

Smart People Can Show You the Way



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It's tough to build a sizable, profitable landscape business by going it alone. That's even if you're (apologies to Yogi Bear) "smarter than the average landscaper!"

Bottom line: Building a good landscape company is a lot easier (more fun, too), getting to know and by working with other smart people outside of your company. These can be people like yourself, owners or managers, that you meet through participating in a trade association such as PLANET or your local, regional or state association.

Or they can be any one of the several dozen industry "consultants" that offer their services on a contract basis. I have met and/or know just about all of them and can confidently say that, regardless of what aspect of your business you're struggling with – marketing & sales, financials, systems, operations, team building, motivation – there's someone out there that's had the same issues and can, in a phrase, lead you out of the wilderness.

View it as an investment

Does it cost some money? You bet it does. That said, I can't think of very many company owners that have sqawked about making the investment, given the results they've achieved as a result. In almost all cases, the contractors that I know tell me that bringing in the right consultant has paid off in aces. The trick is finding the right one for your particular business needs.

To that point let me shamelessly promote an event being offered by *Turf* editorial advisor (and someone I admire) Steve Rak II, president of [Southwest Landscape Management](#), Columbia Station, Ohio. The event is set for Friday, Oct. 11, at the facility his company shares with his brother Jeff's company. Their offices and shops are located about 20 minutes from Cleveland Hopkins Airport.

He and his brother, Jeff Rak, partners in Rak Consulting LLC, are offering a

1-day [Business Development and Networking](#) event at their shared headquarters. I toured their facility just after they built it several years ago. It's a first-rate facility.

Double-teaming the market

And, their headquarters are indeed "shared." Steve runs his commercial maintenance company out of the same building that's shared with his brother Jeff's [Land Creations Landscaping](#), a 22-year-old, award-winning design/build company. Even so, the two businesses are separate entities with separate offices and staff. But, obviously brothers being brothers, they look out for each other's interests.

But back to their Business Development and Networking event.

Jeff and Steve are limiting the event to a total of 10 landscape owners or key managers. They're describing the event as an "intimate gathering." The event is tailored to owners that are doing less than \$1 million in gross sales annually and have been in business for at least two years. Discussions will focus on topics, such as hiring the right people, the company experience, systems and paperwork flow and sales.

Also, attendees will get a full-access facility tour of both companies and, if they get there early enough, before 7:30 a.m., see their crews roll out. Attendees will also get a chance to meet with and ask questions of the companies' account managers, field supervisors and operations managers.

Some of us are probably experienced and smart enough to get ahead in the landscape business without any help from anyone else. Most of us probably need some help. The wise course for most of us is getting to know and learning from other smart people outside of our organizations.

To get more information about the Business Development and Networking event, click [here](#).