

Automation Education



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Running a small business is not easy. When that small business is a lawn care company, you have a whole separate set of obstacles on top of standard business operations. You have to think about how to retain and train employees, maximize the efficiency of your routes, provide accurate quotes in a timely manner—the list goes on and on. How can you possibly grow your business when you're so focused on day-to-day activities? The solution starts with automation.

Automation doesn't mean you won't be involved in the business. But rather than spending your time measuring square footage to calculate how much you need to charge to profit on your next job, you can instead focus on saturating your target market or expanding into new territories. How? There are plenty of lawn care and landscape software solutions on the market to improve your efficiency. You just have to find the one that best integrates with your business. Here are a few things you can look for when choosing a lawn care and landscape software provider.

Where do you spend your time?

How do you spend the bulk of your time? How do your employees spend the majority of their time?

Most lawn care companies spend a large chunk of their time on scheduling and invoicing. Whether it's a customer service representative coordinating in between the customer and the technician, the owner calculating the fastest routes for his technicians' jobs the following day or the office manager sending out invoices and bills for the month—a lot of time is spent on operations.

The good news is that once you know where your time is being spent, you can find the solution that's right for improving the profitability of your business.



Focus on what you need

Most small businesses can greatly benefit from some type of customer relationship management (CRM) software system.

In the lawn care business, this allows you to schedule jobs, set reminders, generate invoices and even reference small details like what time of day the customer prefers to be contacted or what the weather was like during the previous service appointment.

From a base CRM system, you can then select add-ons (either from the same lawn care software company or a competitor, whichever works best with your business). Add-ons might include:

- **A mobile application:** some sort of mobile component that helps you track technicians out in the field or update them on new jobs or cancels. This saves everyone time, money and headaches.
- **People management tool:** a training and development software solution that helps you house all of your training and onboarding files in one place. With this, you can train and test your employees whenever and wherever—without having to physically be present. When you're ready, you can sign on and see how each individual is doing. After all, training helps your employees feel more capable of doing their jobs, which decreases employee attrition and documentation of training is critical if a legal issue ever surfaces.

The point here is that you want a lawn care software solution that is going to work to help you accomplish your business goals. That solution should be customizable so you are getting help with everything you need without paying extra for non-essential features.

Research the software company's support team

Like your company, software providers aren't perfect. You're going to hit some bumps in the road and probably encounter a few errors. The important thing is that their support team is willing and able to help solve the problem in a timely manner. Before you purchase, find out the following:

- Are they willing to walk you through how to integrate the software with your business?
- Do they have a 24-hour support or a live chat feature where you can talk to someone who is local?
- Do they host conferences where you can learn about new features and updates?

Once you have the answer to these questions, and have run through your pro/con list of all of your options, you'll be on your way to running a more efficient, more profitable company.