

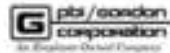
VIEW THE 2010  
LANDSCAPER'S  
CHALLENGE  
SEMI-FINALISTS

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## FULL STORY



### Features - Cover Story TOP 100

8/13/2010

An a-to-z guide of the best ideas from the industry's biggest companies.

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The biggest companies in the landscape industry didn't get there by chance. Hard work, business intelligence and a willingness to try new ideas all play a part in any company's success. The trick is finding good ideas to try.

This year, Lawn & Landscape took an alphabetical approach to its annual Top 100 list, picking out the best ideas, strategies and programs from some of the best companies in the industry: Nanak's Landscaping used cloud computing to gather all its employees' knowledge in one place. Dennis' 7 Dees diversified into retail garden centers to help smooth out cash flow and safeguard against market instability. Urban Gardener pursued LEED-certified jobs. ISS Grounds Control implemented a quality control system for its jobs.

All of these things aren't necessarily easy to implement, but they aren't hard to do, either. Your company might not start building zoos overseas and open up offices in Dubai like ValleyCrest, but that doesn't mean you can't branch out into new markets in your region – or new regions entirely.

So, check out the ideas and see what might work for your company as you finish up 2010 and start planning for 2011. Maybe next year, you'll see yourself on this list.

We make every effort to identify and contact companies via e-mail, phone and fax to gather the data to compile the Top 100 list. If you know of a company we missed, please contact Editor Chuck Bowen at [cbowen@gie.net](mailto:cbowen@gie.net) or 330-523-5330.

Lawn & Landscape's 2010 Top 100 List is sponsored by:



**\*\*Note:** Click the image of the Top 100 list below to enlarge, or [click here](#) to see the PDF.

2010 RANK	COMPANY
33	AAA Landscape
21	Acres Group
7	Ambius
15	American Civil Constructors
6	Bartlett Tree Experts
90	Benchmark Landscape
41	Cagwin & Dorward
51	Chalet
30 (t)	Chapel Valley Landscape Co.
24	Choate USA
61 (t)	Christy Webber Landscapes
65	Christy Weber Landscapes

### A is for acquisitions

With more than 120 offices worldwide, ValleyCrest Landscape Companies has grown from \$450 million in 1999 to leaping over the \$1 billion mark in annual sales within a decade. A good share of that growth has been fueled by strategic acquisitions.

The acquisition campaign has been in place since the '60s and fully engaged since the early '90s. Some notable examples include: Omni Landscape Group in 2004, adding \$50 million in annual revenue and more than 600 employees, expanding its operations primarily in the Mid-Atlantic; Pine Ridge in 2008 with 200 employees; and Waverly Landscape Associates with sales of \$45 million serving more than 300 commercial customers in metro Boston.

A crucial aspect of acquisition is successfully integrating new employees into the company culture. "Our companies are made up of people," says founder Burt Sperber. "And we spend a lot of time trying to learn about the people in the company. We spend as much time (as possible) understanding the philosophy of the people more than anything else and ensure that they have similar values that we have." – Tom Crain

### B is for best practices

The last couple of years have not been the ideal time to scour the markets to find new

78 (t)	Clarence Davids & Co.	business partners and advisers. Too bad the executive team at Teufel Landscape has had no other option.
22	Clintar Landscape Management	
40	CoCal Landscape	
45 (t)	Complete Landscaping Service	Just last year, during the height of the recession, Teufel executives received a call from their banker – a partner, an adviser and a reliable source for more years and decades than many employees have worked for the company. The bank was closing its lending business. Teufel needed to find a new credit source as quickly as possible.
72	Cornerstone Solutions Group	
68	Countryside Industries	
71	D. Schumacher Landscaping	"It could not have been a worse time to look for a banker," says Rick Christensen, landscape division manager and a veteran of almost three decades with the company. But that one drastic moment spurred Portland-based Teufel to examine and change major chunks of its business.
69	David J. Frank Landscape Contracting	
28	Denison Landscaping	Executives drafted a revised and realistic budget, recommitted to employee education and training, increased communication with both employees and customers with a monthly newsletter, and even found a way for the company to fund itself. Those best practices might not seem big, but they have paid big dividends.
73 (t)	Dennis' Seven Dees Landscaping	
59	Dixie Landscape Co.	
60	DLC Resources	"We're now at a point where we're comfortable with our size," Christensen says. – Matt LaWell
84	Dora Landscaping Company	
70	Ecoscape Solutions Group	
92	Gachina Landscape Management	
73 (t)	Gibbs Landscape Company	<b>C is for cloud computing</b> Nanak's Landscaping was a mess. Oh, the offices and the trucks and the folks at the top were just fine, but the organization of information on bid histories and properties was nothing short of a disaster on par with the city dump.
66	Girard	
58	Girard Environmental Services	"Everything we knew about our marketplace was contained in people's heads, in notebooks, on Post-it Notes, and that was all over the company in little bits and pieces," says Sampuran Khalsa, CEO, president and owner of Nanak's, which has six locations in Florida. "We all felt like we were experts in the markets, but we'd forgotten 90 percent of what was going on."
63	Gothic Grounds Management	
12	Gothic Landscaping	
53 (t)	Greenscape	The disorganization prompted Khalsa to start work on a cloud computing project that, during the last three years, has revolutionized the way the almost 20 employees in sales and marketing do business. Now, those employees put information into the system right after talking with clients, no matter where they are. They can turn on their smartphone before they even turn on the truck. All those bits and pieces of information – more than 7,000 jobs – are in the system. No more notebooks.
83	Hazeltine Nurseries	
82	Heads Up Landscape Contractors	
95 (t)	High Tech Landscapes	Installing the system took about a year, Khalsa says, and though it has not been without its challenges, it has been worth the investment.
36	ISS Grounds Control	
67	James River Grounds Mgmt	"There's really no way," Khalsa says, "you can keep everything in your head." – ML
23	Jensen Corp.	
42	L.J. Thalmann Co.	
78 (t)	Lambert Landscape Co.	<b>D is for diversifying</b> To diversify their company, David Snodgrass, president of Dennis' 7 Dees Landscaping & Garden Centers in Portland, Ore., and his partners, brothers Dean and Drew, went back to the foundation their grandparents built more than 80 years ago and bought back a group of garden centers.
25	Landscape Concepts Construction	
44	Landscape Concepts Management	
99	Landscape Specialists	
10	Lawn Doctor	The purchase helped stabilize the 200-plus employee company's balance sheet: 24 percent of its \$18.5 million in revenue last year came from residential design/build; 28 percent from commercial bid/build; 18 from landscape maintenance and 29 percent from retail.
26	Lipinski Outdoor Services	
87	LMI Landscapes	"It bucks the economy trend," Snodgrass says of his retail division's performance this year – up when other areas are stable or down. "That goes back to the diversification – the green industry is never hitting on all cylinders in all areas. Sometimes there are pockets of strength and pockets of weakness. Being diversified allows us to leverage the pockets of strength into the pockets of weakness." – Chuck Bowen
30 (t)	Lucas Tree Expert Co.	
38	Mainscape	
78 (t)	Maldonado Nursery & Landscaping	
30 (t)	Mariani Landscape	<b>E is for employee engagement</b> Recognition, innovation and empowerment are the tenets for employee engagement at Ruppert Landscape. By engaging employees, Ruppert management attests, the trickle-down effect starts with satisfied employees who then take ultimate care of their customers.
19	Marina Landscape	
56	Mariposa Landscapes	A shining example of morale boosting lies with employee giving and volunteering. "Our employees bring their ideas directly to us from their previous involvement in church and neighborhood causes already close and personal to them," says Chris Davitt, president. "When the cause also includes active involvement versus just a money contribution, it's a good fit for us." Popular causes have included a breast cancer walk, feeding the homeless, running a Wiffle Ball fundraising tournament and participation in an Extreme Home Makeover landscaping project.
57	Massey Services	
35	McDonnell Landscape	
52	McFall & Berry Landscape Management	
97	Meadows Farms	
50	Metroplex Garden Design Landscaping	
45 (t)	Mission Landscape Companies	Remaining decentralized allows Ruppert employees to control their own destiny. "A good way to motivate employees is to never let them get too far from the decision-making process," says Davitt.
61 (t)	Moore Landscapes	
34	Nanak's Landscaping	
29	NaturalLawn of America	Sustainability practices have all been driven from the employees on up. This has led to innovative projects such as the installation of a 10,000-gallon cistern to collect and store rainwater, hosting of a sustainability summit for existing clients, installations of green roofs and recycling of waste materials on job sites. – TC
43	Nissho of California	
76	Odyssey Landscaping	
13	OneSource Landscape & Golf Services	
01	Outside Unlimited	
		<b>F is for focus</b>

91	Outside Unlimited	The current recession is nothing new to James Oyler, owner of Dora Landscaping in Apopka, Fla. This recession is the fifth he and his company survived.
89	Realty Landscaping Corp.	
49	Reybrun Landscape Contractors	Oyler's focus on selective bidding has allowed Dora Landscaping to provide quality projects and uphold the integrity of the industry. When flocks of contractors undercut or inaccurately estimate the cost of a job, Oyler stays out of the fray.
98	Ronning Landscaping	
16	Ruppert Landscape Company	"We had these issues in other recessions," he says. "When things were bad, we scaled the business down and were selective of who we worked for. We're already very selective of who we work for, but we became more selective in the bidding process."
85	Russell Landscape Group	
86	Ryan Lawn & Tree	
17	SavATree	Oyler's basic method is to avoid jobs that already have four or five bids. He knows from experience that people who jump into the industry and drive prices down hurt those professionals who know the true cost of business as well as the industry as a whole.
55	Scott Byron & Co.	
5	Scotts LawnService	"It doesn't make sense to bid on a job where there are 16 contractors," he says.
48	Sebert Landscaping	And regardless of what the future brings, Oyler says he will continue bidding selectively.
73 (t)	Senske Lawn & Tree Care	"This is my life's work," he says. "What happens in this industry we care about greatly, so we have a duty to make sure the pricing is upheld so our guys can have health insurance, uniforms, vacations – so we can treat people the way they want to be treated." – Bo Gemell
64	Shearon Environmental Design	
37	Sierra Landscape Co.	
39	Spring-Green Lawn Care Corp.	
94	Sun City Landscapes	<b>G is for green</b> A cost-control initiative at Brickman resulted in new, green vehicles to complement the company's fleet of signature brown and tan trucks. Brickman's heavy-duty Ford work trucks are now joined by about 500 Toyota Priuses.
95 (t)	Sunrise Landscape	Account managers and branch managers used to use their personal vehicles and get reimbursed by Brickman, so switching to the Priuses helped control costs and save an estimated 280,000 gallons of fuel per year.
93	Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care	
47	Teufel Landscape	
3	The Brickman Group	The switch also gave Brickman the chance to do some rebranding and show customers the company's stance on sustainability. The new fleet of white hybrids features a green Brickman logo, a grass skirt and the phrase "Plant Friendly. Planet Friendly." – BG
20	The Bruce Co. of Wisconsin	
4	The Davey Tree Expert Co.	
53 (t)	The Greenery	<b>I is for international expansion</b> ValleyCrest first became an "international" company when it landed the contract to landscape the sprawling Atlantis hotel in the Bahamas around the mid-1990s. This opened up opportunities for other Caribbean projects including Blackadore Caye and Ambergris Caye, Belize, and Moon Palace Golf, Casino & Spa in the Dominican Republic.
27	The Groundskeeper	Now, ValleyCrest is setting its sights on conquering the Eastern Hemisphere.
81	The Highridge Corp.	It set up ValleyCrest Middle East to assist its United Arab Emirates (UAE) customers, a burgeoning market for ValleyCrest, on a wide range of commercial real estate projects from destination theme parks to master-planned communities. Its projects include Al Ain Wildlife Park and Resort, Al As'adain Mosque in UAE; Al Nakheel Palace and Hawadi-King Abdullah Economic City in Saudi Arabia and the Four Seasons Hotel in Bahrain.
1	The TruGreen Cos.	
9	U.S. Lawns	
77	Urban Farmer	In collaboration with Suzhou Garden Development Co. in China, ValleyCrest built The Garden of Flowing Fragrance for the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens, in San Marino, Calif. This year, several design assignments are in progress or completed in China.
18	USM	
2	ValleyCrest Landscape Companies	
14	Vila & Son Landscaping Corp.	
88	Villa Park Landscape	
8	Weed Man	
100	Western Dupage Landscaping	
11	Yellowstone Landscape Group	

"Internationally, this economy has opened a whole world to us," says Richard Sperber, CEO and president. "Becoming more of an international company is an exciting challenge." – TC

### J is for job measuring

Fertilizer is included in the residential and commercial maintenance programs offered by Villa Park Landscape in Orange, Calif. "Our customers love it, because our jobs always look good and we do not have to hassle property managers with proposals that have to be approved every three months in order to spend money on fertilizer," owner Javier Reyes says. But when fertilizer costs soared, Reyes started scrutinizing his company's fertilizer use. He discovered the company was over-fertilizing, its spreaders were not calibrated, and its laborers did not know how to use the spreaders effectively.

To remedy these inefficiencies, he got rid of battered spreaders and focused on maintaining properly calibrated ones. And the company started using Google Earth to measure accurate square footage for every jobsite. By separating turf from planter beds and slopes, employees can accurately measure square footage and calculate the exact amount of fertilizer needed per job site.

"Our foremen and supervisors used to eyeball turf areas and request eight 50-pound bags," Reyes says. "We realized in some cases we were applying as much as three times the amount of necessary fertilizer. Now we can continue to provide this service and it's not killing us financially." – Julie Collins

### K is for keeping focused

The Greenery decided to distinguish itself from its competition this year by focusing on ways to exceed customers' expectations.

Lee Edwards, CEO of the company in Hilton Head Island, S.C., says that punctuality is key. The Greenery has in-house training programs to instruct employees on calling back customers within four hours and having friendly interactions with both residential and corporate customers.

The employees also do role playing so they can project a good image and high level of professionalism.

"People see somebody who is walking around their yard grumbling and gruff looking – it just doesn't give as good a feeling as if somebody says 'good morning' or 'how are you?'" he says. Edwards says the company has always had a focus on customer service,

but the new training program helps employees learn how to handle certain situations.

"It's like that old saying: 'Customer service isn't a department, it's an attitude,'" Edwards says. "If somebody needs something, you're the person who needs to take care of it." – BG

**L is for LEED**

It's all about LEED for Thornton, Colo.-based Urban Farmer. The landscape construction, maintenance and reclamation company has made a name for itself wying on projects that pursue LEED certification from the U.S. Green Building Council – and it's paying off. Last year, the company increased its revenue by 1.3 percent, and it's poised for another 1.5 percent jump in 2010, thanks in no small part to the fact that "80 to 90 percent of the jobs we're doing are LEED at some level," says Sean Lynam, head of business development.

That's why a number of Urban Farmer employees – including Lynam, a vice president, an estimator and a project manager – are working on obtaining LEED certification. "We've done enough jobs that are LEED that we're in the loop on what's going on with it, but getting our LEED certifications will bring us up to speed so we can speak intelligently and know how our piece is affecting the overall project," Lynam says.

Even when the company isn't working on LEED projects, it still emphasizes sustainability. "For us, when it's LEED-certified, there's not a whole lot we do differently than any other project," Lynam says. "It's just going in and making sure we're hitting those milestones and requirements, whether it's installing an all-drip irrigation system or catchbasins for rainwater." – JC

**M is for minimizing pesticide use**

Ted Hofer, CEO of Spring-Green Lawn Care, says the industry has a responsibility to look at herbicide use. The six franchises that the company owns now focus on an injection system that has allowed them to decrease herbicide use by 70 to 80 percent.

Spring-Green doesn't promote the program to customers yet because it's part of a two-year test in the six franchises. It does try to communicate a message about general environmental responsibility. The green message is everywhere, Hofer says, and Spring-Green saw it as an opportunity to take action.

"The main part of the test is getting the same quality of service," Hofer says. "Our testing is showing that there isn't a rise in complaints." – BG

**N is for new trucks**

Anybody can talk a good game about crew safety. But ValleyCrest takes it one step further – giving new Ford Rangers to employees for superior performance as part of its safety program. This is the eighth year the company has given away the trucks – making 42 in all.

To qualify, full-time field employees must complete one year of service with no accidents and be employed by a branch that meets or exceeds the company's threshold safety standards.

And the program seems to work: Since its introduction, overall claims have dropped 60 percent. With more than 4,200 trucks on the road each day, that's no small feat. – CB

**O is for organic**

Canada has some of the most restrictive measures on the use of pesticides. Because of this, Weed Man, headquartered in Oshawa, Ontario, had to change the entire way it does business. Just ask Chris Lemcke, director of technical services.

The company learned early on that fighting the pesticide ban was futile because the tide was too strong. Instead of spending all its resources trying to reverse the tide, Weed Man hopped the crest of the wave and rode it instead.

Now, at the forefront of research and development of organic pesticides, Weed Man is not just surviving, it's thriving while many of its Canadian competitors have been sucked under.

Weed Man recognizes that south of the border, organic lawn care is a growing business segment. "More of our U.S. landscape industry professionals are looking to organic solutions to expand their market and grow their businesses as they realize that more restrictive pesticide legislation in the U.S. is inevitable," says Lemcke.

Organic pesticides can't deliver the exact same results as traditional controls, so, it also requires some re-education. Weed Man's technicians must work with customers to inform them that they should not expect a weed-free lawn in the future. – TC

Rank	Company	Headquarters	2009 Revenue (\$ mil)	% Change vs. 2008	Franchises/Company Owned	2009 Employees	2009 Revenue per Employee (\$K)
1	The TurfCare Co.	Stow, Ohio	\$131.175	1%	10/0	163	803
2	Suburban Landscaping Companies	Calhoun, Ga.	\$96.850	0%	0/100	163	594
3	The Erdman Group	Calhoun, Ga.	\$65.100	1%	0/100	2,218	\$294
4	The Lawn Care Experts Co.	Knox, Ohio	\$44.110	5%	10/0	6,624	261
5	Northwest Landcare	Waukegan, Ill.	\$27.600	1%	10/0	163	169
6	Barth's Landscaping	Stow, Ohio	\$26.000	1%	1/1	1,200	30
7	Arden	Buffalo, Colo.	\$23.500	1%	10/0	163	145
8	Weed Man	Oshawa, Ontario	\$19.800	0%	19/0	1,800	\$110
9	U.S. Lawn	Oxford, Pa.	\$18.000	0%	0/100	163	110
10	Lawn Doctor	Atlanta, Ga.	\$16.000	1%	1/1	40	400
11	ValleyCrest Landscaping Group	Flora, Pa.	\$14.000	0%	0/100	1,125	125
12	Yella Landscaping	Atlanta, Ga.	\$14.000	1%	19/0	1,800	160
13	Cher's Lawn Landscaping & Soil Services	Tampa, Fla.	\$14.000	0%	0/100	163	100
14	World Service Landscaping Corp.	Waco, Texas	\$12.500	4%	1/1	600	10
15	Arden's Land Care Services	Lynchburg, Va.	\$12.500	1%	10/0	163	100
16	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
17	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
18	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
19	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
20	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
21	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
22	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
23	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
24	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
25	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
26	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
27	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
28	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
29	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
30	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
31	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
32	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
33	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
34	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
35	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
36	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
37	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
38	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
39	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
40	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
41	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100
42	Spring Green Lawn Care Corp.	Portland, Maine	\$12.500	1%	1/1	163	100

**Q is for quality management**

Dale Micetic, president of the landscape division of Phoenix-based ISS Grounds Control, understands that service providers need to "close the back door" to keep clients happy.

"You can bring all the contracts in the front door, but if you can't close the back door you're just churning out relationships," Micetic says.

"You're churning through money and you're losing the opportunity to gain long-term relationships."

Micetic instituted the Quality Counts program to monitor employee performance and customer satisfaction. ISS Grounds Control looks for process improvements by going out and rating levels of care in all aspects of landscaping. If they see something that can be improved, they instruct the workers and return later for a follow-up inspection.

The company also hired a firm to create e-mail surveys for clients. Micetic likes e-mail because he thinks clients are more open with their feedback than they are in face-to-face critiques.

"The goal is to build longevity in your relationships," he says. "You do that through understanding the customers."

He says companies should ask their clients two questions: "What are we doing well?" and "What makes it difficult to work with our company?" – BG

2010 Rank	Company	Headquarters	2009 Revenue	% Change from 2008	% of Total 2010 Revenue	2009 Employees	2010 Employees
43	Brooks of California	Orinda, Calif.	\$27,750,000	10%	1%	10	10
44	Landscape Concept Management	Greenville, S.C.	\$26,710,000	1%	1%	100	200
45	Complete Landscaping Service	Beaumont, Tex.	\$25,950,000	9%	2%	250	250
46	Western Landscape Concepts	Irving, Calif.	\$25,000,000	11%	8%	328	310
47	Southwest Landscape	Portland, Ore.	\$24,900,000	2%	1%	100	40
48	Southwest Landscaping	Beaumont, Tex.	\$24,800,000	3%	1%	50	200
49	Brookman Landscape Contractors	Honolulu, Haw.	\$24,500,000	1%	1%	10	10
50	Westport Garden Design Landscaping	Dallas	\$24,000,000	1%	1%	15	15
51	Chambers	Wichita, Kan.	\$23,870,000	1%	1%	100	140
52	Jeffrey & Sons Landscape Management	Millersville, Pa.	\$23,800,000	1%	1%	100	130
53	The Greenery	Wilmington, N.C.	\$23,800,000	2%	1%	300	300
54	Greenquest	East Taunton, Mass.	\$23,800,000	1%	1%	10	10
55	Scott Brown & Co.	Lake Bluff, Ill.	\$23,800,000	1%	1%	75	140
56	Westport Landscapes	Irvington, Calif.	\$23,800,000	1%	1%	10	10
57	Wesley Services	Channahon, Ill.	\$23,800,000	1%	1%	10	10
58	Garland Environmental Services	Savannah, Ga.	\$23,270,000	1%	1%	10	10
59	Dale Landscapes Co.	Miami	\$23,240,000	1%	1%	10	10
60	B.C. Proscapes	Phoenix	\$23,000,000	1%	1%	100	110
61	Orbita Outdoor Landscaping	Chicago	\$23,000,000	1%	1%	75	180
62	Weston Landscapes	Northbrook, Ill.	\$23,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
63	Greenline Grounds Management	Vancouver, B.C.	\$22,760,000	1%	1%	10	10
64	Weston Environmental Design	Phoenix	\$22,600,000	1%	1%	10	10
65	Orbita Outdoor Landscapes	Chicago	\$22,100,000	1%	1%	10	10
66	Garland	Savannah, Ga.	\$21,900,000	1%	1%	10	10
67	James River Grounds Management	Cheneyville, Va.	\$21,700,000	1%	1%	10	10
68	Lawrence & Partners	Waukegan, Ill.	\$21,500,000	1%	1%	10	10
69	Daniel's Earth Landscaping Contracting	Greenwich, Conn.	\$21,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
70	Ecospaces Services Group	Charlotte, N.C.	\$18,300,000	1%	1%	10	10
71	D. Schuchman Landscaping	Westfield, Mass.	\$18,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
72	Greenhouse Solutions Group	East City, Tex.	\$18,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
73	Senske Lawn & Tree Care	Kennewick, Wash.	\$18,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
74	Libbe Landscaping Company	Savannah, Ga.	\$18,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
75	Debra's Lawn Care Landscaping	Portland, Ore.	\$18,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
76	Orbita Outdoor Landscaping	Chicago	\$18,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
77	Michael Farmer	Phoenix, Ariz.	\$18,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
78	Walden-Henry R.C. Landscaping	Savannah, Ga.	\$18,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
79	Chambers Landscaping Co.	Wichita, Kan.	\$18,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
80	Landmark Landscaping Co.	Dallas	\$18,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
81	The Highgate Corp.	Frederick, Md.	\$17,875,000	1%	1%	10	10
82	Health Up Landscape Contractors	Albuquerque, N.M.	\$17,500,000	1%	1%	10	10
83	Handley-Hamilton	Warren, Ill.	\$17,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
84	Orbita Landscaping Company	Chicago	\$17,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
85	Brookman Landscaping Group	Channahon, Ill.	\$16,800,000	1%	1%	10	10
86	Brookman & Fox	Charlotte, N.C.	\$16,740,000	1%	1%	10	10
87	EDL Landscapes	Carrollton, Texas	\$16,675,000	1%	1%	10	10
88	Willa Park Landscapes	Chicago, Ill.	\$16,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
89	Health Up Landscaping Corp.	Frederick, Md.	\$16,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
90	Brookman Landscaping	Phoenix, Ariz.	\$15,970,000	1%	1%	10	10
91	Orbita Outdoor Landscaping	Chicago	\$15,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
92	Greenline Landscaping Management	Wichita, Kan.	\$14,975,000	1%	1%	10	10
93	Southwest Lawn Care Landscaping Co.	Dallas	\$14,500,000	1%	1%	10	10
94	Law Office Landscaping	Las Vegas	\$14,300,000	1%	1%	10	10
95	High Tech Landscapes	Rockledge, Fla.	\$13,500,000	1%	1%	10	10
96	Scott's Landscapes	Tampa, Fla.	\$13,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
97	Weston Landscapes	Chattanooga, Tenn.	\$12,400,000	1%	1%	10	10
98	Weston Landscaping	Phoenix, Ariz.	\$12,000,000	1%	1%	10	10
99	Landscaping Specialists	Lake Forest, Calif.	\$11,500,000	1%	1%	10	10
100	Western Design Landscaping	Phoenix, Ariz.	\$11,500,000	1%	1%	10	10

### R is for recycling

Mission Landscape earned its designation as the only integrated landscape firm in California with a California Integrated Waste Management Board-approved recycling facility and green-waste center.

"Recycling green waste completes the cycle of design, development and maintenance," says David DuBois, Mission's CEO. For the past 20 years, Mission turned plant debris into certified environmentally clean materials. In 2009, Mission diverted more than 12,000 tons of green from the landfill and sold more than 58,000 yards of mulch.

That not only translates to immense cost savings, but also provides tremendous environmental benefits including the reduction of fertilizers and chemicals, erosion control, weed suppression, water conservation, enhanced plant healthcare and soil enhancement.

Mission's compost has been used successfully in wetland restoration and rebuilding slopes devastated by fire. It's now using compost as a source of renewable energy for biomass systems and bioremediation of petroleum-contaminated soils. And recycled palm fronds are being used as longer-lasting slope stabilization agents. — TC

### S is for sales systems

Retaining customers in a market hard-hit by recession is tricky. And making new sales in this economy? That's even harder. This year, Senske Lawn & Tree Care of Kennewick, Wash., has risen to the challenge by giving its sales team the tools they need to succeed.

"We put in a significant accountability system where goals are established, and then there's frequent coaching to make sure salespeople are meeting those goals," owner Chris Senske explains. "It's establishing sales and contact figures and cold calls and making sure we can help our salespeople get enough work coming in the pipeline so they can be successful."

The system includes weekly meetings where salespeople report their progress to managers. The company implemented the system in January. Currently, sales are about equal to last year at this time — but to Senske, that's progress. "On the West Coast, the downturn is still ramping up, so we're satisfied. We'd like to have more, of course, but we're at least matching last year's sales." — JC

### T is for Tenure

We live in a culture where it feels almost wrong to not multitask. But Sampuran Khalsa, the CEO, president and owner of Nanak's Landscaping, just wants to allow his employees the opportunity to focus on what they do best.

"We realized early on that we needed to give our company the kind of environment where landscapers who were talented enough to run their own business would choose to stay with us," Khalsa says. "When you have people with that kind of initiative and talent, if you give them the support they need, they can be free to be great landscapers."

The vision has helped Nanak's spread to six locations across Florida since it was founded in 1973, and it has also allowed Khalsa to retain hundreds of his employees for long stretches of time. The average tenure for the 75 employees on the management team is more than nine years. Dozens more employees have worked for Nanak's for more than two decades.

During a generation of general movement up the corporate ladder, where jumping from one company to another is common, the stability at Nanak's has allowed the company to experience whole cycles together and react quickly when similar events occur.

"The organization can handle those things," Khalsa says, "without them becoming major crises." — ML

### U is for upper management

The plummeting economy hit the construction division of Andre Landscape Service, Azusa, Calif., hard. So owner Jeremy Andre decided it was time to get leaner — much leaner. "I've made management and salesperson cuts throughout the landscape maintenance, landscape construction and tree divisions," Andre says. "And I cut upper management and pretty much all my sales staff in my construction division."

Although the company's revenue increased in 2009, Andre saw signs of the economic slowdown even then. "Then it went really bad this year," Andre says. As a result, the company's construction division now has one superintendent managing and running the field and one employee handling sales. Andre says cutting upper management allowed him to hold onto those employees in the field he needs most.

And there are still plenty of salespeople on board in the maintenance and tree divisions. "They're actively pursuing a lot of sales right now," Andre adds. Yet odds are, the company won't be adding upper management positions back in the construction division anytime soon. "I see things staying lean for a while," Andre says. — JC

### V is for video conferencing

When your company has seven locations spread across three states, gathering employees in one spot for a meeting can be expensive and complicated. Just ask Chris Senske, owner of Senske Lawn & Tree Care. For meetings, Senske was bringing employees into the corporate office in Kennewick, Wash., from offices as far as 700 miles away. Now, with telephone and video conferencing capabilities, he doesn't have to. Employees from all of the company's locations can stay put and participate in meetings and trainings online.

Senske is preparing for the first major test of the system, when the company's customer service manager will conduct data entry training with salespeople from each location simultaneously. "They'll be able to interact online with the computer data system and learn how to enter customer information with the customer service person in the office," Senske says. The new technology isn't designed to replace all in-person interactions, however. "Our plan is to have face-to-face meetings at least twice a year for managers and sales folks," Senske says. "We still think the interaction you get from the actual training — talking with each other and exchanging information at dinner — is important, too." — JC

**W is for working smarter**

Thomas Tolkacz wanted a change. His company, Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care, and his employees were performing well. But how could they perform better? What could he tweak in order for them to work smarter?

The answer arrived in the form of a series of energetic Internet video clips for the Working Smarter Training Challenge, a program designed by JP Horizons that lasts a year and involves all employees. Tolkacz and Swingle, which has headquarters in Denver, started the program in January.

"There is low-hanging fruit and you are going to find the simple fixes in your process to drop your bottom line," Tolkacz says. "But the program is more of a long-term investment that will provide returns over time."

Tolkacz is not finished, of course, but already he and his 200 employees have discovered inefficiencies in everyday business. Each truck used to be gassed up each night, no matter how many miles it had traveled that day. When each fill takes 15 or 20 minutes, that times adds up. So did the time needed to dump the trucks each day, so Tolkacz rearranged the lots. The biggest reward, though, has been seeing so many employees deliver presentations for the series.

"You're giving a lot of people confidence and the ability to talk with their peers," he says. "That's exciting to me." – ML

**Z is for zoos**

It was a landmark deal for ValleyCrest when in 1998 it landed a \$75 million contract to build Walt Disney's Animal Kingdom in Orlando, its largest contract to date. Then, it was awarded the San Diego Zoo. Fast forward a little over a decade and shift 8,000 miles to the east: ValleyCrest is now taking on another high-profile and lucrative zoo project, Al Ain Wildlife Park & Resort in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

In a desert setting on the edge of a historic oasis settlement, this \$1 billion, 2,000-acre zoo is being created as a place for people to come and learn about arid land wildlife and conservation through first-hand experience, including desert safaris. It's part of a mixed-use facility including a hotel where residents can watch animals from their balconies.

One of ValleyCrest's most significant challenges on this grandiose zoo project is to take on the preservation, and often times the relocation, of up to 1,000 mature trees. It's been deemed "Operation Green Fingers" under the blessings of his Royal Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed al Nahyan, president of the UAE, himself. The procedure involves ValleyCrest's signature complex technique of creating a box made of eco-plastic lumber, this time produced in Dubai, for each tree it moves. – TC

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