

## In the Fast Lane



Source: [www.TurfMagazine.com](http://www.TurfMagazine.com)

Andrew's Lawn & Landscaping grows at a record rate

In 2001 Andrew Gabries was a typical 15-year-old looking for spending money and something to do. Still too young to drive, he enlisted his mom to chauffeur him around his neighborhood and nearby communities to start a mowing business. Twelve years later, he's in the driver's seat and Andrew's Lawn & Landscaping is in the fast lane.

### **Andrew's Lawn & Landscaping & Go Green Lawn and Pest Control (formerly Go Green Lawn Services)**

**Owner:** Andrew Gabries

**Founded:** 2001

**Headquarters:** Thornton, Pa.

**Markets:** West Chester, Pa., including Chester and Delaware counties  
**Services:** Lawn mowing and landscape enhancements, including spring/fall cleanup, mulch, edging, pruning, lighting, fertilizing, weed control, pest/disease control, core aeration and overseeding

**Clientele:** High-end residential and commercial sites

**Community Service:** Andrew's Lawn & Landscaping honors one of its employees by taking care of the landscaping at the local firehouse. Gabries also has participated in fundraising and awareness for Lyme Disease and is building relationships with community youth-oriented organizations to help them raise funds for programming.

**Website:** [www.andrewslawnandlandscaping.com](http://www.andrewslawnandlandscaping.com)

[www.gogreenlawnservices.com](http://www.gogreenlawnservices.com)

"I was naturally self-driven and motivated to succeed," says Gabries, who worked after school and weekends through high school and graduated in three years from Penn State University with a degree in landscape contracting.

Along the way he also earned the Eagle Scout award from the Boy Scouts of America.

All those experiences, he says, have helped him build a successful company in a relatively short period of time.

“‘Be prepared’ would be the first motto that comes to mind that I use on a daily basis. I always do my best, and I instill that same mindset in my employees. My company’s core values revolve around a positive attitude, quality, teamwork and integrity. We are impeccable with our word and don’t make false promises.”

## **Growing organically**

As a locally owned and operated company, Gabries has developed a robust portfolio of more than 350 high-end residential, HOA and commercial properties. Given his clientele, expansion into organic lawn care seemed a natural fit; and in 2011, Gabries purchased Go Green Lawn Services (now Go Green Lawn and Pest Control) from someone looking to exit the industry. He sees the organic fertilizer division as his biggest opportunity for growth.

His goal for 2013 is to grow to \$3 million in sales and dramatically increase his customer base as well as double his team.

“We started a call center in January 2013 to help with Go Green’s growth spurt,” he says. “Go Green will help our company stay ahead of the industry curve.”

The company partnered with Holganix, a local company based in Glen Mills, Pa., for its organic lawn treatments. The food-grade, plant-based soil stimulant reduces the usage of nitrates and phosphates, and because fewer treatments are needed, Go Green’s service is better for the environment, Gabries says.

In keeping with its conservation and environmental goals,, in conjunction with Holganix, is participating in The Greater Green Goal initiative to eliminate 100,000 pounds of nitrates, 25 million pounds of phosphates, and 100 million ounces of concentrated pesticides by Earth Day 2016.



## **Growing smartly**

As he puts his growth plan in motion, Gabries is taking a 21st century approach by embracing newer tools and technology to make it happen – including implementing a contemporary marketing plan.

“It is no longer just about product and price. It is just as much about place and promotion. Social media, Web-based strategic communications and industry-specific software with add-on features have put us ‘young bucks’ ahead of the old-schoolers,” he says. “We grew up using technology as a way to communicate with our friends and find the transition to using it for business practices an easy one. It can be an overwhelming learning curve for companies even if

they hire recent college graduates with marketing degrees. Often, those new hires don't fully understand the landscaping business unless they have worked on a crew themselves."

Despite his familiarity with the industry and the communications medium, Gabries recently hired someone with savvy social media skills and a background in brand management to ensure the company has a meaningful, yet professional presence on the Internet.

He might have a new-school approach to business, but that doesn't mean Gabries discounts the benefits of networking with and learning from mentors in the industry. Whether it's visiting with a PLANET Trailblazer or participating in seminars and workshop and learning from consultants, Gabries' eyes and ears are always open.

A key source of advice and inspiration is his office manager, Daune Ring, who owned and operated a successful landscape management business for over 20 years.

"She brings a lot of insight, creativity, and passion for the industry to the table," he says. "Every day offers moments to learn something new. Staying engaged, embracing change and seeking educational opportunities are three ways I stay motivated and make informed business decisions."

## **An "a-ha" moment**

"For more than a decade, I never had to file an insurance claim for any type of loss. This past year, a guy totaled a truck and trailer. He was off task, not where he was supposed to be or doing what he was supposed to be doing," recalls Gabries. "I did not have written policies and procedures, a comprehensive employee handbook, or ways in place to measure performance or keep people accountable for their actions. I have since outsourced my HR, which is headed up by a very knowledgeable consultant. It is one of the best decisions I have made."

Gabries participates in PLANET's Green Industry Conference each year and is active in its STARS safety program. He is diligent about meeting regulatory requirements, documenting any incidents and conducting regular safety awareness training such as weekly tailgate talks. "We constantly are reassessing our efforts to ensure we do not get complacent when it comes to safety."

Gabries has ambitious goals to grow his company. He'll need good employees who embrace and embody the company's core values of positive attitude, quality, teamwork and integrity. When asked the biggest challenge facing him, he admitted his concern at being able to find team members who have those values and who also don't necessarily want a job, but rather want a career in landscaping.

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