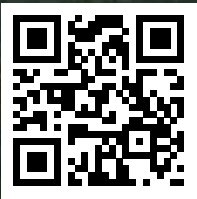


SEPTEMBER 2020

Offshoot

The Official Publication of the California Landscape Contractors Association San Diego Chapter



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

But what's in it for me? I remember being asked this over and over again while I was serving as Director of Membership for three years in our fine San Diego chapter. Consistently, I would reframe the question and ask the prospect what they wished to accomplish for themselves and their company. Figuring out what they were looking for was key to answering their question accurately. Most of the time they were not wanting anything to do with an esoteric answer like a mission statement review. What they really wanted was a tangible takeaway that they could compare against the cash cost and time invested—a clear transactional analysis, aka ROI or bottom line. Really, this was a regularly-recurring question. This is where we would most frequently get stuck.

Now since most of us have these thoughts – simply because we are human and normally have a naturally self-focused nature – you can likely relate. Maybe as a multi-year member you might find yourself randomly thinking why am I here, what am I doing here? What's in it for me? Myself included! (Yes, of course I consider myself perfectly normal, with the exception of this landscape addiction!)

Truth is, being inside CLCA this year has had me thinking about CLCA and the alignment with our mission. Hey, I'm human too and I consider this to be the most important issue we are facing. The pandemic has really shined the light on our industry and most industry-related contacts are still reporting that they're incredibly busy or booked out very far. When we get this busy it's very easy to become blindly transactional and that can cause us to forget the WHY.

Looking for alignment, and for personal and professional growth, I find the commonality is our shared value of professionalism, from top to bottom, from sales through complete installation with a maintenance agreement that lasts for years after our construction crews have moved on. The contractors, vendors, and workers I've spent time with inside CLCA have all shared these and other

insights unselfishly, reminding me consistently what a beautiful industry this is to be involved with, and how fortunate we are to be involved. Of course, some days all of us wished we'd done something else. However, I've had far more days that are so unbelievably rewarding, so good, it makes me feel I can't believe I get paid for this.

“I'm the one who's responsible to get what's in it for me, to create what's in it for me—it's an inside job.”

That's the point I want drive home: financial success and landscape success are not always the same but when they are, man, that's heaven on earth. For myself, becoming overly transactional can be a really dangerous thing. I can easily forget why I love being a landscaper. Staying grounded to

professionalism and what makes a landscape thrive from all aspects is still the key to success. I always need to remember, underlying it all is an overwhelming passion and the love of a beautiful landscape; any part or all parts, and the passion between, all of it, everything it takes to get it too thrive, is really what's driving landscape success—and I don't want to ever forget that. I'm the one who's responsible to get what's in it for me, to create what's in it for me—it's an inside job.

Today I'm grateful for our CLCA SD chapter and all the volunteers who remind me daily to stay cheerful, passionate, and professional. I love working with you all and must never forget as an industry insider I get paid pretty well to dig in dirt and march through dog turds (cut grass). Well, that was back in the day, but I think most of us started somewhere close to there. LOL

Best always! ~Willie



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Coming Events

Mark your calendar!

September 22

Chapter Beautification Awards Entry Deadline.

Forms are available online for download. This year's contest will be judged by photo submission.

October 13

San Diego Chapter General Meeting. All welcome. Due to health guidelines, this will be a virtual meeting. To attend, email amy@conradpr.com for the Zoom link.

October 23

San Diego Chapter Golf Tournament.

Watch your inbox for registration information.
Rancho Bernardo Inn: 17550 Bernardo Oaks Dr., San Diego.

November 10

San Diego Chapter General Meeting. All welcome. Due to health guidelines, this will be a virtual meeting. To attend, email amy@conradpr.com for the Zoom link.



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In Your Garden this Month

Excerpted from Briggs Tree & Nursery Blog at www.briggstree.com/blog

This is a great time of year in your landscape. The ornamental grasses that you've planted should be flowering right now and at their peak. With the days shortening, be careful not to water too late in the day to discourage diseases. Fertilize your entire garden. At the minimum, an easy way to remember when to fertilize is to do it on the first day of the three growing seasons: spring, summer, and fall. The first day of fall this year is September 22. Mark your calendar! A good all-purpose fertilizer can be used on most of your plants including fruit trees. Fertilize Azaleas, Camellias, and Gardenias with a high acid fertilizer. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions closely.

Color: Now is the time to plant Delphinium, Dianthus, and Digitalis. Mums should be available also along with Iceland Poppies, Primula, Snapdragons, and Stock. Marigolds and Petunias may be looking a little tired. Clip old blooms to stretch their time in the garden. Begin planting spring bulbs this month. Plant in masses in the ground or in pots to create a spectacular spring show. The iris in your garden can be cut back and divided now in preparation for next spring.

Fruits & Vegetables: In mild winter climates, plant your first crop of lettuce. Plant every few weeks to have a continual crop. Plant beets, broccoli, cabbage, onions, peas, and spinach also. Don't plant during a heat wave.

Roses & Flowers: Keep deadheading all flowers to prolong the bloom period. Fertilize roses now to encourage blooms next month.

Irrigation: Do a test run on your irrigation system to ensure that all lines are clear and emitters are working efficiently. Make sure that you maintain the watering schedule for plants in pots that are not part of the irrigation system. Rinse off the foliage in your landscape to remove dust from plants which can be a habitat for mites and other insects.

Also: In your vegetable or flower garden, add a layer of compost (2-3 inches for good soil, 4-6 inches for clay or sandy soil). Mixing this in now will put needed nutrients back into the soil and you'll reap the benefits in the crops you plant now and in the spring.

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Choosing the Right Emitterline

By Michael Derewenko, JAIN Irrigation

Choosing the right irrigation product for an application can be difficult, especially when our industry presents so many similar options. With supply tubing and emitterline, the challenge is no different and the confusion is usually justified. Common confusions arise when a contractor has to make the decision between streaming rotor nozzles and conventional spray nozzles, point source emitters or emitterline, and smart controller or dumb controller. While some contractors may lean one way or the other with spray and rotor bodies, depending on local support, a more difficult decision will always be which emitterline to use. To dispel a few myths, we thought it would be beneficial to list some variables that should help make the decision between emitterline and supply tubing types easier.

Resin

Like a lot of contractors out there, I've been installing drip irrigation for years and had no idea how wrong I had been doing it. Not only were my decisions to use inline emitters over point source emitters incorrect, but also my general decisions to install inferior quality tubing on projects that required long-term product success.

One of the major differences in the tubing is the quality of resin a manufacturer uses to make the tubing and emitterline. If you bought tires that only had a 5-year warranty, would you feel safe with your family riding for longer... not likely. Fortunately, there are companies out there that don't compromise on quality resins and allow the product to do its job for more than 12 years *guaranteed*.

Furthermore, there are lots of benefits to using recycled materials. Fittings, filter bodies, sprinkler bodies – there are plenty of places to use recycled materials. Tubing is not one of them. An emitterline like Total CV from JAIN is made with 95% pure virgin resin with only a small percentage of UV additive to protect the tubing when exposed to harsh UV light.

Emitter Type

Emitters are super important to the longevity and efficiency of a drip system. Emitterline is more than a hole punched into tubing. Behind that hole is actually a fully functional emitter, complete with a check valve, filtering labyrinth, and sonically welded body that ensures water flows even with lines full of debris.

An Amnon emitter like JAIN's is offered in a few different flow and spacing options. But it's the magic of the Amnon's design that does the dirty work. As water moves through the flow path, debris is trapped on the sides of a series of walls. This debris is collected throughout the cycle and flushed out the next time the system is run. A small silicone diaphragm, similar



in design to a globe valve, works as a check valve to prevent excess water from exiting the line after the system is done running. If a project involves slopes, then a check valve is a must!

Reliability

A contractor has one major obligation... to provide their customer with the best product solution for their project. The majority of contractors agree with this mantra while many are still annoyed by a customer's necessity to spend as little as possible with the expectation of a superior product's performance. It is the contractor's job to inform the customer why and when a particular product should be used. Everyone loves talking about reclaimed valves, smart controllers, flow sensors, and rotors with built-in check valves. When was the last time you heard a contractor convince a customer they should spend more on better quality tubing and emitterline? Surprising since the expectation of quality is equal to that of overhead emissions devices and valves, *if not more*.

Distribution

Where can you buy higher quality tubing? Everywhere! All the major distributors across the United States have relationships with tubing manufacturers that sell higher quality tubing and emitterline. Understandably, it doesn't always make fiscal sense to stock only the highest quality of any product. Unfortunately, most distributors fall into a rut of rebates, point giveaways, and ease of inventory. Be the contractor that pushes your distributor to bring in high-quality products for your project and stand out amongst your peers.

Specification Options

Different water agencies and municipalities require purple markings for reclaimed emission devices; this is no different from supply tubing and emitterline. While some agencies only require a purple stripe, others require the tubing itself to be purple. It's always a good idea to check before a reclaimed installation to see what is required of reclaimed indication. Aesthetically, as tubing can become exposed, simple purple stripes tend to draw less attention than a completely purple tube.

This article was originally published on Jain Irrigation's blog at <https://jainsusa.com/blog/>

Leveraging Social Media for Human Resources

By Steven Cesare, Ph.D., The Harvest Group



A business owner from Illinois called me the other day to discuss her company's under-performing recruitment efforts. During that discussion, social media naturally came up, at which time I informed her that in today's competitive, information-rich environment, every company must have a disciplined social media strategy spanning multiple business goals.

It is all too clear to successful business owners that social media has moved quickly from being a mere cosmetic aspect of the company into a vital determinant of capitalistic advantage. Today's social media is far more aggressive than its passive predecessors in that unique resources and ongoing attention must be devoted to it, just as resources and attention are allocated to horticulture quality, customer service, gross margin,

and revenue growth. With that premise in mind, here are some of the fundamentals I shared with the Illinois business owner.

To remain current, visible, and sustainable, astute companies frequently have a presence on at least the following four platforms: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Extending that thought, social media postings should occur bi-weekly on each of the platforms, with appropriate costs, results, and tracking metrics being monitored accordingly for effectiveness.

Beyond social media platforms, there are four common information topics routinely included within a well-developed, targeted, and successful social media strategy:

Continued on next page...

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Leveraging Social Media for Human Resources

...Continued from previous page

Recruitment: In conjunction with its own website, the company should consistently populate, refresh, and publicize all vacant positions. Job descriptions, salary ranges, training opportunities, career path information, available benefits, and the like represent standard social media content.

Employees: This topic fuels the company's Rewards and Recognition Program by highlighting new employees, tenured employee work anniversaries, recent achievements, successful performance, employee commendations and promotions, as well as biographical sketches that personalize each employee's distinct contributions to the company.

Educational: Supporting customer service, these social media postings frequently include useful information to improve viewers' awareness, initiative, and competence through topics like how to trim a rose bush, plant health care, fertilization tips, proper application of bark or mulch, irrigation improvements, and installing new plants or trees, etc.

Job Quality: It's always beneficial to highlight successes, by sharing before and after photos or videos of new installation, enhancements, or tree service work, especially when accompanied by the Manager's and Foreman's names to document their accountability. People's memories may lapse with time; photos and videos permanently improve those memories.

Building upon social media platforms and content categories, it is important to note the current mode of presentation is far more elaborate than it was just a few short years ago. Long-winded, drab, static PDF postings are from a bygone era; dynamic information transfer is the new standard.

There is an increased emphasis on 30-60 second video presentations rather than 2-3 still photographs. Aerial captures of drones flying over new construction projects, documenting yard departure routines, or detecting invasive tree hazards, actively engage the viewer across topography, sense, and imagination. Likewise, the migration from placid to progressive information can also be seen in company websites that contain an embedded audio-visual thumbnail of the company President verbally escorting the viewer across and through the various sections of the company website (e.g., who we are, project gallery, careers, customer testimonials).

If you have any questions about this topic or anything else related to human resources, call Steve at (760) 685-3800.

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Preventing Distracted Driving

Helpful tips provided by
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A recent study from the University of Minnesota found that talking on a cellphone while driving impairs one's ability even more than driving while intoxicated. Talking on a cellphone and other driving distractions pose a major hazard to everyone on the road.

To minimize risks while driving:

- Do not talk on your cellphone or send text messages.
- If you absolutely must conduct a conversation, use a hands-free device.
- Never touch up your makeup or hair in the rear-view mirror.
- Limit your conversations with passengers and ask them to keep their voices down so you can concentrate.
- Do not smoke while you are driving, as you will probably pay more attention to not burning yourself or putting out the cigarette than driving safely.
- Only adjust the radio when you are completely stopped.
- Never allow animals to sit on your lap while driving.
- Do not eat or drink while driving.
- Avoid reading maps or directions. Instead, pull into a parking lot to get your bearings and determine where you need to go next to reach your final destination.
- Do not take notes or search for phone numbers.
- Never use a cellphone (even a handsfree device) in bad weather, work zones or heavy traffic.

Safety First

Allowing yourself to become distracted while driving can lead to dangerous, and even fatal, consequences. Be a responsible motorist and make paying attention to the road your number one priority when you're behind the wheel.

This article is for informational purposes only and is not intended as professional advice.

~KURAPIA~

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Fixing the Patchy Discolored Grass on Your Lawn

Excerpted from West Coast Turf's Blog by Mr. Wise Grass at www.blog.westcoastturf.com

The summer months of July through September can wreak havoc on your grass in high heat and humidity. If you see silver dollar size brown patches that occur in otherwise healthy lawns, the main cause is keeping the leaf surface continuously wet with daily waterings. Patches can run together, forming larger patches that lose their circular shape. Grass dies back from the tip and fine white threads of fungus can be found on the patches in the early morning hours when the leaf surface is wet.

To minimize chances of disease, here are five things you can do:

- Add fertilizer. Low levels of fertility promote Dollar Spot; however, avoid applying high rates of Nitrogen, particularly in late spring and summer.
- Water early. Water during early AM hours to allow grass leaves all day to dry off.
- Don't over-water. Avoid frequent irrigation that keeps the leaf blades wet and that results in water-logged/compacted soils.
- Let it grow. Mow at the upper end of recommended mowing heights (but not above recommended height).
- Don't compact. Avoid wet compacted soils.

If you suspect your lawn has a deeper issue, you can spray on a fungicide labeled for Dollar Spot. Repeat every 10 days until symptoms are gone... ALWAYS READ & FOLLOW LABELED DIRECTIONS.

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West Coast Turf grows the highest quality cool season grasses and our special blends of fescue are the best performing in the industry. Cool season grasses thrive in climates with more annual rainfall and cooler year-round temperatures. This includes coastal areas of California and high elevation mountainous areas with cooler temperatures. Cool season grasses are not suitable for hot desert climates. Our unique West Coaster Tall Fescue is our professional blend of fescue and other seed to avoid disease and keep a happy, healthy, and resilient lawn for your home. If you do experience any spots, you can patch it with our West Coaster Seed.

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