Land Care Inc. worked through the 2007–2008 housing market collapse in Las Vegas by being diversified and having a solid business plan.

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**Our Mission**
The Professional Landcare Network cultivates and safeguards opportunities for our members — the dedicated professionals and companies who create and enhance the world’s landscapes.

**Our Vision**
To be the respected leader and voice of the green industry.

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**WE HIT A HOME RUN**

**This Was My 15th Year**

attending PLANET’s Renewal & Remembrance at Arlington National Cemetery, and PLANET volunteers hit a home run! On Monday, July 25, more than 400 of them braved 102 degrees Fahrenheit temperature and Washington, D.C., humidity to lime 271 acres and aerate 37 acres of turf at the cemetery. The group also spent the morning planting perennials, mulching, pruning, cabling and adding lightning protection to trees, and updating irrigation systems around the Columbarium and Receiving Vault.

This was a family event, too, as 58 children planted perennials and even participated in laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

It was a home run from several perspectives. Everyone who attended left feeling very good about donating their talents, expertise, and time. The cemetery received some additional tender loving care to the tune of approximately $200,000; over the years, PLANET has contributed more than $2 million to this national landmark. The event was good public relations, as well. For example, our efforts were recognized by Anchor Brian Williams in his Making a Difference segment on “NBC Nightly News.”

Volunteers also took the time to participate in PLANET’s Legislative Day on the Hill held on Tuesday. They received a briefing on key issues such as the H-2B guest worker program and the EPA’s WaterSense on Monday afternoon, attended a dinner Monday evening, and enjoyed hearing from three speakers: ABC News Senior Congressional Correspondent Jonathan Karl on Monday afternoon, Rep. Robert Dold (R-Ill.) at the Monday evening dinner, and Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-Ore.) at Tuesday’s breakfast. The rest of the day was devoted to making the rounds on Capitol Hill to talk with legislators.

All in all, it was a tremendous two days in our nation’s capital. As I walked around the cemetery with Phil Fogarty, the original Renewal & Remembrance champion, he mentioned that this was one the smoothest run events ever. Phil gave kudos to Renewal & Remembrance Chair Walter Wray, Landscape Industry Certified Technician, and his staff for their efforts and remarked how everyone, even the little children, were emotionally overwhelmed by just being there and realizing the sacrifices these soldiers made. “One little girl,” Phil told me, “promptly embraced a tombstone after getting off a bus. She couldn’t have been more than 3 years old.”

Thanks to everyone for helping to make Renewal & Remembrance and Legislative Day on the Hill a tremendous success. Special thanks also to the Irrigation Association and Tree Care Industry Association who partnered with us to host the events and to Syngenta, the Platinum sponsor, and all the sponsors who help to make this event possible.

Arlington National Cemetery holds a very special place in the hearts of all Americans, and PLANET members are very proud indeed to be able to give something back to the men and women who gave their lives for our country.

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**Gerald J. Grossi, PLANET President**
Landscape Industry Certified Technician
GREEN INDUSTRY CONFERENCE
October 26–29, 2011 | Louisville, KY

It’s time to grow.

“I attend PLANET’s GIC because it brings together entrepreneurs, large and small. We share Intel and war stories. I always learn lessons I can apply to my business.”

- Brad Johnson, President
  Lawn America
  PLANET Member

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PLANET’s Green Industry Conference (GIC) is a one-of-a-kind program designed to focus on education and networking to advance your business. Intensive sessions and workshops are combined with opportunities to engage with leading industry, government, consumer, and academic experts. GIC will bring attendees up to date on all the latest topics, tips, techniques, and technology guaranteed to keep green industry company owners, managers, supervisors, and employees on the cutting edge of business practices.

Tree Removal Tips & Techniques that Save Time & Money

Mark Chisholm
Thursday, October 27 • 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.
Register: www.landcarenetwork.org

Back by popular request, 2010 International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) International Tree Climbing Champion (ITCC) Mark Chisholm will share some of the techniques he has learned as a third-generation, ISA-certified arborist over the last 25 years in the industry. Learn tree removal strategies that can help save time, reduce the risk of injury, and increase your profit margins while satisfying your clients’ tree care needs.

About Mark

Mark Chisholm is a three-time ITCC and is certified by the state of New Jersey and the ISA. As a third-generation arborist, Chisholm conducts educational seminars nationwide on behalf of STIHL Inc. Learn more about Mark at treebuzz.com.

PRO Magazine Pros in Excellence Awards

Sponsored by Ariens, STIHL and GIE+EXPO, the PRO Magazine Pros in Excellence Awards recognize landscape contractor(s) who are successfully growing their businesses with professionalism and innovation. The winning landscape contractors will be announced at GIE+EXPO and featured in the November/December issue of PRO Magazine. Visit greenindustrypros.com for more information.

Independent We Stand

STIHL is proud to be a major sponsor of Independent We Stand, an organization that promotes independently owned business and touts the benefits of “buying local.” Since 1974, STIHL has “walked the walk” by selling its products exclusively through a network of independent locally owned, servicing dealers. Visit IndependentWeStand.org or visit the STIHL booth (#5080) to join the movement!
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STIHL Lumberjack Challenge Returns to GIE+EXPO
Thursday - Friday: 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., Outdoor Demo Area
The STIHL Lumberjack Challenge, presented by DL Weatherhead’s Timberworks, returns to GIE+EXPO! This entertaining and educational lumberjack show is a unique blend of sport, history and comedy that guarantees fun for all participants. Lumberjack athletes demonstrate a variety of skills as they compete in such disciplines as log rolling, speed climbing, the obstacle pole, hot saw, springboard and many others.

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*As compared to previous models
IN MOST PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, THE market is gradually coming back and landscape professionals are beginning to take stock of opportunities. And, there are plenty of them, from a pent-up demand for maintenance services and growing interest in sustainable landscapes, to a renewed interest in landscape elements, such as outdoor kitchens. With the opportunities, however, come challenges. How to grow in an increasingly competitive market where costs continue to rise and customers are taking advantage of a buyer’s market is chief among them.

That’s where this year’s Green Industry Conference (GIC) comes in. To be held October 26–29 in Louisville, Kentucky, the conference will help green industry professionals define and take advantage of new opportunities while dealing with the new realities of increased competition, rising costs, and customers who literally want more for less.

“Establishing long-term goals and developing strategic plans are important,” points out GIC chair Phil Fogarty. “But, what all companies — large and small, emerging and long-standing — need are ideas and road maps on ways to take advantage of the recovery.” The informative seminar and workshop lineup reflects this sentiment.

SELL, SELL, SELL

What does any company need to take advantage of new opportunities? The answer is sales, of course, and the sales and marketing process has changed, just as the market has. A broad range of sales-oriented seminars introduce attendees to new ways to market on the Internet, develop processes that work, and more effectively leverage relationships. Long-time industry consultant Kevin Kehoe will share ideas on how to create an effective sales machine, one that has the right structure, goals, and reward systems in place. Among strategies, he will present ways to apply the right sales processes and execute the correct lead generation and conversion systems.

Sales trainer Patrick McManamon will explain how asking a few more qualifying questions on the front end of the sales process can increase a company’s sales and closing efficiency. Other seminars will visit the referral process, how to sell value in today’s value-driven environment, and why some sales efforts, although filled with important information for customers, often fail.

“What all companies — large and small, emerging and long-standing — need are ideas and road maps on ways to take advantage of the recovery, says GIC Chair Phil Fogarty.”
NEW OPPORTUNITIES, NEW REALITIES

Honing the sales process is a step in the right direction. But, it will only get your company part way to revenue goals if opportunities are missed or new market realities are not addressed.

One new opportunity, the installation and maintenance of sustainable landscapes, has been on the minds of contractors since the 2008 housing collapse. The mantra has been, “Wait until the economy turns around and customers have money to spend.”

The waiting is over, according to sustainable pioneer Bob Grover, Landscape Industry Certified Manager & Technician, as he walks attendees through the contents of a “Sustainable Landscaping Toolbox.” If you want to be more sustainable, but don’t know where to start, this session is for you. Learn how to establish a sustainable culture in your company, reduce your carbon footprint and water use and that of your customers, and integrate sustainable landscape elements into both new and existing landscapes.

Find out even more about this hot topic, and real-world applications, from a panel of landscape contractors who are putting sustainability concepts to work for them.

For companies looking to diversify, Monroe Porter’s session on transitioning from installation to maintenance and vice versa is a must-attend. The program focuses on core competency evaluation and how to determine in which industry segment you are most likely to succeed. Jeff Dross from Kichler Lighting will explain how landscape contractors can benefit from joining the “LED Landscape Lighting Revolution.” Reducing troubleshooting and associated labor costs, along with the ability to create dramatic lighting effects are just two reasons to join the revolution, he will tell attendees.

Being successful and having a healthy bottom line requires adjusting to new market conditions. Kevin Bang, from USI Insurance, for example, will offer tips on how to budget for health care reform and review ways to understand and control health care risks. CNA’s Jim Martin will address new trucking regulation that impacts any company with a DOT number or anyone driving commercial motor vehicles.

The economic fallout of the recession has created a low-price environment where cost cutting is requisite to remain both profitable and competitive. Industry veterans Bruce Wilson and Tom Oyler from the Wilson Oyler Group will offer ideas on ways to deal with high fuel prices, manage labor more effectively, and price enhancement work for more margin.

Another important session benchmarks key data on prices, gross margins, and staff productivity ratios and speculates where these important numbers will trend in 2012.

JUST A TASTE

This is just a taste of what’s in store for attendees looking to make the most of 2012 growth opportunities, and it doesn’t end with the seminars. GIC continues to be the premier networking event of the year with the ever-popular Breakfast With Champions and specialty group receptions leading the way. Like last year, there will also be virtual tours of several facilities, and the GIE+EXPO trade show floor and outdoor demonstration area will feature the latest in labor-saving equipment and product advancements.

If you want to learn how to sell more, take advantage of new opportunities, and become more competitive and profitable, then you really can’t miss what’s on tap at this year’s GIC, October 26–29 in Louisville, Kentucky.
The good news is the recession is over. The bad news is its hangover is still hanging on. According to landscape professionals from around the country, maintenance has seen an uptick, design/build remains relatively flat or is up slightly depending on the market, and overall revenue seems to be beating projections. Still, challenges remain and they involve competition, pricing pressures, rising costs, and the inability to accurately predict sales, not to mention a monkey wrench or two thrown in by Mother Nature.

SEEING THE LIGHT
In Rochester, New York, Brett Lemcke, Landscape Industry Certified Manager, vice president of RM Landscape, says overall sales are up 8 percent over last year. Maintenance alone is up 40 percent. Construction, however, has seen only a 2 percent increase. “We’ve had only a few big design/build projects this year, mostly on the residential side,” he relates. “Commercial projects are primarily of the enhancement nature, and they are relatively small, within the $5,000 to $25,000 range.”

As the numbers indicate, maintenance has been a different story, in large part because that’s where Lemcke sees growth opportunities. “We want to grow maintenance and its full steam ahead there. Our company has added 20 additional people this year and purchased 10 new trucks and more equipment to keep up with the work and a backlog caused by an extremely wet spring.”

Duke’s Landscape Management in Hackettstown, New Jersey, has also experienced an uptick in sales, according to company President Eric Cross, Landscape Industry Certified Manager & Technician, LEED Green Associate. “Our goal was a 15 percent increase in sales this year, and we’re trending a little higher than that. A couple of larger projects have come through as a result of relationships we’ve built over the last few years.”

“Last year, we developed a three-year budget, three-year sales goals, and a three-year organizational chart. To date, we’re currently on target.”

Peter Howe, Landscape Industry Certified Manager, with Carmel, Indiana-based Engledow, agrees with Davis, noting that fierce competition and price cutting, a result of the recession, continue to plague the marketplace. Despite these challenges, he says that both design/build and maintenance revenue is up a bit from last year. “Property managers want buildings to sell,” Howe emphasizes, “so they need to enhance and maintain their landscapes.”

MARKET-DRIVEN
Growth is spotty. In Vista, California, Heaviland Enterprises owner, Tom Heaviland, Landscape Industry Certified Manager & Technician, is keeping his operation tight while waiting for the market to recover. “We will not hit our original sales targets and have looked for ways to reduce expenses,” he explains. “Our company compensation plans for salespeople are more incentive laden with lower base salaries
than in recent years, but they have opportunities to earn more when certain targets are met.”

Heaviland has also made a few adjustments because of rising fuels costs. Account managers drive four-cylinder Ford Focuses and production managers drive smaller Ford Rangers. Recently he ordered two Ford Transits to replace the F-250 pickups previously used by irrigation technicians.

The commercial landscape management market Heaviland’s company targets continues to be under extreme price pressure. “Competition is strong from both national and regional players, all vying for market share. Buyers are in a good position, knowing that if they go to bid on their property, they can expect to see roughly a 20 to 30 percent savings.”

Despite the competition and a slow start caused by changes in his sales team, Heaviland looks to be very profitable this year. “If you’re going to be profitable and grow, you have to keep it lean, and still keep it lean once things turn around,” he emphasizes.

Customers are shopping their interior plantscaping needs a little more than usual, reports Chris Raimondi, Landscape Industry Certified Manager, president of Raimondi Horticultural Group in Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey. “We’re hitting target goals for the year, but not without waiting longer for customers to make their buying decision. They have money, but they’re cautious about spending it, and they’re looking for the best value for their dollars. One customer, for example, recently received five quotes for a project next year. That’s a little unusual for the interior market.”

With the waiting games come uncertainty, says Raimondi, and the inability to plan. So, the company has had to adjust and be in a position to quickly react when customers decide to go with a project.

In Larksville, Pennsylvania, Michael Kravitsky IV, Landscape Industry Certified Technician, president of Grasshopper Lawns, Inc., reports that his lawn care sales are up 17 percent over last year. That’s a healthy bump, considering he had projected only a 2 to 3 percent growth. “Things aren’t perfect,” he says, “but customers are more optimistic about the future. Last year, homeowners wanted to back down on services, maybe forgo an aeration service or cut back on an application.”

“This year, it’s either-or — either they want all the services, or they can’t afford any. Generally speaking, I believe homeowners are getting tired of being bombarded with bad news and are more willing to spend money on their lawns and landscapes.”

“It’s not that our customers don’t have the money to spend, they’re just reluctant to make the commitment, being unsure of the economic forecast,” relates Ed Furner, Landscape Industry Certified Technician, client representative for Lake Bluff, Illinois-based Mariani Landscape. “We still have design/build work, but the size and volume of projects are smaller. Our maintenance work, though, has exceeded expectations this year and will likely help us meet projections.”

As Furner points out, diversification has been and continues to be a business saver for companies waiting for the housing market to fully recover. Long-time industry veteran and green industry consultant Rod Bailey, Landscape Industry Certified Manager, couldn’t agree more.

“Maintenance is keeping several of my clients in business,” Bailey emphasizes. “I’ve encouraged them to be aggressive with their marketing, push maintenance, and then focus on selling higher margin enhancement upgrades.”

He continues: “Grass needs water to grow, which means there are opportunities in offering irrigation upgrades for customers looking to save on water costs, too.” Bailey also advises clients to continually review their overhead and sell, sell, sell, especially to the 20 percent of customers who traditionally account for 80 percent of sales.

“Stick to them like glue,” he adds, “and be proactive about finding ways to help reduce their maintenance costs. For example, encourage them to replace grass strips in parking lots with mulch or decorative rock strips along the curb. This will improve your efficiency and you can then offer a reduction in maintenance cost. They will appreciate your effort and return the favor when the economy turns around.”

It will turnaround say all the preceding contractors. But, don’t hold your proverbial breath they quickly add. The rebound is slow, which means words like “diversify,” “lean,” “proactive,” “sell,” “innovate,” “enhance,” “value,” and so forth will dominate the discussion and business plans for the next few years.
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One Tough Animal.
Joy prefers the term “remodeling” when talking about adding natural elements to a landscape. Xeriscaping, she notes, sometimes has a negative connotation for customers.
landscape management company offering planning, design, installation, renovation, maintenance, irrigation, arbor care, and consultation to a variety of commercial clients. The owners sold their residential division in 2003, only to have recently reentered the market through brisk referrals. “Starting a business wasn’t easy,” Rob admits. “I didn’t have any experience running a company, so I read as much as I could, attended seminars and took courses, and asked everyone questions. Early on, Land Care joined PLANET, in large part to take advantage of additional learning opportunities. “We joined PLANET to be part of a bigger movement,” Joy explains. “Being a member has enriched us on many levels, from the many educational opportunities it has afforded us, including being able to learn from veterans about how to save money and be more profitable, to forging new friends within the industry who we can call on for advice virtually any time.”

Both agree that one of the association’s strengths lies with its broad range of resources. One of those resources is the unique Trailblazers program that gives PLANET members an opportunity to spend one day on-site with an industry veteran. Rob was recently nominated as a Trailblazer mentor. “The program is great and has been very helpful to me over the years, he relates. “It was an honor to be selected and have the opportunity to give back to the industry.”

“The Trailblazers program is just one of several important networking opportunities within PLANET,” says Rob. “Having access to a pool of industry veterans who are more than willing to share their trade secrets was more than reason enough for us to join. Adds Joy, “We’ve also taken advantage of resources such as PLANET’s Safety Sense and Business in a Box, and our company participates in various cost-saving affinity programs.”

Land Care President and CEO Rob Diaz learned how to run a business by reading, studying, asking a lot of questions, and making the most of the company’s PLANET membership.

Land Care offers a wide array of services, something that helped the company weather the housing collapse.

NEW Training Manuals Launching at the Green Industry Conference 2011!

- UPDATED to offer new industry information
- ENHANCED to include a video/Web component
- RECOMMENDED study material for the Landscape Industry Certified Technician Exterior exam

Check them out at PLANET booth 3134, October 26-29! GreenIndustryConference.org
The Land Care owners are currently updating their Web site, an exercise that Joy refers to as “One of the most time-consuming and all-encompassing jobs undertaken to date. “Web sites have so many moving, interconnected parts,” she explains. “When designing one, you’re truly providing a snapshot of your entire company and everything it touches. Paragraphs have to be worded correctly to satisfy legal advisers and search engine optimization requirements, not to mention making sure service offerings convey the right message to site visitors. It is a big undertaking, but one we feel will be well worth the effort. “We needed a fresh, updated, and innovative look — something that reinforces our expertise and professionalism. This time around, we are using a platform that is more user friendly, one that will allow us to quickly and easily update the site, which keeps it interesting and exciting.”

Even with all the energy and time expended to create a new Web site, staying up with computer technology was never in doubt for Land Care. Rob was exposed to computers while working in logistics in the air force, and he found out early on how they facilitated communication to all corners of the globe. It was a given they would be integrated into his business, just as it’s a given now that social media will play a fundamental role in the company’s growth. “Our entire team uses social media,” Joy emphasizes. “They tweet and they’re on Facebook.” When asked if social media has created many sales opportunities for the company, she responds, “Absolutely! Our client support team records lead generation, and it’s always great to hear that we were referred through one of our social media channels.” She points out that one of the challenges all companies face is to ensure what is being tweeted or otherwise written about them or a client conforms to company standards and policies. Case in point, depending on the property and a customer’s preference, employees may be restricted from downloading photos of a job or mentioning the customer’s name. Having success with social media is not unlike having success in other areas of an operation; it requires plenty of up-front planning and proper execution. “It’s so important to have the right team members in place, in all corners of your company,” says Rob. “Everyone needs to share a common vision, and management has to make sure everyone is accountable and has the proper training.” Joy agrees. “Our faith, our team, and our clients define our greatest strengths. We are blessed, grateful, and so humbled by the opportunities we have been given.” These same strengths and opportunities have helped Land Care stay profitable in a city that has yet to recover from economic extremes.
COMPANIES THAT OUTPERFORM THEIR competitors have several “best practices” in play. They know and practice them regularly and routinely, and the “best practices” have become part of their organizational fabric.

Today, we hear a lot about how tough the economy is and how tough each marketplace is throughout the country: “Gee whiz Bill and Ed, you have no idea how tough our market is!”; “Our market is different, the competition is fierce, and competitors are randomly lowering their prices way too much!”; or “Our clients are the most demanding in the whole country and they want lower pricing. I don’t know how to compete with that!”

So, when we ask them how they are arriving at their pricing, we hear about this magic formula, or we “kinda” do this or that to get to our pricing. That is when we really learn one key reason organizations are not competing so well. They are not accurately estimating their work.

Remember, the main purpose of estimating is to arrive at an accurate cost for performing the work according to the specifications and the expectations of your customer while making you a fair and reasonable profit. Accurate estimating is the foundation of building the right price for your services. The more accurate you are with your estimate the better your chances are of coming in at the right price.

ESTIMATE YOUR JOBS FROM FOUR VANTAGE POINTS

Here are a few tips we suggest for estimating to become one of your “best practices”:

1. **Field Estimate**: The field folks who are responsible for performing the work usually do this. This is done by determining crew hours needed to perform the work. Example: A three-man crew for three hours per week equals nine man-hours per week. These estimates are often too high because the field folks want to make sure they have everything “covered.”

2. **Price per square foot**: Measure the job and apply your square foot pricing calculation you have learned from your experiences with jobs similar in scope and difficulty. Example: .02/per sq. ft. per month for medium difficult jobs, .06/per sq. ft. per month for smaller or very difficult jobs, or .008/sq. ft. per month for very easy or highly productive jobs. This method requires considerable experience to reach this level, but I have used it for years as a cross check on estimating and pricing.

3. **Compare with other existing similar work**: Measure the job you are looking at. Now look at other jobs you currently maintain and see how you have priced them and if you are making money on them. Compare the jobs you are looking at with existing jobs that are similar in size and scope of work. Now, see what the price per square foot you are at with your existing jobs and apply this pricing on the targeted jobs. Determine if this method makes sense in pricing your new potential jobs.

4. **Computer program with production rates**: Measure the jobs and insert them into your program that has all of the production rates already installed along with the costs of materials and the application rates of these materials.

   **Note**: We use the computer program as the core estimating method along with the other methods mentioned here to give us a “real-world” approach. We truly believe that all companies should have a computer production rate estimating process in place.
KNOW YOUR COSTS

Knowing what your costs are is the most important part of performing an accurate estimate. Following are some of the basics that are part of the estimating “best practice”:

Know your workforce and materials costs

Determine your hourly average wage, including basic burden costs. Simply take the hourly wages of all the field people performing the work and add them up. Then, add your burden rate: payroll taxes, insurances, workers’ compensation, general liability, health benefits, and any retirement benefits. Now total all of this up and divide by the number of people you have on the project. Example: You have 10 field people and you add all their costs together and you get $125.00 per hour. Take this $125.00 per hour and divide by 10 and that will give you $12.50 per hour as your hourly average wage, including burden.

Then, determine your material costs and their application rates associated with maintenance activities. This would include fertilizers, snail bate, roundup, pre-emergents, and any other routine types of materials used in maintenance. This way, when you estimate, you will know what your labor costs are per hour and your materials cost.

Know your production rates

The next step in developing you estimating “best practice” is to determine your production rates. Determine production rates for each task that will be performed:

- **Mowing with each size mower;** sq. ft. per hour
- **Edging the lawn;** lineal ft. per hour
- **Hedging;** lineal ft. per hour
- **Pruning;** sq. ft. per hour or number of shrubs or trees per hour

Each task should have a production rate that makes sense to you and your team. This is critical. When you are awarded the job, the workforce will know exactly what is expected and how much time is allocated for the task.

Know the measurements

Measure the job. I often get a lot of pushback here because of time concerns. Yet, new technologies for measuring jobs, such as Go I Lawn, can help with this, so learn how to use them. Don’t let this become the roadblock to your implementation of the estimating “best practice.” The companies that take the time to do this are the ones enjoying the most success.

Know the specifications

Understand exactly what is required and what is not included. Carefully review all specifications to make certain you are not underestimating or overestimating what is needed to perform the work according to the specifications. Know what is included or not included, such as seasonal flowers, mulch, irrigation repair, vandalism coverage, and so forth.

Know and practice the estimating ‘best practice’

We highly encourage you to build this “best practice” into your company and know and practice it regularly and routinely. By doing so, we feel confident you will have a much better position when competing out there in these challenging times.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Head Harvesters Bill Arman and Ed Laflamme are cofounders of The Harvest Group where along with their fellow Head Harvesters Cindy Code and Steve Cesare they help more than 50 organizations in 25 states and three countries in “harvesting their potential.” The Head Harvesters can be reached at harvestlandscapeconsulting.com.

Join us at GIC

Join Harvester Bill for his workshop, 10 “Best Practices” That all Smaller Growing Companies Need to Know and Practice, Friday, October 28, 2011, 1:30 p.m.-2:45 p.m. at the PLANET Green Industry Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. Register today at GreenIndustryConference.org!
**Trailblazers on Call**

Have a tough business or technical question but don’t know where to turn? Submit your pressing questions and receive a response within 24 hours from one of PLANET’s esteemed Trailblazers.* Simply call Gail Rogers at (800) 395-2522 or email her at GailRogers@landcarenetwork.org.

*This program is free to PLANET members.

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**PLANET AEF**

Calling all PLANET student members! PLANET Academic Excellence Foundation (PLANET AEF) scholarship applications and Outstanding Educator of the Year nomination forms now available at LandcareNetwork.org. For more information, contact Kristen Nolton at (800) 395-2522, or via email at scholarship@landcarenetwork.org.

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**Save on Certification at GIC**

Save 25% individually or 50% for groups of four or more on select* PLANET certification exams taken during the Green Industry Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, on October 29. Visit http://tiny.cc/fbbvc for more information.

*Discounts do not apply to computer testing fees or to any other PLANET certification exams. Select exams must be taken during GIC to qualify for this special. This special also does not apply to the Landscape Industry Certified Technician—Exterior exam, which is offered exclusively by state association licensees.

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**Crystal Ball Report #30**

See how your company measures up when it comes to being innovative, or how it can begin to be. PLANET members can download a free electronic copy of Crystal Ball Report #30: Innovate or Die! by logging in to the Member Center at LandcareNetwork.org or purchase a printed copy (Item number MR-0030) from the online PLANET Bookstore! Members $10/Nonmembers $30.

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**New Lawn Care Technician Exam**

Are you ready to take your career to the next level? If so, taking and passing PLANET’s new Landscape Industry Certified Lawn Care Technician — National exam is an important first step. For more details, go online to http://tinyurl.com/3mreypp, contact PLANET at (800) 395-2522, or email certification@landcarenetwork.org.

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**Student Career Days**

Save the date and stay tuned for more details about the green industry’s leading competitive, recruitment, and networking event for students — PLANET’s annual Student Career Days — March 22–25, 2012, at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas. Visit StudentCareerDays.com for highlights from this year’s event.

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**Green Industry Great Escape**

Take advantage of a healthy dose of rest and relaxation along with education and networking opportunities with other green industry professionals at the Green Industry Great Escape (formerly Executive Forum) at the Atlantis Resort & Casino, Paradise Island, Bahamas, March 1–4, 2012. For more information, call the PLANET office at (800) 395-2522 or go online to LandcareNetwork.org/greatescape.

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**Central Planning Bookstore Clearance Sale**

Save up to 70% on select publications while supplies last! Go online to http://tinyurl.com/3f58yju for a complete listing.

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**EVENTS:**

**Note:** Education offered at PLANET events is approved for PLANET Landscape Industry Certified recertification at 1 CEU per hour of instruction attended.

**GIC — it’s time to grow!**

Get the latest information on market trends in your area, product and service innovations, and hands-on education at the 2011 Green Industry Conference, October 26–29, in Louisville, Kentucky. Visit GreenIndustryConference.com for detailed registration and hotel information. Stop by and see us at booth #3134!

**Platinum Sponsor:** JOHN DEERE | **Gold Sponsor:** Syngenta

**Silver Sponsor:** Bayer Environmental Science

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**Lawn Care Summit**

Join PLANET and the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) for the annual Lawn Care Summit, a national forum on current trends and future developments in lawn care, December 7–9, 2011, at the Turnberry Isle, Aventura, Florida. For more information, call the PLANET office at (800) 395-2522.

**Gold Sponsor:** Bayer Environmental Science
For the first time ever, you can see how Bobcat® compact track loaders compete with other brands online. Visit www.BobcatAdvantage.com/CTL5 to find out who comes out on top.