

#### **First Rule of Evaluations**

Steven Cesare, Ph.D.

The Harvest Group, harvestlandscapeconsulting.com

A landscaper from Georgia called to talk about a host of human resources issues, most of which ultimately veered toward employee accountability. If your company's current human resources program does not identify accountability as its top priority, your company has the wrong human resources program.

Issues like goals, attendance, policy compliance, customer service, and safety are key points of accountability that should be discussed and documented in monthly one-on-one meetings between a supervisor and his/her direct reports. These one-on-one sessions, supplemented by ad-hoc coaching sessions throughout the year, serve as the pretext for the formal accountability metric: the annual performance evaluation.

Unfortunately, in more cases than I care to admit, the supervisor will oftentimes present a low performance rating to the subordinate that completely catches the subordinate off-guard.

The First Rule of Performance Evaluation: A subordinate should NEVER be surprised by a performance rating given by a supervisor.

#### NEVER.

Surprises such as this, transmogrify the performance evaluation process from a collaborative employee development event into an interminable adversarial game of "Gotcha!"

If any employee is ever surprised by a low performance rating, off-hand comment, or out-of-left-field incident during the formal performance evaluation meeting, the supervisor is accountable.

The supervisor must never introduce new documentation to an employee during a performance review. Indeed, the performance evaluation process should represent the natural culmination of the preceding one-on-one meetings, periodic coaching sessions, and ongoing conversations between the supervisor and subordinate throughout the current rating period. All aspects of the employee's performance must be discussed sequentially as they occur, not squirreled away, waiting for the right time to share them.

The supervisor should have fulsome evidence of previous feedback given to the employee regarding underperformance; evidence that is merely being recounted during the performance evaluation. I said, recounted, not revealed. It's not new; it's been shared before. Refer to those meetings where substandard performance was identified, where action plans were devised, and where follow-up sessions were conducted to monitor employee improvement.

In case those meetings never happened, or were never documented, yet the subordinate was surprised by a low performance rating, don't be surprised if the employee files a lawsuit against the company for "a negligent evaluation of an employee." Parenthetically, heed my advice: Make sure your EPLI policy specifically mentions that aspect of coverage.

Accountability obviously applies in both directions.



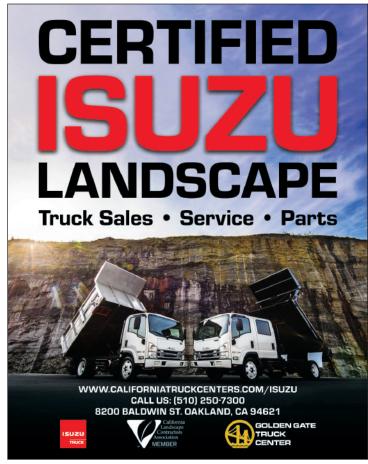
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#### president's message

Loren McIrvin, Allied Landscape

### **Lessons Learned**

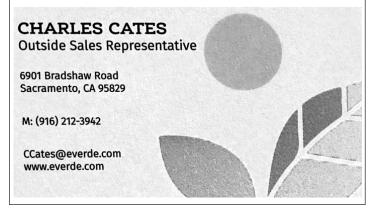
August will mark my 17th year as a landscape contractor and business owner, and I would like to share some lessons learned in hopes that my message might help someone starting out or might serve to remind a seasoned professional about the power of simplicity.

Operating a landscape company is a complicated business: the amount of moving parts that range from a broad scope of work to logistics to HR is daunting. Managing all of these moving parts takes empowering great people with a great business system that includes the vision, values, processes, tools, training and support to succeed. The key in developing any "system" or approach is making it simple, which is no easy task for the complicated business of landscape design, development, and management.

Defining how my company does things was one of the most important tasks I completed, and this helps empower my team members to have the confidence to make the many day-to-day decisions required to keep the company going and growing. Working with my team we were able to distill or simplify how we do things into four core values - Care, Work, Lead, Grow and serves as guide in everything we do.

- CARE We care about our Team, Company, Customers, Our Planet and doing what's right
- WORK We Work Safe, Work as a Team, Work Smart, Work Hard, We Get Things Done
- •LEAD We Lead with Respect, Empathy and by Example
- •GROW We Grow as Individuals, Teams, as a Company

When things get busy and complicated I remind myself: keep your head down and keep it simple, CARE about doing what's right, WORK through it, LEAD well and GROW as a person and help others do the same.



# Increase Your Business' Value by Turning Repeat Customers into Subscribers

Larry Giroux, Ewing Irrigation, ewingirrigation.com

Many people think reoccurring and recurring revenue are the same thing, but that couldn't be further from the truth. Not knowing the difference can cost you. While both are valuable to your bottom line, one is much more valuable than the other.

#### **Reoccurring Revenue**

Reoccurring revenue comes from repeat customers who need your services more than once, but they aren't under contract, so they contact you at different times to schedule the work they need done.

You're never quite sure when those customers will call, but you know they'll reach out eventually when the leaves pile up or the weeds start affecting the look of their landscape.

#### **Recurring Revenue**

Recurring revenue comes from sales to customers who buy from you on a predictable, automatic basis, like a subscription or service contract.

Those are the customers who sign a one- or multi-year contract for landscaping, irrigation, lighting, maintenance, and other services your company offers. It's a win for both the customer and the contractor. The customer doesn't have to worry about remembering to call to schedule service, and you don't have to wonder when they're going to call.

Compared to one-off transaction revenue, both reoccurring and recurring revenue contribute positively to your company's bottom line, but you can see why recurring revenue is more valuable. Not only does it ensure you keep your crews working and your revenue flowing, it also saves you time when it comes to filling your calendar and scheduling jobs for maximum efficiency.

(continued on page 4)

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## Why Recurring Revenue is So Valuable to Your Business

By Larry Giroux, Ewing Irrigation, ewingirrigation.com

An example of why recurring revenue is much more valuable to a company than reoccurring revenue can be found in the case of Advanced Waste Services (AWS) of West Allis, Wisconsin, which was acquired by energy giant Covanta Holding Corp. (NYSE: CVA) in 2015.

Mike Malatesta founded AWS to help businesses dispose of their industrial waste. Covanta saw acquiring Malatesta's company as the perfect way to enter the industrial waste industry and sent him a Letter of Intent to acquire AWS.

Covanta liked that AWS had repeat business from loyal customers that they assumed were on recurring contracts. However, when Covanta officials conducted their due diligence before closing the acquisition, they realized some of AWS's revenue was reoccurring, not recurring, and that lowered the value of AWS.

Had the bulk of Malatesta's customers been on contract and his revenue recurring, he could have made more money from the acquisition.

#### **How to Switch Jobs from Reoccurring to Recurring**

- •Identify customers who schedule your services on a reoccurring basis
- •Look for a landscape segment with a purchase cadence that is relatively predictable. Lawn care, irrigation service, landscape cleanup, and maintenance are some examples.
- Design an offer for your regular, reoccurring customers that
  makes it more convenient for them to buy on a subscription or
  service contract rather than on a transactional business model.
  Instead of calling for a landscape spruce-up before a big event,
  offer a package with several landscape spruce-ups throughout the
  season.
- Give reoccurring customers compelling reasons to subscribe.

## Here are three examples of recurring services you can suggest:

- Periodic landscape clean-ups throughout the season.
- Annual brick paver inspection, clean up, sweeping sand application.
- Routine irrigation system check-up before dead turf indicates an issue.

For more ideas on services to sell and other helpful information from Ewing's team of experts, check out the blog articles and Ewing Education resources on our website at ewingirrigation.com, or visit your local Ewing location today.







### Get the band back together

Benefit your business by attending your **CLCA chapter activities and state events**! Building relationships with others leads to new opportunities, new friends, and new connections that can be valuable to your success.

When's your next gig?



clca.org/calendar



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## **Heat Stress Management Tips for a Safe Summer Season**

Ewing Irrigation. For more helpful tips, visit www.ewingirrigation.com

Heat stress is a major concern for anyone who works outside, especially during the summer months. Heat exhaustion can occur when you're exposed to high temperatures, especially when it's combined with high humidity and strenuous activity.

As you work, heat generated by the muscles in your body can build up and cause heat stress. With the addition of heat coming from the hot work environment, the body gets overheated and less blood flows to the brain, muscles and other organs.

Because there is no pain, a person may not realize when they become weak and tired, which means they are less alert and less able to use good judgment. An increase in body temperature of even 2 degrees F can affect mental performance, and an increase of 5 degrees F can cause serious illness or death.

#### **Signs and Symptoms**

Watch out for these symptoms as you and your team work in the heat.

- •Cool moist skin with goose bumps even though you're in the heat
- Sweating
- Headache
- Fatigue
- •Dry mouth or dry membranes resulting in no tears and no spit being present
- Muscle cramps
- •Heat rash
- A weak, rapid pulse (and slow if the person has fainted)
- Nausea
- •Dilated pupils
- Dizziness
- •Depression of the central nervous system
- •Loss of coordination
- Mental confusion

It's important to recognize that pesticide poisoning has similar but somewhat different signs and symptoms such as moist membranes, salivation, tears, spit, slow pulse, nausea and diarrhea, possible small

pupils and coma. There can also be combined effects of heat stress and pesticide poisoning. Take action and provide first aid if anyone shows symptoms of either.

#### **Heat Stress Management**

Follow these tips to keep your team safe during the hot summer months.

- Assign the task of heat stress management to a specific manager
- Train both your managers and your crew in the prevention, recognition and treatment of heat stress and conduct safety meetings during heat spells
- Acclimate your team when they begin to work under hot conditions by assigning lighter workdays, longer rest periods and watching their responses for 5 to 7 days
- Account for the conditions of work by checking weather conditions, how heavy the workload is and if your team has to wear additional protective wear and equipment
- Account for other physical conditions by keeping track of when team members have been sick, when they've rested, if they're taking any medications or if they've consumed any alcohol
- Manage work activities by setting up work breaks, rotating strenuous tasks, scheduling heavy work for cooler hours and postponing non-essential tasks during heat spells
- Establish a drinking water program

Provide additional measures such as special cooling and breathable clothing, provide shade, use air-conditioned mobile equipment when possible and modify pesticide usage to reduce the need for personal protective equipment (PPE).

#### What Managers Can Do

Managers should be aware of any team members who have fluid retention or other medical problems that may affect their intake of fluids. Also, managers should be aware of team members who, due to economic pressure or toilet availability, tend to limit the amount of water they drink or limit the number of needed breaks.

Any scheduled plan for work and rest periods needs to take the following factors into account:

- Workload levels
- Air temperature
- Humidity
- Sunlight conditions
- •Clothing and PPE

Your crew will recover better from heat with shorter, more frequent breaks as opposed to longer, less frequent breaks. For heavier work in higher temperatures and higher humidity, longer more frequent breaks are needed.

If possible, breaks should be taken in a shaded or air-conditioned area. In general, if your team is performing heavy work at 95 degrees F with 30% humidity, each hour of work should include a 15-minute break. Break times need to increase and work times need to decrease significantly as temperature and humidity increase. When air temperatures reach 105 degrees F, each hour of work should include a 45-minute break.

#### **What Your Crew Can Do**

It's recommended for anyone working outside to drink at least one cup of water every 30 minutes, even if they are not thirsty. If heat conditions become more extreme or if the workload levels become more strenuous, then drinking greater amounts of water is recommended.

Drinking two or three cups of water before work provides a head start, and remind your team to continue drinking water into the evening to replace all water lost through sweating. During extreme heat or when they're wearing confining PPE, your team should be advised to drink a pint or more of water before beginning work.

For more information on heat stress and creating a work/rest schedule with built in minimum amounts of water to drink, visit the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's website at www.osha.gov/heat-exposure.

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#### East Bay Chapter Newsletter

The CLCA East Bay Chapter newsletter is published monthly. Copy and advertising deadlines are the 10th of the month preceding publication. Materials may be mailed to: Jerrie Beard & Associates, PO Box 96, Coloma, CA 95613. Or email to: jsb@beardassociates.com. For information on advertising and rates, contact Jerrie Beard at (530) 990-3580.

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2017	Tim Hendricks
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Congratulations and Thank You to the following CLCA East Bay Chapter Members for their continued support for over 25 years.

Roger Fiske Ken Gerlack
Jeffrey Jones Joe Korematsu
George Sunayama Jack Rydman
Thomas Raeth Kevin Berndt

## CLCA East Bay Chapter Contractor's Honor Code

The CLCA East Bay Chapter exists to support Contractor's AND their employees. To successfully meet this objective, and encourage the involvement of all levels of the landscape industry, the Board of Directors is committed to supporting the following Contractor's Honor Code:

The solicitation, recruitment of, or attempt to hire another Contractor's employees while attending any CLCA function is strictly prohibited.



### Sponsor Spotlight

## RainBird

Rain Bird Corporation is a leading global manufacturer and provider of irrigation products and services headquartered in Azusa, California. The privately held company was founded in 1933 during California's agricultural boom. Since the beginning, Rain Bird has produced and offered the industry's broadest range of irrigation products for farms, golf courses, sports arenas, commercial developments and homes in more than 130 countries around the world.

Over the past eight decades, Rain Bird has been awarded more than 450 patents worldwide, including the first in 1935 for the original horizontal action impact drive sprinkler (U.S. Patent #1,997,901), which revolutionized the food production industry and ushered in a new era in irrigation. In fact, the original impact sprinkler was designated a historic landmark in 1990 by the American Society of Agricultural Engineers.

Rain Bird's engineering, marketing, manufacturing, and sales teams have worked together to develop innovative water-conserving products that include irrigation sprinklers, dripline, pumps, and timers/controllers. Today, we offer over 4,000 water-saving irrigation products and services with offices and manufacturing facilities in Arizona, Alabama, Mexico, France, and elsewhere around the world.

Our commitment to The Intelligent Use of Water<sup>TM</sup> shows not only in our high-quality products but also through our expert water management professionals who share their passion for water conservation. They provide education, training, and services for the industry and communities around us, creating long-term, responsible partnerships with our customers, vendors, and the cities in which we live. These efforts along with our high-quality products have been recognized with numerous awards throughout the years.

#### **Work on Exciting Projects Around the World**

Rain Bird is involved in fascinating projects in a variety of environments across the globe, from designing landscape irrigation for professional soccer fields in Brazil to engineering an intelligent golf course irrigation system at Admirals Cove in Florida. We support environmental sustainability through our partnerships with the eco-city of the Dubai Silicon Oasis and have helped to renovate the National Mall in Washington D.C. These projects are a clear example of how Rain Bird clearly plays an important role in helping the world use water intelligently.

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- Free Admission to All Dinner Meetings during the year.





















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For information, or to become a sponsor, call Laura Leuer at (510) 207-4350.



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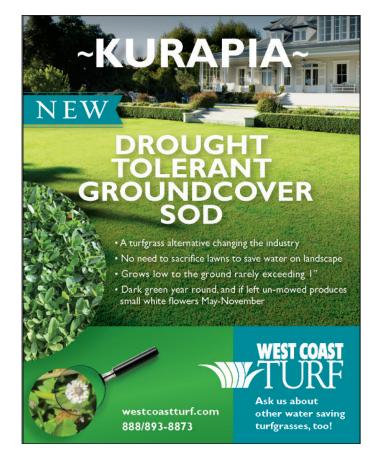
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