

'I felt it was time for a change'

Rud Mason started Princeton Scapes, located in Sterling, Massachusetts, in 1993. After 10 years operating with a few part timers, he decided to get serious and grow the company, and he did. By 2008, his company generated approximately \$1.5 million in high-end residential design/build and maintenance sales. Four years later, in 2012, he purchased another landscape company that focused on commercial maintenance and snow removal, which brought his revenue totals to \$2 million.



Today, operating with 30 employees during the busy season, his company generates \$2.5 million in sales, and it is growing with a healthy mix of residential and commercial maintenance, commercial snow removal, and, in his words, "a reborn design/build component."

Q. After 21 years in business, why did you feel that joining a PLANET peer group would be a good fit for your company?

A. The peer group appealed to me because I had spent 10 years with the same industry coach. Although he helped me immensely, I felt it was time for a change. I liked the idea of working with other business owners who were dealing with similar issues and could identify with some of the challenges I faced. In addition, having access to success stories, like those told by peer group facilitators Tom Oyler and Bruce Wilson, was a huge bonus.

Q. Did you have any specific expectations when you joined the peer group?

A. I guess the obvious one is that I expected to learn. More specifically, I wanted to learn how to grow my business, not just in revenue, but to become more of a process-driven company.

Q. Where does your company's strength lie and where do you think you can lend support to other peer group members?

A. A commitment to clients and employees is our company's real strength, something that has helped us grow from literally nothing to what we are today. What I've learned (or reminded myself of) over the years from interacting with them could be helpful to the peer group.

Q. How has your company benefited from joining the peer group?

A. I have had an incredibly positive experience. Over the years, I put processes and procedures in place for most areas of my business, but have struggled to implement them. Peer group members identified employee accountability as the missing piece of the puzzle. The answer may seem obvious, but it is amazing what can hide when you're putting all your energy into running a company. In addition, they've been enormously supportive and very willing to share their perspectives and procedures.

Q. What is your impression of the group?

A. We are an eclectic group. Initially, I felt strongly that all the member companies should offer similar services. Instead, I've found I receive great insight from people in our group who operate companies with drastically different business models. They are a great group and our different businesses and personalities give each of us different and unique perspectives, something I find to be incredibly beneficial.

Q. What advice would you give other PLANET members thinking about joining a peer group?

A. Be patient with the process. Having similar-sized companies is helpful, but not a requisite. ~

(From The Hill continued from page 32)

a submission is inadequate, the EPA must establish the TMDL list.

The CWA also provides the statutory basis for state water quality standards programs. The regulatory requirements governing these are published in the Code of Federal Regulations. States are responsible for reviewing, establishing, and revising water quality standards.

Recently, some uses of pesticides became threatened by burdensome Clean Water Act permit requirements. As a result of a Sixth Circuit Court decision, certain pesticide applications now require costly

(NPDES) permits. The new permits have added a great deal of costly paperwork and reporting requirements for certain pesticide applications without providing any additional environmental protections. In addition, the permit requirements vary from state to state, causing confusion for lawn care providers that operate in multiple states.

Stay on top of this and other developing issues, by frequently checking PLANET's Legislative Affairs web page for updates. We all also need to remain vigilant at the local and state levels to new and existing water quality requirements. ~

Note: *Waters of the United States will be one of the three issues discussed with legislators during this year's Legislative Day on the Hill. Go to LandcareNetwork.org and select Position Statements under the Government Affairs tab, to familiarize yourself with all the issues.*

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