

I Am A Landscaper: Howard Freilich



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It's hard to believe that one of the largest horticultural firms in the U.S. – responsible for doing designs and installations nationwide – all started with one man selling plants on a street corner.

But that's exactly what happened when Howard Freilich, founder and CEO of [Blondie's Treehouse Inc.](#), got started in 1979 by constantly coming up with new ways he could sell plants and promote his services. The business, now headquartered in Mamaroneck, New York, grew from there. It was Freilich's passion for what he was selling that led the way, and that hasn't changed. Today – even after winning 50 awards for landscape design and construction and expanding the business to more than 150 employees in a vast array of divisions – Freilich, in his 39th year in business, is as passionate about it as ever. In fact, he says: "I have the best job in the world."

I love making people happy and that's what this job is all about. I also love watching plants grow and seeing how they can beautify a space. It's the best.



When I was first starting out, I'd use my nights to host plant parties. It was basically the same concept of a Tupperware party. I'd put an ad in the paper and ask people to host. They'd get a free plant for hosting and based on how many guests bought plants, they could earn more. I would also invite people to bring their own plants to the party, so I could diagnose problems and tell them how to fix them. It was one way I got my name out there early on.

I absolutely love plants. I still love them as much as I did when I started out. I can't go anywhere without checking out the plant life – whether it's in someone's home or on a vacation. I was recently in Morocco on vacation and enjoyed seeing some very cool palms.

I love to play golf and I try to play wherever I go. I just got back from

playing down in Sea Island, Georgia, where I played at the [Sea Island Golf Club](#), where they host the RSM Classic. I got to play that course right before the pros.



Travel is definitely a passion, and I'll often try to fit my hobbies into my vacations. I golf and fish on trips. I also love to ski and try to make some trips out West. This past summer we visited the Canadian Rockies and traveled from Vancouver to Banff.

I love to spend time with my five grandkids. My oldest daughter also works for the business now, which is very exciting for me.



I believe in working hard and relaxing hard, too. Working hard allows you to relax hard. That's a motto I live and work by. I give it my all on every job we do. Even though I'm the president and CEO, I'm still very involved. We do a lot of work in the hospitality industry and that's a 24-hour, 365-day business. If they need something done, they know they can get in touch with me personally and it will get taken care of quickly.

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- [How Can I Build Strategic Alliances To Offer Additional Services?](#)