

I Am A Landscaper: Todd Thomasson

The logo for 'Turf' features the word in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A green grass blade graphic is integrated into the letter 'u'.The logo for 'Tree Services' is in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A small green leaf icon is positioned above the 'e' in 'Services'. Below the main text is the tagline 'Taking Tree Care to New Heights' in a smaller, italicized font.The logo for 'DesignBuild' features the word 'Design' in black and 'Build' in orange, both in a bold, sans-serif font. A small orange square icon is positioned above the 'i' in 'Design'.The logo for 'PLOW' is in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly slanted to the right.

Source: www.TurfMagazine.com

Having grown up on Rock Water Farm, an operational beef cattle farm in Danville, Virginia, Todd Thomasson was accustomed to being outside. While it was all but decided for him that he would be headed to Virginia Tech (he was the 15th in his family to go), he wasn't sure exactly what he wanted to do until he saw the Agricultural Tech brochure on his teacher's desk. During school, Thomasson interned at TruGreen and upon graduation worked for two prominent design/build firms in the area before going off on his own, founding Rock Water Farm Landscapes & Hardscapes, a full-service landscape company headquartered in Aldie, Virginia, in 2005.

Thomasson admits he started off with just "himself and a truck," but it was his hard work and dedication that helped rapidly grow the business. While that meant 100-plus-hour workweeks and made his entire 20s a "blur," Thomasson is now to the point where he can step back and relax a little. With 25 employees and \$3 million in revenue, the business is steadily growing, and Thomasson is finding he's able to delegate much more.



I got married last July, so that's been a big change in my life. My bachelor pad has been crashed, and I no longer have a pool table under my chandelier. It's a real dining room now.

What I like most about this industry has changed and evolved. When I started out, it was the independence and watching my effort have a direct impact on my income. That was really exciting as a new business owner. Then I started buying tools and equipment and found that fascinating. I've always really liked trucks. Now, my biggest interest is stepping back and watching the company operate without me. It's kind of amazing seeing what we've built.

I work hard but I like to take little trips when I can fit them in. I recently surprised my wife with a trip to Vegas because she's never been. My best advice is to get a credit card that pays you rewards and use it for

everything. Pay it off every month, of course. But I travel for free using those reward points.

The real education comes after you graduate. I recently went back to Virginia Tech with another friend who also graduated from the Agricultural Tech program, and we spoke to the students about their future. Our goal was to be informative and show them what they could do if they work hard.

My entire sales staff is female; I'm outnumbered three to one at the office, and I have women in the field, too. I don't like to think of women overlooking this field because of the fact that it's typically male-dominated. They have a lot to offer the green industry.



I grew up on a beef cattle farm so my favorite indulgence is a really good steak. I'm very much a meat and potatoes person, and that's how I reward myself. I live very frugally and do not blow money because my thinking is if you increase your income but also increase your cost of living, have you really gained anything? However, I'm also to a point where I don't have to eat the cheapest lunchmeat and hot dogs.

Read more: [Stepping Back and Learning to Delegate](#)