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Vision

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OC VISION
C/O CLCA - Orange County Chapter
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Cover Photo: Woodbridge by 2022 award-winning contractor Park West Landscape.

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CLCA Keeps You in the Game

In looking back at the nearly forty years I've worked in the landscape industry, I was thinking about what has kept me going and in business. My wife has played a huge part. She has put up with the ups and downs and has given me the strength and encouragement to keep pushing forward. I've also been fortunate to have some great mentors. The one thing that really stands out to me, that I keep coming back to, is the CLCA. While I don't utilize all the benefits of my membership – there are a lot of them – I feel that I have gotten what I needed over the years. CLCA has supported me, motivated me, connected me, educated me, and helped grow me. Keeping me in the game all these years later.

To dive deeper, I'd like to share how I learned of CLCA. Shortly after studying horticulture in college, I started my own landscape company. After two short years in business, I had already run the company into the ground. I needed to find something else, do something different, if I was going to stay in the trade. So, I went to work for a design and build landscape company. I was amazed at how the company was run and the quality of work, not to mention the size of the jobs. After twelve years working for this company, I learned how to manage people, how to estimate, and

how to build quality jobs. I also learned about CLCA. The owner was very involved in the association and often referred to it for support and resources. Our company also entered the award competitions every year. Impressing me most was how we



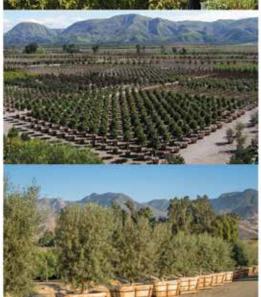
would win, year over year, against the best companies in CLCA. I remember thinking that one day I would like to be that company, competing and winning, putting out quality work. Successful in business.

Fast forward to today, I have my own design and build landscape company that produces quality, award-winning work. Successful in business.

Bottom line: We all know the tough stuff of finding work, good employees, estimating, and putting the work in the ground. Running a successful company and producing quality work takes a special finesse. That's what CLCA is for. To motivate you, support you, and connect you with people and resources to help keep you in the game.

~Sincerely, Dave







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OC Chapter Baseball Outing Angels vs. Mariners on August 5



Join us on Saturday, August 5, for an action-packed evening filled with food, networking, baseball, and all around fun!! You don't want to miss this exciting excursion to the Anaheim Stadium where we'll sit back and watch the Angels play the Mariners!

We'll be meeting in the parking lot by the "Big A" beginning at 5 p.m. for some tailgating. The game begins at 6:07 p.m. **Tickets are limited, so be sure to get yours as soon as possible**. This event is always a fun time; you don't want to miss it!

Email Steve Beckstrom at scbeckstrom@gmail.com for more information and to secure your tickets!

Connect, Learn, and Grow with CLCA!

Not a Member? Join at clca.org/join

2023 CLCA-OC Calendar

Mark Your Calendars & Save the Dates Now!

| Aug. 5 | Baseball Game & Tailgate. Angels vs Mariners. Anaheim Stadium: 2000 E. Gene Autry Way. |
|-------------|---|
| Aug. 28 | Family Fun Beach Day, Doheny State Beach. |
| Sept. 20-21 | The Landscape Expo, Anaheim. |
| • | More information at www.thelandscapeexpo.com. |
| Sept. 23 | Annual Beautification Awards, Yorba Linda. |
| • | Black Gold Golf Club: 1 Black Gold Drive. |
| Oct. 11 | CLCA OC Lunch & Learn. Details TBD. |
| Oct. 26 | 2024 Chapter Planning Meeting & Board Elections. |
| | Interested in serving on the 2024 OC Chapter Board |
| | of Directors? Call Chapter President Dave Horton at |
| | (949) 653-1101 to submit your nomination. |
| | |

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Four Ways to Invest in Your People



3% of employees are willing to stay with a company if it invests into their careers, according to Zavvy. It's obvious that investing in your employees communicates you value and appreciate them, but there are numerous methods you can use to convey your level of investment.

Turnover is often higher at organizations where employees feel disengaged or burnt out at work. This can be due to a lack of opportunities, work-life balance, or recognition for a job well done.

Link Training to a Career Ladder

While training your team members naturally makes them better at their jobs, make sure you are providing them access to the next level of professional development that would allow them to advance within your landscape company.

If you're getting complaints from staff about them feeling stagnant, make sure your career ladder is transparent and outlines next steps they can take to elevate themselves.

For instance, Russell Landscape Group has Russell Landscape University, which is an online platform that



team members can access to learn about everything from proper string trimming techniques to business management practices. Each employee has their own account and Russell Landscape Group can track which training modules they have completed.

Aiello Landscape ties their training to raises, where employees have to pass knowledge checkpoints at certain year marks.

"The employees are motivated to grow and get more money by passing more training tests," says Tommy Aiello, owner of the company.

At Martin Landscape, they advertise new job openings within the company, before looking outside of the organization.

"We want everybody in the company to know what positions we have available and how you get to the next level," says Wade Martin, owner of Martin Landscape. "Do you need to be certified in pesticides? Are you going to be a spray tech? Great, we're going to give you the books, and we're going teach you how to pass the test to get your pesticide license so we can move you out."

Offer 4-Day Workweeks

Another way to show your commitment to your people is to move to a 4/10 work schedule. This provides a three-day weekend for employees who can spend more time with their families and enjoy a longer break from their work.

"The team loved it," says Kelly Slater, VP of Pleasant Landscapes. "They had been accustomed to working 8-11 hours per day anyway during our peak season so the official rollout of the new schedule really didn't change too much for them. I think knowing they had that 3-day weekend to look forward to really improved morale and I noticed a slight increase on their motivation too."

This isn't a change that should be adopted on a whim as it may not be the best fit for your specific landscape operation. It's a good idea to poll your staff prior to making a shift as some landscape companies found their staff had young children and they wanted to be home by 5:30 p.m.

"As their children got older and more independent there was more flexibility to their schedules," says Bill Gardocki, former owner of Interstate Landscape. "We approached the topic again in 2013 and there was much more acceptance of the idea of the 4-day workweek. The appeal of 3-day weekends had become very enticing."

Care About Their Well-Being

It's hard for employees to find a desire to stay with a

Continued on Next Page...

CLCA's mission is to serve and protect the interests of its members, promote professionalism, and advance public awareness of the landscape industry.

Four Ways to Invest in Your People

...Continued from previous page

landscape company long-term when they feel they are just a cog in the machine. Taking the time to care about your team's overall well-being instead of just their productivity can significantly impact company morale.

Sun Valley Landscaping currently shows their investment in their staff's well-being by subscribing to their Chamber of Commerce's Navigator program. This program connects employees with a Navigator who can support them through anything that might keep them from being physically

"Turnover is often higher at organizations where employees feel disengaged or burnt out at work."

or mentally present at work. This could include anything from challenges with personal finance, getting a driver's license, having legal trouble, getting a loan, finding affordable childcare and much more.

Similarly, Ables Landscapes has a Dream Manager on staff who meets with employees

every six weeks for a dream session where they discuss life goals, like improving their credit score or buying a house. Their life coach works behind the scenes to help make the connections for Ables's employees who either don't have time or don't know how.

"We view the Dream Manager position as one of the key ways we serve our people, but one of the cool benefits is that it naturally builds buy-in and loyalty, which has led to less turnover," says Mark Ables, president and CEO of Ables Landscapes.

Recognize and Reward Your Team

Last but certainly not least, don't forget to show your team your appreciation of them. You can do this through various recognition and incentive programs. For instance, Green Lawn Fertilizing has a safety incentive program that awards one of their employees with the strongest safety record with a new Ford F-150 truck.

You can show your gratitude through monetary gifts as well. When Ruppert Landscape partnered with investment firm Knox Lane, 1,200 employees received bonuses ranging from \$7,000 to just over \$200,000 with the proceeds from the partnership.

"Everyone receiving this bonus was instrumental in helping create the value that we've been able to realize," says Craig Ruppert, CEO of the company. "This bonus is money that is well-deserved and a way for us to acknowledge the value of our teams' contributions and the essential role that they will play in our company's future."

This article by Jill Odom was originally published on the National Association of Landscape Professional's blog at https://blog.landscapeprofessionals.org/

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July is Smart Irrigation Month

This year's theme is: What's the value of smart irrigation?

Telling the story about how smart irrigation products, technologies & practices are having a beneficial impact on our lives and communities.

mart Irrigation month was created to promote the social, economic, and environmental benefits of efficient irrigation technologies, products, and services in landscape, turf, and agricultural irrigation. The green industry is providing solutions to some of the most critical challenges facing society, including supporting global food security and protecting the water used in thriving, healthy communities.

This year's theme, *What's the value of smart irrigation?*, tells the story about how smart irrigation products, technologies, and practices are having a positive and beneficial impact on our lives and communities.

"The value and impact of irrigation to society is immeasurable. July is our industry's opportunity to share its amazing stories about contributing to a sustainable world and raising awareness about how innovative and smart irrigation technologies, practices, and products provide solutions to some of the most critical challenges facing society," said IA Chief Executive Officer Natasha Rankin, MBA, CAE. "By promoting smart irrigation, our industry's experienced and committed professionals work every day to protect our world's valuable natural resources while supporting food production and creating landscapes that enhance the quality of life in our communities."



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The value of Smart Irrigation includes:

Environmental Sustainability

Irrigated green spaces provide biodiversity and habitat for pollinators, create opportunities for carbon sequestration, and provide cooling for urban areas.

Vital Green Spaces

Through smart and efficient irrigation, our industry provides vital environmental services including carbon sequestration, soil conservation, and plant pollination, while supporting growing, thriving communities.

More Livable Communities

Smart irrigation creates green spaces where people can play and stay active, providing health benefits for communities.

Cutting-Edge Careers

Smart irrigation creates high-tech jobs here in the United States and provides the technical and vocational jobs that keep our communities thriving.

Water Conservation

Using smart irrigation options like weather- and soil moisture-based controllers that automatically adjust the watering schedule based on conditions at your location helps keep your landscape healthy, while using less water.

Thriving Economies & Businesses

The irrigation industry contributes over \$23 billion annually to the U.S. economy and enables businesses large and small to thrive.



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Improving Irrigation Efficiency

9 billion

gallons of water per day is used for residential outdoor water use.

25,000

gallons of water

could be wasted in one six-month season by having just one broken sprinkler head.

As much as

50%

of the water we use outdoors is wasted due to inefficient watering methods and systems.



Data from United States Environmental Protection Agency

Slow the Flow

If water is applied too quickly, it can cause the water to run off of the landscape and into the street.



Check Sprinkler Heads

Ensure that sprinkler heads are properly placed and set-up so they aren't irrigating the sidewalk.

Use Low Volume Irrigation

Use drip irrigation, micro-sprinklers, or bubbler irrigation for planting beds and narrow strips of vegetation.







Smart Irrigation Month is an Irrigation Association initiative to increase awareness of the value of water use ... and grow demand for water-saving products, practices and services.

For more great resources, visit: www.smartirrigationmonth.com

Why You Need a Business Playbook

By Jonathan Goldhill, Business Coach, The Goldhill Group

You might have heard about a playbook. So, what is it, what are the benefits of a business playbook, and why do you need one?

A business playbook is a comprehensive guide that outlines the strategies, processes, and best practices for operating a business. It serves as a valuable resource for employees, management teams, and stakeholders, providing multiple benefits:

Consistency and Efficiency: A playbook ensures consistency in business operations by documenting standardized operating procedures (SOPs) and workflows. It helps align employees' actions with the organization's goals and objectives, promoting uniformity in how tasks are executed across different teams and departments. By clearly defining processes and workflows, a playbook helps streamline operations and eliminate redundant or unnecessary steps. It provides employees with a roadmap for completing tasks efficiently, reducing errors and delays in execution.

For 20 years, we've been telling our clients that if they want to build or scale a valuable business they can sell for a (small or large) fortune, they need to create a systems-dependent business, not an owner-dependent one.

Therefore, we encourage our clients to document their SOPs – because you can't scale or exit easily without them. More recently, we have promoted Playbook Builder for this

because it's user-friendly and has some cool technology built into it. Of course, alternatives include Google Docs, Microsoft SharePoint, Trainual, Waybook, Notion, and more to consider.

Onboarding and Training: Playbooks are valuable resources during employee onboarding and training. New hires can refer to the playbook to understand the company's values, culture, and expectations. It gives them a structured overview of their roles and responsibilities, accelerating their integration into the organization. Playbook Builder shines here because you can embed videos, email them to your employees, and track their engagement (or lack thereof) with the email.

Knowledge Management: A business playbook acts as a centralized repository of knowledge, capturing institutional knowledge and best practices within the organization. It helps preserve critical information, preventing it from being lost when employees leave or transition to new roles and can be continuously updated with new insights and learnings. In any multi-generational family business, a family business history provides the sense of identity, continuity, and values that build a firm foundation for the future.

Decision Making: Playbooks offer a decision-making framework, providing guidelines and procedures for various issues or scenarios. They serve as a reference point for

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Business Playbook

...Continued from previous page

employees and managers facing common challenges or complex situations, helping them make informed decisions based on established strategies. In department or leadership team weekly meetings, have a segment where you "IDS an issue" (IDS is an acronym from the Entrepreneurial Operating System for the 3-step process used to resolve a business issue where you Identify, Discuss and Solve a problem). With a clear focus on problem-solving in the weekly leadership team meetings, they can be valuable and productive.

Scalability: As a business grows, maintaining consistency and operational efficiency becomes more challenging. A playbook becomes particularly valuable in scaling operations as it provides a standardized approach that can be replicated across multiple locations, teams, or business units.

Continuous Improvement: Playbooks are not static documents. They evolve over time as the organization learns from its experiences and identifies areas for improvement. Regularly reviewing and updating the playbook allows the company to incorporate new insights, optimize processes, and adapt to changing market conditions.

Risk Mitigation: By documenting procedures, protocols, and compliance requirements, a playbook helps mitigate risks. It ensures that employees know regulatory guidelines, safety protocols, and ethical standards, reducing the potential for legal and operational liabilities.

A business playbook offers structure, consistency, and guidance to an organization, leading to increased efficiency, better decision-making, and improved overall performance. You can scale a business more effortlessly with a playbook followed by all. You can more readily exit or transfer a business to the next generation. Finally, the playbook codifies how business gets done, which avoids having a well-meaning but inept team of people trying to run the business.

If you are busy in what seems like endless fire-fighting, gotaminute interruptions from staff to ask how something should get done or feel overwhelmed by the lack of processes in your business, schedule a complimentary consultation with me and let's see if we can help you untangle the challenges and develop a roadmap with a playbook that can get you to the next level in your business! www.thegoldhillgroup.com

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