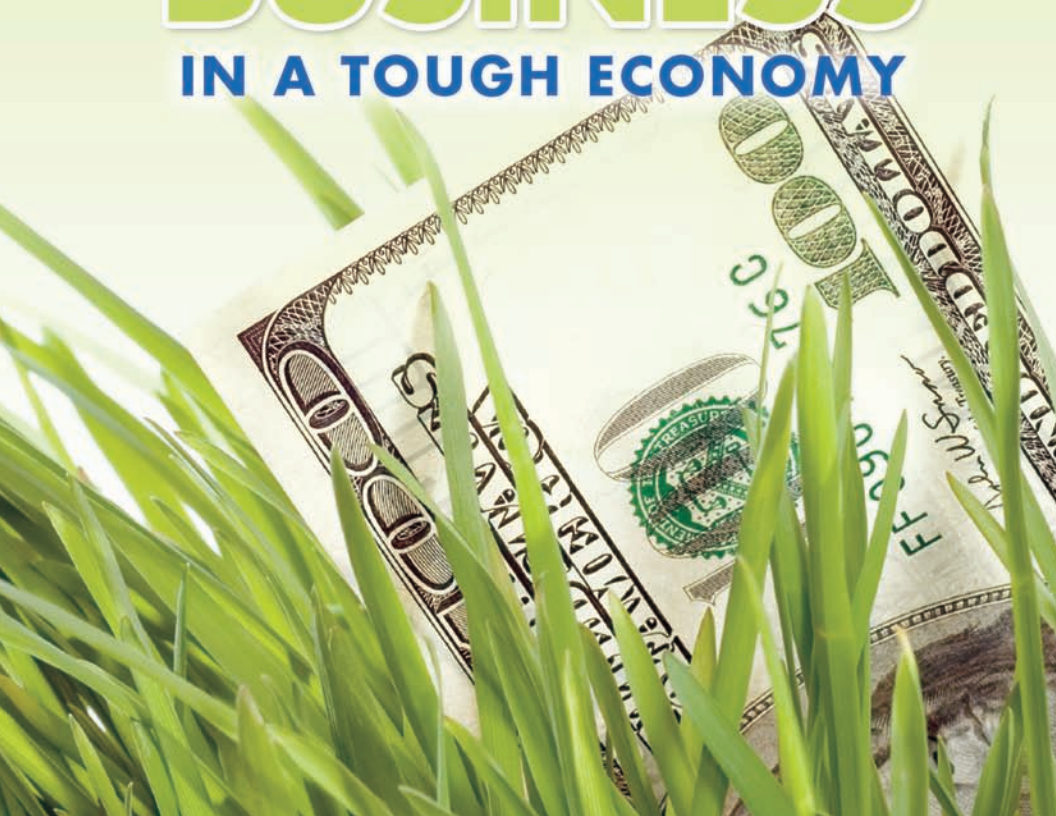


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PIPELINE

Summer 2009

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What we do is good. I overheard a conversation with an industry professional last month. He was speaking to the “fact” that St. Augustine grass consumed so much water. As an industry professional, he should know better. We should not allow the preference of one type of plant over another by vilifying a species. In the terms of Florida Friendly plantings, right plant right place. We should definitely not allow the demonization of turf.



We all know the benefits of turf grass like erosion control and cooling urban heat islands. Did you know the astounding fact that a 50’ by 50’ patch of well maintained turf provides enough oxygen for a family of four for a day? How about the fact that one acre of turf provides more oxygen per year than one acre of rainforest! We need to think about all the long term and far reaching benefits lawns do for us. Natural grass helps us sequester carbon, absorbs ozone and hydrogen fluoride along with other gaseous pollutants. Turf works as a catchment of rainwater for ground water replenishment. Its’ root mass and soil microbes filter the water during ground water replenishment. A 150 acre golf course will recharge the aquifer with 90 million gallons of water. The course would require 9 million gallons of water for irrigation. That leaves a net gain of 81 million gallons to the aquifer.

Turf grass also plays a significant role in dust stabilization, arresting air particulates and reducing smog pollution. In the 1960’s China experienced the Cultural Revolution under Chairman Mao. The regime decided to remove turf grass and many of the ornamental trees in an effort to eliminate all vestiges of western civilization. In the decades that have followed, dust and smog have increased significantly. We all remember the controversy before the Olympics about air quality in Beijing. The insufficiency of plant material to hold down dust and trap airborne particulates has become a health concern in the country. Green areas also play a role in our mental health. Studies have shown that patients with a “green view” recover faster. Mental health benefits include improved work productivity and a positive therapeutic effect. Turf and ornamental plantings are essential. What we do is good.

Best Regards,

Matthew Shreves

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Swiftmud May Pay For Water Programs

If you have an idea for an educational project that could promote water conservation, prevent water pollution or restore aquatic habitats, the Southwest Florida Water Management District could have some grant money to help make the idea a reality.

Swiftmud officials are seeking applicants for the Community Education Grant program, aimed at adults, as well as for its Splash!



Program, which is aimed at schoolchildren. The Community Education Grant program provides grants of up to \$5,000.

Some local projects that have qualified for this grant include Winter Haven's plans to schedule a series of presentations on water conservation in landscape irrigation and Lakes Education/Action Drive's work to put together

educational materials for special events held at local lakes.

To apply, visit the District's Web site at WaterMatters.org/communitygrants. The electronic application allows applicants to save, review and change portions of their proposal before submitting. The deadline is Aug. 21. To discuss project ideas, call Robin Grantham at 1-800-423-1476, ext. 4779.

The Splash! mini-grant program, which also offers grants of up to \$5,000, is intended to assist teachers with classroom projects that focus on water quality, natural systems, water conservation, alternative water sources, flood protection or watersheds. The goal of the program is to promote hands-on water resources education that teaches students about their local watersheds. The deadline to apply is Sept. 11.

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Northwest Chapter Nominates Board



The FIS Northwest Florida Chapter recently held its officer nominations, and they are President, Skeets Mez; Vice President, Richard Kirstin; Secretary, John Cusmano; and Treasurer Bill Brackett. The Chapter will be changing their meeting schedule for the summer months and will meet the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm at Perry's Legendary Seafood. Skeets Mez at (850) 936-6403, John Royals (850) 243-0911 or Matt Shreves at (251) 653-4555.

Promoting Smart Water Applications In Southeast

The Palm Beach-Martin Chapter members are currently focused on creating a basic irrigation education program. This program is to be targeted at contractors, employees of contractors and municipal irrigation staff. The Chapter believes basic irrigation education and training is what the local contractors would like most out of being members of the FIS. Hopefully, the Chapter will be able to provide this soon and, at the same time, generating a revenue stream for the chapter.

The Chapter is actively working with the SFWMD to help promote smart water applications. The Chapter has also been working with the City of Stuart to educate contractors and homeowners on the soil sensor rebate program. We will have a FIS community education booth set up at the City of Stuart Green Market event on Sunday, July 12. Everyone is welcome to come out and participate. It is also a good way to find new customers.

The Chapter's new membership chairwoman Kim Nienhouse of HD Supply has been doing a great job trying to drum up new members. Your work is greatly appreciated Kim!

The Chapter is still holding general membership meetings every other month. The next chapter meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 21. We would also like to remind the Dade-Broward members that there will be a Dade-Broward Chapter -VS- Palm Beach-Martin Chapter golf tournament rematch on September 25. If you would like details about the golf tournament, call (305) 863-9390.

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July is Smart Irrigation Month!



Whether you're in agriculture, landscape or golf course irrigation, whether you're a manufacturer, distributor, dealer, contractor or grower, and no matter how large or small your

The Irrigation Association named July as "Smart Irrigation Month" to promote efficient watering practices, technologically advanced irrigation products and water conservation. Smart Irrigation Month is an opportunity to draw attention to water-saving products, practices and services.

business, you can take part in Smart Irrigation Month. With growing demands straining water resources everywhere, it's important to promote water-saving products, adopt "best practices" and educate customers about how to do more with less.

The logo features a stylized fire graphic above the word 'HOT'. To the right is an octagonal stop sign with the word 'STOP' inside. Below 'HOT' is the word 'MELTDOWN' and below 'STOP' is the word 'PROTECTOR'. A small 'TM' trademark symbol is located between 'STOP' and 'PROTECTOR'.

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Tampa Manages Effects of Drought; Conducts Successful Golf Fundraiser



The FIS Tampa Bay Chapter has had a busy spring and is looking forward to an interesting summer. Our highest priority has been working with local authorities to manage the effects of our region's 3-year drought. SWFWMD, the regional water management district has imposed modified phase 4 restrictions, essentially one day a week between midnight and 4 a.m. for most homeowners. On top of that, the City of Tampa completely banned the use of automatic sprinklers for nearly two months. The Chapter's members have stepped up to help address this crisis through participation on the SWFWMD green industry advisory committee, participation on the City's water resource technical advisory committee and presenting to various groups, boards and

councils our desire to help manage the water resource in a way that will prevent a reoccurrence of this crisis.

The chapter also conducted another very successful golf tournament. There were 29 teams, three beverage carts and a beautiful day for golf. With the help of the chapter was sponsors and gift prize donors, the chapter was able to raise over \$2,000 for charity.

Additionally, the Chapter's education committee has been active both on a local level and a state level. Members have scheduled or conducted a number of important classes and have enlisted the specialists in bringing high quality targeted educational opportunities to FIS members statewide.

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AUGUST 2009

August 4

Tampa Bay Chapter Meeting
CDB's Southside, Tampa

August 11

Northwest Florida Chapter Meeting
Perry's of Niceville Legendary Seafood
& Steaks, Niceville

Volusia Chapter Meeting
Clubhouse Restaurant, Daytona Beach

August 19

Southwest Florida Chapter Meeting
Alligators, Fort Myers

SEPTEMBER 2009

September 1

Tampa Bay Chapter Meeting
CDB's Southside, Tampa

September 8

Palm Beach/Martin County
Chapter Meeting
Duffy's Sports Grill, Palm Beach Gardens

Volusia Chapter Meeting
Clubhouse Restaurant, Daytona Beach

September 16

Southwest Florida Chapter Meeting
Alligators, Fort Myers

OCTOBER 2009

October 6

Tampa Bay Chapter Meeting
CDB's Southside, Tampa

October 13

Northwest Florida Chapter Meeting
Perry's of Niceville Legendary Seafood
& Steaks, Niceville

Volusia Chapter Meeting
Clubhouse Restaurant, Daytona Beach

October 21

Southwest Florida Chapter Meeting
Alligators, Fort Myers

Value Selling – Your Insurance for the Future PART II

CREATING & GIVING A VALUE-BUILDING PRESENTATION

By Kurt K. Thompson, K Thompson & Associates, LLC

Value enables your company to keep more at the end of the day. Value is the tool to build worth in your company for the future. Value is what allows you to have the pride and satisfaction in your work that a price competitive strategy will not allow. The following is the second of a three-part article on the process of building value in your company, creating a separation that results in higher profitability.

G

TION

The Value Building Process

- 1. Understanding Your Market**
- 2. Creating & Giving a Value-Building Presentation**
- 3. Delivering on the Value Promise**

In part one of the value building process, we spent time taking an in-depth look at your own company, the customers whom you are targeting, and your competition. With this understanding, you can develop and deliver a presentation that will demonstrate your company's value over your competition's.



A presentation is the science of matching the product or services you want to sell with the customer's expectations and needs. Remember, if you are going to ask for more, then you need to show that you are giving more. The



“A great tool to use to deliver your presentation is a sales kit. This is a collection of props, graphics, and literature that reinforces the concepts you are relating to the customer.”

presentation is the forum for understanding what the customers expect and for explaining how your company will fulfill those expectations better than any other will.

Before the presentation can be started, an in-depth interview of the customer must take place. During the interview, the sales person will define the customer's specific needs and expectations. The interview may be a separate meeting or take place at the beginning of the meeting that the presentation is given. Without a complete understanding of the customer, the presentation could completely miss the target.

We have all heard many different versions of the rule that you sell the benefit, NOT the feature. Simply put, irrigation contractors do not sell sprinklers, they sell lush, healthy, green landscapes. Keep this in mind when creating and giving the presentation. There are three goals of the presentation that need to

be accomplished in a specific order to make the presentation a success. These goals, in order, are:

- Sell Yourself
- Sell Your Company
- Sell Your Product

Most customers will not trust what you are saying about your product or service unless they first believe that your company has integrity and is worthy of their business. Nor will the customer think much of your company unless they first believe you have the expertise and honesty that makes them feel comfortable. Therefore, your presentation must accomplish each of these three steps, in this order.

A great tool to use to deliver your presentation is a sales kit. This is a collection of props, graphics, and literature that reinforces the concepts you are relating to the customer. The sales kit should be organized using the three steps of selling. You can use a binder or folders to help organize the materials in

the order you want to present them. This way the components of the sales kit can act as a prompt for you to remember everything you need to explain to the customer and not have to use written notes.

To accomplish the first goal of selling yourself, print out a sheet of work experience biographies and professional credentials to place in the sales kit. Use these to explain your personal expertise by showing the customer how you gained your experience through past employers and formal education. If you have achieved industry credentials such as certifications and training, include copies of those certificates in your sales kit. Also include any community service awards or recognition you have received. The customers like to know you are tied to their community.

To accomplish the second goal of selling your company, include copies of your company's business license as well as certificates of liability and workers compensation insurance. Explain the benefit to the customer of their financial safety in doing business with contractors who have this. Letters from your banker and your material suppliers or the manufacturer also help to demonstrate that you're a sound business. Paying your bills on time also relates to the customer's financial security.

Professional industry affiliations are very important to a customer. Include current membership certificates in business or trade associations. You may want to

include a copy of the CIA's code of ethics.

People like to do business with those that they know well. Photos of your office, equipment, and employees are powerful ways to personalize your company to the customer. Include photos of your best jobs. They are especially good if the jobs are in the same community as the customer. If your company has received any industry awards for projects you have completed, be sure to incorporate them into the kit. Also include newspaper clippings or other records of community involvement in which your company as a group have been involved.

To wrap up the personal and company profile, show the customer list and include letters you have received from previous customers. Use only those names that are projects like the one you are proposing to the customer. If you are talking to them about a sports field project, showing specific residential projects can distract from your goal. In some cases, showing a previous project that has some public or community notoriety can benefit you even if it is a different type of project.

At this point in the presentation, you should be able to know if they think you are worthy of their business. There is no sense moving on to the product proposal if they are not secure with you and your company. As you have been going through your presentation to this point, you will have been looking and listening for positive indicators from the customers.

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The questions you ask along the way are to make sure that the points you make are being received correctly by the customer. Remember to ask the question, shut up, and listen. If you are not satisfied that the customer is comfortable with you AND your company, go back and review the key points. If everything is good, then move on to the product presentation.

The goal of the product presentation is to show the customers that you listened to and are meeting the needs with the proposed system as well as explain what they are paying for. Start by reviewing their needs you determined from the initial interview. Using a site survey checklist to review the things you considered in the system design shows the customer some key items the other contractors may overlook. If you have done a design for the presentation, go over the plan and everything that you have included. Again, emphasize the features your company includes that make you unique. Describe the products in terms of benefits, not features. Include color literature from the manufacturer in the sales kit. This is one of the best times to state the price of the system. A good technique is to use your proposal form as the outline for this part of the presentation. If you do not state the price here, you can include it at the end of the presentation.

Next, and probably the most important part of the product presentation, is to go through the installation procedures. Stress the importance of those procedures in terms of safety, financial security, and longevity. There should be an outline included in the sales kit so that the customers can follow along. If you have the association's installation standards, include them in the kit and presentation. Show the customer the final punch list you will use. Stress that unless they are satisfied with each item, the job is not complete.

You might include a sheet that shows trouble signs of poor contractor that the customer should watch for or ask about

if they are checking references. These would be the items that you provide or include, and make the difference in a customer paying for a better system. Examples would be no license, no certifications, no bank or supplier references, etc. Follow up with a detailed explanation of a contractor comparison checklist that you will leave with them. The customer can use it to compare the other contractors to your company.

To finish the presentation, show a copy of your mission statement and explain what it means to the customer. This should be a way to reinforce the philosophical integrity and your commitment to the customer to deliver the highest quality system for a fair price.

In this time of rushed schedules, a potential customer will rarely take the time to conduct detailed research on your company. Most do not know the types of things to ask about a contractor that would provide valuable decision-making information. They are going to rely on you as the main source of information about your company. As your presentation explains about your company, it can be done in a way to point out the critical features and why they are important benefits. Your presentation is the vehicle to deliver the information in a way that it becomes the benchmark by which your competitors are measured.

In order to become polished at presenting your company, nothing will substitute for practice. The reason the great presenters got that way was because of repetition. There has never been a better time to start practicing. The jobs are so plentiful that if you lose the job because of a novice presentation, there are ten more waiting for you. Start now and prepare for the slower times by becoming a proficient at getting more money because you give more value!

Next issue of The Pipeline will have the third and final part the Value Building Process.

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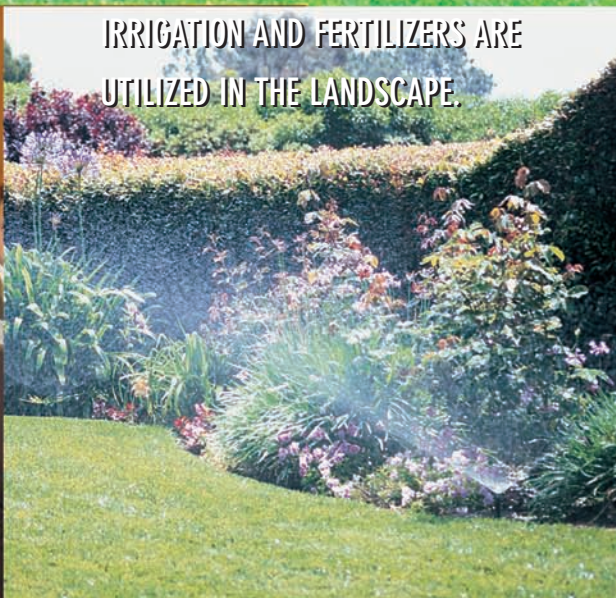


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FLORIDA GOVERNOR SIGNS LA IRRIGATION

By Jim Spratt, Director of Government Affairs
Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association

ON JUNE 18, 2009, FLORIDA'S GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST SIGNED INTO LAW SENATE BILL 494 -- "AN ACT RELATING TO WATER CONSERVATION". THIS NEW LANDMARK LAW CONTAINS THREE DISTINCT, YET SOMEWHAT RELATED, SECTIONS WHICH WILL SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGE THE WAY IRRIGATION AND FERTILIZERS ARE UTILIZED IN THE LANDSCAPE.



NEW AFFECTING PROFESSIONALS

First, SB 494 explicitly updates Chapter 373.62 Florida Statutes. This may be more familiar to you as the “automotive sprinkler system” or “rain shut-off device” law. Adopted in the early 1990s, the law requires all automatic irrigation systems to have a functioning rain shut-off device or switch. SB 494 expands this to include any technology that inhibits or interrupts operation of the system during periods of sufficient moisture.

The law also raises the expectation of licensed irrigation contractors by requiring those who install or perform work on automatic irrigation systems to test the functionality of the shut-off technology. The new law also requires shut-off technology be installed, replaced or repaired.

One of the best provisions of SB 494 is it recognizes irrigation professionals licensed at the local level as meeting the requirements of “licensed contractors.” The new law also authorized Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to develop a model fertilizer ordinance, as well as outline a fine or penalty matrix for compliance. The enforcement of this “model ordinance” will be handled at the local government level.

The second section of SB 494 provides incentives for the installation on certain “smart irrigation controllers.” These smart irrigation controllers must have the capability to be remotely monitored and adjusted, must utilize multiple soil moisture sensors to account for site-specific soil types and must be inspected annually by a professional engineer or

professional landscape architect licensed by the State of Florida.

The third section of SB494 addresses the application of fertilizer to the urban landscape. It encourages local governments to follow the statewide model fertilizer ordinance and requires local governments located within impaired watersheds to adopt the ordinance at a minimum. Although local governments aren’t prohibited from adopting rules more stringent than the model ordinance, local governments are required to include technical comments from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the University of Florida/IFAS regarding the scientific relevance of the more stringent provisions.

The law creates clear authority for the development and implementation on urban landscape Best Management Practices (BMPs) through FDEP and UF/IFAS and provides for approval of equivalent or more comprehensive programs, such as FNGLA’s Certified Horticultural Professional Program.

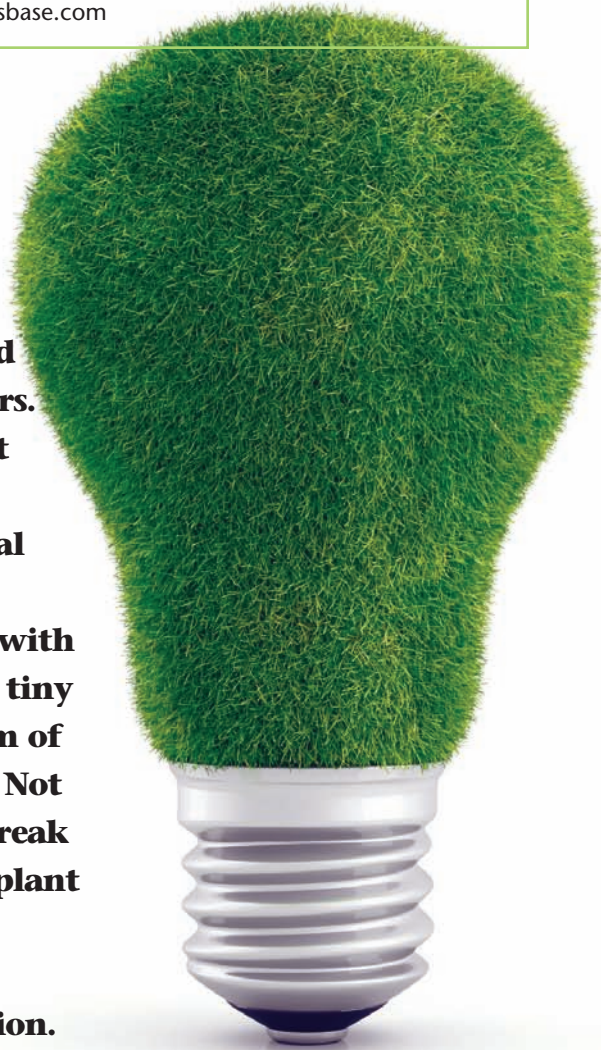
Lastly, SB 494 authorizes FDACS to issue a Limited Certification for the application of urban fertilizers. Individuals who possess the Limited Certification from FDACS are pre-empted from local government testing requirements relating to the application of urban landscape fertilizers.

Stay tuned as the new rules and regulations are certain to change the way irrigation professionals go about our business!

“Thinking Outside of the Box”
**Can Increase
Your Business**

By Rudy Labordus, www.articlesbase.com

An experiment was held one day with caterpillars. On the rim of a clay pot that held a plant, a biologist lined up several caterpillars so that the leader was head to tail with the last caterpillar. The tiny creatures circled the rim of the pot for a full week. Not once did any of them break away to go over to the plant and eat. Eventually, all caterpillars died from exhaustion and starvation.



The story of the processional caterpillars is a kind of parable of human behavior. People are reluctant to break away from the rhythmic pattern of daily life. They don't want to be different. If you want to succeed in business, that is, to reach horizons and goals you haven't reached yet, you need to change the things you're doing now. Start doing things that are different and monitor your progress.

One of our clients who run a retail water irrigation business changed its direction not so long ago. It did something radically different to anything it had done before. The result? Almost triple the result of its last campaign. Sometimes irrigation just isn't on people's shopping list during the summer or in a down economy. And even though they were the best in their industry, they did have competition - and their customers didn't really care which shop they were in - they just wanted their 'bits'. The public didn't always recognize the difference until they became a customer.

Establish An Identity

They needed to establish an identity that would make them stand out from the crowd. A lot of major corporations have some sort of identity or character that people relate to. McDonalds has a clown; Dulux has an old English sheep-dog. Monier roofing has a black cat; Toyota Camry has a chicken, and so on.

Market Research

Research showed that women aged 25-39 were the 'motivators' behind purchasing irrigation for the home, so we needed to look at creating something that would appeal to this group. Research also showed that women could more easily relate to their childhood memories. They relish

in their memories of such shows as Thunderbirds and Bill and Ben the flowerpot men.

In fact of 100 people surveyed, over 87 percent remembered these shows - even though they hadn't seen them on TV for years. And 99 percent had nothing but good memories of them. It was a powerful response.



Develop A Difference

We created two personalities for this company that people could easily relate to. We gave them names and a personality. The boy was called Ric and the girl Tic. This was a cute name derived from a popular term used in irrigation - 'reticulation'. The characters were designed to be interactive, warm and friendly. Once made, we initiated some more research to find out how people reacted to the new characters. Again the result was very favorable.

Ric and Tic are marionettes, have a sprinkler body, and the company name prominently printed on them. Their legs are garden hose and they are two very



We created two personalities for this company that people could easily relate to. The boy was called Ric and the girl Tic. This was a cute name derived from a popular term used in irrigation - 'reticulation'. The characters were designed to be interactive, warm and friendly.

happy characters. Once Ric and Tic were a reality, it was time to make the commercial. Naturally a good offer was needed (always have an offer) and a script written to introduce them.

Saturation

It was important to saturate the market to introduce Ric and Tic, but, as with any business, we had a reasonably tight budget. We decided the best use of our budget was to use only one TV station to get this message across. No other supporting media was used. We ran 300 commercials over a two-week period.

Before we ran the campaign, we asked the media to provide figures showing what they expected reach and frequency figures would be. The media research showed 95 percent of our market would see the ad (reach) and they would see the ad an average of 13 times (frequency). This is total saturation.

We needed saturation for two reasons. Firstly, we needed to get Ric and Tic established in the market, and secondly, we were encouraging people to install irrigation in a down time! We needed all the exposure we could get.

Success

Ric and Tic tripled the result of any of their previous summer campaigns. The success of Ric and Tic has shown that something different and some good focus can achieve incredible results. The store customers now know when they walk into these stores that they're in 'the right store' because of Ric and Tic.

They've created an identity - a personality for them that people can identify with. It helps make them unique and gives them an exceptional way to demonstrate their high customer service standards. And yes, you can even look forward to Ric and Tic toys for the kids!

So, the next time you're thinking about what to do with your business, think about the processional caterpillars and do something different. Break away from the every day. Chances are you'll be munching on lush greens long before anyone realizes you're gone. Good luck with your next advertising campaign!

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Mining the Gold in Your Existing Customer List

By Jeff Carowitz, Strategic Force Marketing



“Prepare your “gold mining” plan and materials now for quality sales leads all season long.”

Look around at all of your company’s assets : people, tools, equipment, computers, and more. Perhaps your most valuable asset is your list of high-quality, loyal customers. These clients are the backbone of your organization and can be counted on for steady business and referrals, season after season.

To be ready for 2009, make a plan to mine the gold in your customer list to sustain and to expand your business.

Wise marketers know the fastest way to grow your project backlog is to sell more to active customers. Now is a great time to see which of your customers might be candidates for a additional services.

Many clients that invested in landscaping or irrigation in the last 5 years will be ready to enhance their investment with lighting, ponds or other landscape enhancements. Make a target list of customers that have the right profile

(landscape size, property value, income, etc.) and launch your marketing efforts.

With your targeted list, approach them directly: in-person or by phone. Offer to do a lighting demonstration or to review your project portfolio with them. Show them that additional enhancements could add new impact and areas of interest into their existing landscape.

In addition, begin market lighting to your entire customer base using low-cost tools like billing statement stuffers, flyers, door hangers, and magnetic signs on your trucks. You’ll find that simply letting customers know you offer additional services will yield leads from the clients that know you best.

Prepare your “gold mining” plan and materials now for quality sales leads all season long.

Jeff Carowitz is a leading consultant to green industry businesses and can be reached at 760-532-7034 or Jeff@StrategicForceMarketing.com

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"Through John Deere Landscapes' Partners Program, I was able to offer very affordable health insurance to my employees with low monthly premiums and co-pays. The entire process was very simple and easy. Thanks again to John Deere Landscapes for their continuing efforts to lessen the burdens and growing pains of small business ownership!"

*Seth Pflum,
Spartan Landscaping, LLC*



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BUSTING MYTHS ABOUT COMPETITION:

MYTH

★ ★
VS.
★ ★

TRUTH

THE MAIN EVENT

PIPELINE SUM.09

By David Beausoleil, CAST Lighting

Every now and again, we hear a contractor complaint like this: "CAST trains too many contractors, the competition will drive down the price and trash the market!"

The Myth: If I am the only guy in my area installing lighting, I can set whatever price I want.

The Truth: A market with no competition exists only in communist and monopolistic economies. (Take a look at North Korea!) Competition forces efficiency and drives the capitalist system that you and I live in. In a capitalist soci-

ety, prices are not only driven by supply and demand, they are determined by the perceived value of the products and services you provide, and the willingness of consumers to pay you for this value. To compete, you must deliver value in the most efficient and cost-effective manner (more on this later).

Like it or not, you will have competition. The real question is, do you want GOOD competition or BAD competition? Trust me, bad competition is what you get without training and education.

The Myth: More competitors means more low-ballers and they will force me to lower my prices.

The Truth: It's true that some bad businessmen will try to low-ball the market. In our seminars and post-seminar support, we make sure that contractors learn how to bid intelligently. We also stress the fact that landscape lighting is not about selling fixtures; it's about selling designs. The landscape lighting industry is more akin to landscape design rather than electrical contracting. The better you get at design, the higher prices you will command. We have never seen a landscape lighting low-baller who succeeds in the long run.

This may surprise you; one contractor in the Mid-West asked us to organize a seminar at his home. He wanted to invite all his competitors to attend so they would better learn the value of their services and raise their rates to the level where professionally designed landscape lighting should be. He was a smart businessman; he understood that if all landscape lighting installers are trained well, then the whole industry benefits and good rates are assured.

The most profitable word in the English language is NO. "NO, I will not do that job for X, I will only do it for Y, and these are the reasons why my price is my price." The national average for closing contracting sales is 2 out of 10. Yes,

you will need to spend some time selling. Sales is a numbers and marketing game. Are you pre-qualifying your sales prospects? Are you in the game?

The Myth: More competition means that my share of the prospective local market will decrease.

The Truth: This is hardly the case. How hard are you really working the marketing of your lighting business? Don't forget that the landscape lighting industry is still growing at a phenomenal rate. The potential market is huge; even a small percentage of that market can generate more work than you could possibly handle.

Also, you will never be able to sell to every customer there is in your market. Your competitors have existing relationships that will deliver sales to your competitors not you. You simply can't be friends with every potential customer in your market. In addition, there is a mixture of dynamics, chemistry, personality, common interests, relationships and communication going on with every sale. Perhaps you aren't that great a salesman and need to work on your skills. But there is a bright side, every job the competition installs is drive-by advertising for you. As



**"LIKE IT OR NOT, YOU WILL HAVE
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more and more homeowners see beautiful landscape lighting, they will search out all competing designers including yourself, then it's up to you to make a convincing presentation.

You will get your fair share directly in proportion to the extent of your efforts and the quality of your work and reputation.

The Myth: The biggest threat to my business is my competition.

The Truth: The biggest threat to your business is you; or more specifically, your shortcomings in your business operation. This threat is internal, not external. If you're doing landscape lighting and you're not succeeding, then some things (or many things) are wrong in your business.

HAVE YOU DONE ANY OF THESE THINGS LATELY?

- ▶ Created a marketing plan
- ▶ Hired a salesman
- ▶ Hired an office manager
- ▶ Filled key organizational positions
- ▶ Enhanced your logo and tag line
- ▶ Prepared detailed financial statements and projections
- ▶ Prepared operating budgets and followed them
- ▶ Put graphics on your vehicles
- ▶ Held sales or organizational meetings
- ▶ Obtained a working capital loan from your bank
- ▶ Attended any professional development seminars
- ▶ Marketed to your existing customer base
- ▶ Identified your target market and purchased an updated mailing list

- ▶ Written job descriptions for all employees
- ▶ Written an employee manual
- ▶ Devised a sales presentation
- ▶ Answered the question, "what is my competitive advantage?"
- ▶ Answered the question, "why should a customer buy from me?"
- ▶ Joined any affiliated trade groups, done networking
- ▶ Developed extensive time studies to bid more accurately
- ▶ Built a sales kit
- ▶ Taken pictures of your projects and assembled a portfolio
- ▶ Planned your work and then worked your plan.
- ▶ Read the book "Selling the invisible" by Harry Beckwith

Start working on your business, not in your business. A smart man knows what he knows and knows what he doesn't know. If you need help, get it!

To conclude, we hope you see that your competitors are not hurting you. In fact, good competition ensures high rates and an ever-growing customer base. There is plenty of work to go around and we can all be successful as we ride the rising wave of the landscape lighting industry.



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It's Time for

“You really need to take a hard look at your books, your business and your plans to see which direction you’re heading. If that line has been travelling downward you had better make some changes fast!”



... a Checkup

By Kevin Colesworthy, Sales Manager, TWC Distributors, Inc.

So, how are you doing out there? Have you been doing new things? Better yet, are you doing things differently? I hope you answered “yes” because frankly, I don’t know how you could survive any other way BUT to have made a few changes in your company. Many of you are finding out if you are simply “In Business” or “A Businessman/Businesswoman” because there are distinct differences between the two.

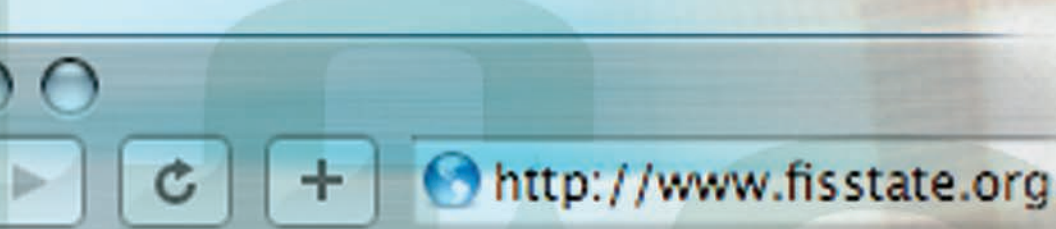
Just a couple of years ago the joke was that anyone could make money in the Florida irrigation market if they just had a shovel! There was an abundance of work everywhere you looked. You’d give a client a price, buy the material, put it in, collect a check then quickly move down the list to other projects. Most of you were even able to pay your bills on time! The opportunity to “Be in Business” was easy and many contractors lost good

employees because there was a Gold Rush going on. It’s not the same now, is it?

Being a Businessman (woman) separates you from those who struggle to find their way out of some bad situations. You’re able to reflect on solid business principles that grew your business and refine those techniques that have kept your doors open for so long. You also know that your trade associations and distributors are allies you need tremendously in times like these. Investigating new markets and researching new products that support profitability have rejuvenated your creative side. I’ll bet you can even define words like “margin”, “over-head”, “payables”, “receivables” and “diminishing returns”. Most importantly, you should have realized by now that you have to make money on every job.

Here’s a little tip that the successful businessman knows: Establish your sell price first, and then go look for lower costs. If you’re doing it the other way you’ll always give up the money you deserve. Don’t worry; there are a lot of backwards distributors, too!

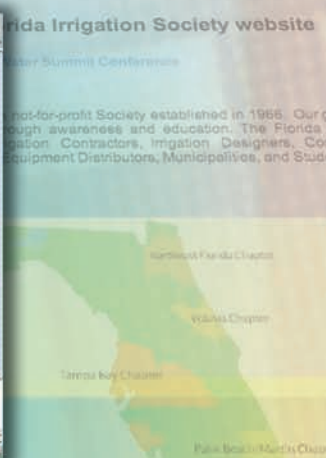
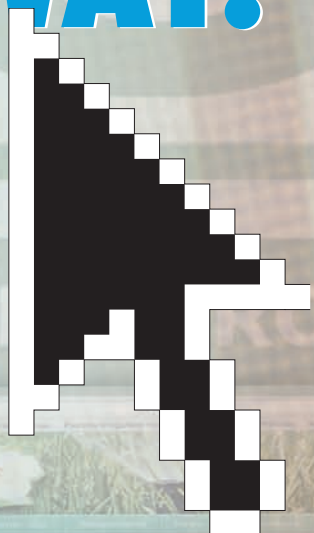
You really need to take a hard look at your books, your business and your plans to see which direction you’re heading. If that line has been travelling downward you had better make some changes fast! Just being “In Business” isn’t enough.



JUST ONE CLICK AWAY:

New FIS Website, Blogs & Interactivity

By **Valerie Macht**, 15 Studio, Website Developer
for the Florida Irrigation Society



The Florida Irrigation Society is proud to announce the launch on its new website. FIS wanted to give its members more information, interactivity, and a cleaner overall look. The new site should prove to be a very useful tool, so visit it often at www.fisstate.org!

Take a minute to explore the new features and information that is now available. One specific feature introduced is the ability to blog with other members of FIS. This tool will allow you to discuss important code changes and irrigation practices, read or make important announcements, and get the very latest on what is happening with your chapter.

Here are step-by-step instructions on how to register for and participate in your local FIS blog.

BLOG REGISTRATION

In order to register, please go to www.fisstate.org and navigate to your chapter's page (listed on the left side of the page) and then click on the link on the chapter page to go to the blog.

At the bottom of the blog page on the right, you will see a link named New User Registration.

When you click that link, it will take you to a login page. On that page, you will type in your desired User ID and your email address and then click register.

You should receive a confirmation email that contains your password. If you do not receive this email, please check your spam folder. This can take a couple minutes. If you have still not received it, contact the FIS Webmaster.

Once you have received your password, you may log in to your chapter's blog by visiting the main blog page and clicking the Login button on the bottom right, which will take you to the login page.

Once logged in, you may visit your dashboard, where you can edit your account and write posts. From there you can update your profile, change your password and participate in the blog.

PARTICIPATING

Once in your dashboard, you will go to the menu on the left under Posts and click the Add New button. This will allow you to type a blog entry that will appear on the blog page.

In order to comment on someone else's post, visit the main blog page and click on the

Comments button below the post. Your comment will not appear on the main page. Other users will only be able to read it by clicking on Comments.



The Florida Irrigation Society website was built by Valerie Macht. Her degree in graphic design and over 10 years of experience working with clients large and small allow her to give each client specialized attention, and do it at a surprisingly affordable rate. Samples of her work can be seen at www.15studio.com. Services offered include business cards and logo design, flyers and brochures, web design, and landscape design rendering. To contact Valerie about a project, please email her at valerie@15studio.com. Remember to mention the Florida Irrigation Society, as members get a 15% discount on any project.



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PLEASE MARK THE APPROPRIATE CLASSIFICATION(S) FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Installer of irrigation systems 2. Dealer in irrigation equipment 3. Distributor in irrigation equipment 4. Irrigation system design only 5. Manufacturer 6. Manufacturer's Rep 7. Well Driller 8. Registered Professional Engineer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Registered Landscape Architect 10. Certified IA Designer 11. Operator of irrigation systems 12. Certified Water Evaluator 13. List Other Certifications: _____ |
|---|---|

As a membership benefit, FIS will publish licensed contractor members (from counties that require testing) in the Membership Directory and on our Web Site (www.fisstate.org). If your business is located in a county that requires an irrigation contractor license through testing and you wish to be included in this listing, please provide us with your license number and county.

LICENSE # _____ COUNTY _____

Have you or your company ever been a member of the FIS before? _____

If so, when and how was the membership listed? _____

Are you a member of an FIS Chapter? If so, please name chapter. _____

If application for membership is accepted, the undersigned agrees to comply with the bylaws and minimum standards and specifications of the Florida Irrigation Society.

Signature of Applicant/Date _____ Signature of Sponsor/Date _____

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