nearby,” he says of implementing routing software about a year ago.

Running large lawn care trucks burns more dollars per mile than



Tech Check

About this survey

Editor's note: Based on about 150 respondents. Data was collected April 2026.

Not all totals will equal 100% due to rounding.

HOW CONTRACTORS STACK UP

Most companies believe they are keeping pace technologically — but only about one-third say they are ahead of competitors.

32%

SAY THEY ARE TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED

37%

SAY THEY ARE IN LINE WITH COMPETITORS

22%

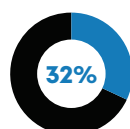
SAY THEY ARE BEHIND BUT CATCHING UP

9%

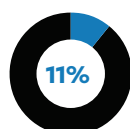
SAY THEY ARE BEHIND AND STAYING THAT WAY

AI: AN EVERYDAY ASSISTANT

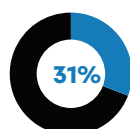
ChatGPT use is already mainstream. Landscape companies are rapidly adopting generative AI tools like ChatGPT for everything from emails and SOPs to budgeting and business analysis.



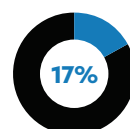
always use AI tools



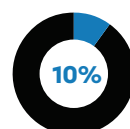
usually use them



sometimes use them



rarely use them



never use them

DIGITAL EXPECTATIONS

Customers want convenience. Technology is increasingly tied to customer experience — especially around communication and payments.



● say technology makes their business more attractive to customers



● allow customers to pay online



● have a dedicated social media staff member or manager

MORE TECH, LESS OVERHEAD

Even as software and automation become more essential, most landscape companies still do not have formal tech leadership in-house.

75%

do not have a chief technology officer or similar role on staff

73%

say they depend on technology more today than five years ago

HIRING BOOST?

Digital tools and modern equipment can support recruiting and retention, though respondents were mixed on how much impact technology really has on labor challenges.

• 11% say technology helps a lot with recruiting and retention

• 39% say it helps somewhat

• 30% say not really

• 20% say not at all



STAFF ILLUSTRATION WITH ADOLBE FIREFLY

Gillenwaters can anticipate, with international economic pressures and inevitable inflation. “All of these are challenges, so we’re trying to offer the same product and results to customers at a price that doesn’t give them sticker shock,” says the training director of Hulett Environmental Services, based in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Route optimization software also allows the Hulett team to identify lags and opportunities to close service gaps.

Meanwhile, the company is an early adopter of an upgrade to its CRM platform’s AI-powered data dumps that happen in real time. On the platform’s

dashboard, he can click on interactive, real-time scorecards without running full reports. “We can very quickly look at average time per stop, how many stops per day, revenue per day, and measure data on a technician-by-technician basis,” he says.

This shows where team members can improve, what additional training might be necessary and highlights peak performers who deserve rewards.

Aside from efficiency, digging deeper into software platforms’ tools — including newer built-in AI tools — elevate transparency.

Shorette implemented a construction industry digital markup command software that allows the team to review plans, edit drawings, measure quantities and collaborate on PDFs without wrestling giant paper plans sitting in the back of a truck.

This is key for large-scale commercial design/build projects.

“We’ll get a drawing set from a contractor, perform a digital takeoff and, from that, we can import that information into [our CRM] and apply it to pre-programmed square footages and counts so we can build the proposal accurately,” Shorette explains.

The result is a higher level of job costing.

“There’s more consistency between estimators,” he says. “Now we know exactly what our gross margin is on every job.”

With this integration comes more predictable scheduling and better client communication. “We can assign job tickets to our team members and guarantee that we are providing all of the services per our contract,” Shorette says.

For Hanson, adopting a lawn-care specific software platform got him out of the truck, into a strategic growth role and fast-laned revenues by 56% from 2024 to 2025. The company is on pace to break \$1 million this year and moved, during this time, from Hanson and a part-time employee to three more full-time team members.

Before, Streamline Lawn Care used Google Sheets and Docs, and Hanson realized productivity depended on his “kicking out a schedule.”

“I was wearing too many hats,” he says, relating that technology has given him the freedom to think big picture. “I’m able to market, I created a better business plan, and the results are night and day.”

The author is a freelance writer based in Ohio.

For more research, visit bit.ly/2026lawntech



Built for landscape businesses that never stop growing

MAINTENANCE | CONSTRUCTION | SNOW & ICE



Know your actual job costs **33% faster***
in real time, not at month-end



Spend **18% less time** managing your
sales funnel* and more time closing



Schedule jobs **32% quicker***
and keep your crews moving



Spend **24% less time** on invoicing
and A/R* with back-office operations
that run themselves

“Last year we grew 25%, and this year, we are on track to grow 30%. Without Aspire, we couldn’t have achieved this.”

– Greg Cole, President | Cole Landscaping



See what's possible.
Scan to explore Aspire.

*Results are illustrative of certain customers' success; your individual results may vary