

Network News

Produced by:





**A monthly newsletter informing
and educating the LandOpt Nationwide Network**



Inside this issue:

Focus on Operations Fuels Inaugural Field Day	1
Professional Development Announcements for Training	1
Message From the President: The Final Mile	2
Follow the Formula for Sales Success	3
Network Success	2
Southern Scope Makes Their Mark	2
Teri McGuinness Joins LandOpt as Partnership Coordinator	4
GIE on the Horizon	2
As Heard on Chatter....	3

Focus on Operations Fuels Inaugural Field Day

As has been proven time and again within the Powered by LandOpt Network, face-to-face networking and peer interaction are invaluable elements of the Network



experience. It was with that concept in mind, that the Inaugural Operations Field Day was developed. Intended to get the Network’s account managers, project managers, GMs and other Operations-focused team members together in a collaborative and interactive environment different than the traditional training sessions conducted in Pittsburgh, the Operations Field Day will focus on group discussion, best practices and interaction with equipment vendors. To really add a different look and feel, PROSCAPE Landscape Management has volunteered to host the event at their facility in Byron Center, Michigan.

“The Field Day is definitely a response to requests we have had from the Network for higher-level interaction among the Operations roles within each business – an interaction that transcends the standard training curriculum,” noted Director of Success David Gallagher. “Dirk Bakhuyzen III was among those with

Snow & Ice Con Ed will be conducted Sept. 12-14 and Operations Field Day will take place Sept. 14-15.

great interest in making this happen. In discussing the why’s and how’s of such an event, he offered to host the event and the Field Day idea developed from there.”

Since the Continuing Education Training scheduled for fall was intended to be focused on Snow & Ice Management Services– also of an Operations genre – it was decided that the two events could be combined within the same week to allow for ease of travel and efficiency for all involved.

While the reality is that some of our Southern Network members will not have cause to attend the Con Ed, the goal is for all who attend the Con Ed to stay the extra day and a half for the Operations Field Day where they will be joined by those who are traveling to Michigan specifically for this event. **(cont’d on Page 3)**

LandOpt Professional Development

The following are upcoming best-in-class LandOpt training events for the third quarter of 2011.

Training:

- Sept. 12 through Sept. 14—Con Ed Snow & Ice Mgmt.
- Sept. 14 through Sept. 15—Operations Field Day
- Oct. 24—27 — Transformation Training

Webcasts: (Subject to change)

- Aug. 25 — Team Succession Planning
- Sept. 8 — In Preparation for Planning ‘12: Part I
- Oct. 6 — In Preparation for Planning ‘12: Part II

Network Success!

- 2011 NEW sales across the Powered by LandOpt Contractor Network have hit \$10.3M, up nearly 17% over the same period in 2010!
- Congratulations to **Scott Schmidt from Carolina Creations** who recently logged a \$170,460 LT recurring agreement — the largest of its kind within the Network this year.
- Kudos to **Tim Hildebrand of PROCARE Landscape Management** on his promotion to Account Manager
- **Ryan Johnson from Eichenlaub** has done it again — achieving \$1M in sales. Way to go Ryan!
- LandOpt's training center has been a busy place. We welcomed nine Powered by LandOpt team members for Transformation Training in July, followed by 12 General Managers who attended GM Bootcamp in August. Great to see this focus on training and continuous education within the Network!

GIC on the Horizon

PLANET's annual Green Industry Conference is on the horizon, scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 26 through Saturday, Oct. 29. An important part of the event is the Green Industry Equipment Expo where hundreds of exhibitors showcase their products and services. LandOpt will be among those exhibitors in booth #2022. If you are planning to attend the show, please let us know in advance and plan to stop by and visit!

Pushing Through on the "Final Mile"

A Message from Tim Smith, President/CEO



One of the most enjoyable aspects of my role as President and CEO of LandOpt is to witness the incredible growth and transformation that takes place within a landscaping service business once they fully adopt the LandOpt tools and processes. For sure, this growth and transformation does not take place overnight and it's certainly not without its share of minor aches and pains along the way – but there is no doubt that the transformation does occur. The kickoff, those first months of transformation, is an exciting time and critical in laying a solid foundation for growth. But, in my opinion, of equal importance is what I call the "final mile." The final mile represents that last 20% of growth and effort required to fully and completely adopt the LandOpt System. And, make no mistake; it is not limited to only "new" LandOpt businesses. The final mile knows no time constraint. It can just as easily apply to those contractors who have been part of the LandOpt Network for 4 or 5 years as those who have been with us 4 or 5 months.

Let me explain. The final mile, to me, is about fully adopting all of the LandOpt tools and systems that are meant to make you successful -- not just adopting those that work best for you. It's about following each and every step in a process -- not just enough of the steps necessary to yield results. The reality is that those forgotten pieces and missed steps are the ones that can, and will, take your business from good to great. They are the elements that allow your business to consistently fire on all cylinders and, when they are missed, can cause some of your greatest pain. There are four Pillars of Success within a LandOpt Business and the final mile is about making sure each one: Sales & Marketing, Business Management, Operations Management and Human Resource Management are all carried across the finish line.

For example – let's look at sales. Your sales team may have become adept at ensuring that agreement pricing consistently includes the proper Gross Profit Margin (GPM). That's great! But, if you are not tracking those jobs through Operations to ensure that they are being consistently *delivered* at the proper GPM, then your company is not earning the profit you anticipated.

The same philosophy holds true for Financial Planning and the Cash Flow tool. While a financial plan is a fabulous tool to have in place, utilizing the Cash Flow tool for proper allocation of your dollars is what makes the financial plan work. Monthly and annual objectives are hard to meet when you do not have a clear picture of available cash.

Only you know for sure where there is still room for growth and transformation within your business. I respectfully challenge each of you to look at each pillar within your Powered by LandOpt business with a critical eye. Are you using all of the tools toward your success? Are you executing all of the processes completely and utilizing the systems comprehensively? Now is the time for your team to dig deep – to push through what can sometimes be the most difficult stage – and complete that last 20% of growth in your LandOpt business. Find that reserve of energy that you may not think is there and push on through. The effort will pay off in dividends when you see your already successful business reach new heights!

The official "pinning" ceremony for Southern Scape took place while they were in the office recently for Transformation Training. Pictured are Greg Shaw and James Hagood (l to r) making their mark before being congratulated by President and CEO Tim Smith.



Follow the Formula for Sales Success

With news that sales in the Network have just topped \$10.3M – up nearly 17% over the same period last year – some are wondering out loud about what, exactly, is the secret behind the success of the sales representatives in the LandOpt Network. Are they doing something “different”, perhaps? Maybe the market conditions are different in certain regions? Perhaps some of these reps are just plain “lucky”? We set out to find the answers to these questions and more. In speaking with five sales representatives we found out that there really are no great secrets. Simply, they succeed through adherence to the LandOpt Selling System, a dedication to continuous prospecting and networking, and a steadfast belief that the word “no” is but one step on the road to “yes.”

Those we spoke with: **John Cascio** from Trace Lawn & Landscaping, **Will Hickman** from Carolina Creations, **Joe Menzione** from Cut Above Landscaping, **Rebekah Oman** from Miller Landscape and **David Vaniel** from The Silvis Group are having unparalleled sales years with most of them at or very close to their individual goals as this third quarter winds down.

When asked about the “secret” to success, Vaniel summed it up best. “There is no secret. You simply need to go out do what you need to do. And do it every day.”

For Vaniel, this means not getting preoccupied with the big sales. “Focus on the little stuff,” he counsels. “Often, newer sales reps will get up caught up in chasing the big sale. The reality is, those larger accounts require more time to build up a relationship. They don’t happen overnight, but little sales will eventually lead to big ones.”

Doing “what you need to do” is a mixture of many things, according to Cascio. For him, and many others, following the LandOpt System is critical. “You absolutely have to make sure you are meeting the customer’s needs and lining up the correct value proposition for them.”

The other rule that he lives by is to make sure the initial meeting is conducted in a sit-down environment. “If you are trying to conduct the meeting during a walk-through, there are simply too many distractions and important details slip through the cracks,” he noted. Instead, he opts to allow time for the walk-through if that’s what the customer wants, but waits to deliver the value proposition until they are seated in a private room or office.

All of the reps unanimously agreed that continuous prospecting and networking are **(cont’d on Page 4)**

Inaugural Field Day (Cont.)

“Bear in mind, we plan to incorporate some fun into this event,” noted Gallagher for the benefit of those who fear all work and no play. “Wednesday afternoon will kick off with the first ever Equipment Skills Olympics and there will be some serious bragging rights up for grabs. Then, the entire group will convene for some socializing over cocktails and dinner that same evening.”

LS Training, an online provider of equipment training for landscape and turf operations, has agreed to be an event sponsor. As such, representatives will be present for the event to discuss the special pricing they currently offer to the LandOpt Contractor Network. LS Training includes more than 20 different online safety modules that include Blower, Edger, Skid Steer, Landscape Tractor, Powered Trap Rake, MSDS, Personal Safety, Fertilizer Spreader, Dump Truck, and more. Each module is complete with video, self-scoring exams, and a field checklist for supervisors to review with employees.



Full detail on both the Continuing Education Training and Operations Field Day were sent via email to all GMs and Success Coordinators last week. The registration deadline is Friday, Aug. 19. LandOpt has also made arrangements for a discounted rate of \$69/night at the nearby Baymont Inn & Suites in Byron Center. Reservations must be made prior to Friday, Aug. 26.

Questions about the event or the details associated with travel and registration can be directed to [David Gallagher](#).

As Heard on Chatter.....

LandOpt’s CRM system includes a wonderful means for allowing ongoing discussion and continuous communication among team members at all levels within a Powered by LandOpt business. The “Chatter” section within Salesforce is usually alive and well with some interesting discussions. Tidbits of recent conversation include the following:

- *Anyone in the Network want to guess who has the most enhancement sales YTD?*
- *Happy to report that we are closing the books on our highest revenue in a single month for our 45-year history!*
- *Had a great 3 days at Sales Rep Boot Camp!*
- *Is there an area in CRM to put sq. ft of turf and then be able to run a report for it?*
- *Great SIMA presentation yesterday and looking forward to time with Buckhead and Southern Scope next week!*

If you’re not already part of the Chatter community, it’s easy to begin. Those with a CRM seat can simply establish their profile, choose to “follow” their peers, LandOpt team members, general acquaintances or people of interest and can comment, ask questions or contribute as they see fit.

If you have questions about getting started, simply ask your Success Coach.

key to success. Menzione lives by a personal motto, "When in doubt, make a call. You can never go wrong by picking up the phone and making a cold call." He culls leads from a variety of sources including an online database, referrals and prospecting in the vicinity of already scheduled appointments because he understands the importance of keeping the pipeline full. He recommends, however, keeping cold call lists manageable. "You always want to work with a list that you know you can get through," he noted. "For me, that's around 100 prospects." Keeping the size of lists in-check allows him the sense of accomplishment in getting through the entire list and ensures proper follow-up.

For others, like Cascio and Hickman, professional networking affords the best opportunity to make new contacts within the community. Hickman has the benefit of having grown up in a community where "everyone knows each other." As such, he is active in community organizations like the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary and the business networking organization, BNI (of which he is President of his local chapter.) All allow him to "make the personal connection that a phone call or an email won't accomplish," he notes. For him, "If I don't already know someone within an organization, it's fairly easy for me to make a phone call to someone I do know who can provide an introduction."

As the newly elected President of his own BNI Chapter, Cascio agrees wholeheartedly. His approach in building relationships is to not make every visit to a prospect a sales call. "Sometimes I just stop in to say hi to people," he shared. "Establishing a relationship really lays the groundwork for the time when they do have a need that my company can fulfill. Then, I'm the first call they make."

Without question, the resounding message from each and every sales professional we talked to was, "Be Persistent."

Oman noted that sales requires thick skin and the ability not to take rejection personally. "Every 'no' is one step closer to a 'yes'. I don't get hung up on convincing someone that they need my services if they really don't. I just say 'next' and move on to someone who does need my company."

Said Menzione, "I have a really short memory for people who blow me off or dismiss me on the phone. I simply call them back in a few weeks knowing that I probably just caught them at a bad time. When I call back, the chance is great that they don't even remember the first call and if I catch them in a different mood they are more than willing to talk."

An example of their resiliency? All strongly believe that "No" simply means "Not now." Oman summed it up best. "If you keep swinging for the fences, eventually you'll hit a home run!"

Teri McGuinness Joins LandOpt as Partnership Coordinator



Teri McGuinness has joined the LandOpt team in the role of Partnership Coordinator. In this role, Teri will focus on identifying and generating interest among prospective Powered by LandOpt Service Providers. Acting as the sales process initiator, she will work closely with both the LandOpt Management Team and the Sales & Marketing Group to educate the Green Industry about the benefits of the LandOpt Network.

Teri has a strong background in customer-focused sales and marketing. Her skills have been honed throughout a diverse career that has included outside sales, small business ownership, and tradeshow/events marketing. A native of Wheeling, W.V. she spent a number of years living in both California and Las Vegas before settling here in Pittsburgh to focus on the growth of the LandOpt Network.

Teri is an enthusiastic addition to the LandOpt team and we are excited to have her here to fuel our sales engines. Please welcome her!

Business Transformation

LandOpt helps to transform your business by focusing on our four pillars of success:



LandOpt empowers a select group of highly qualified, regionally-based landscape contractors with a powerful portfolio of business systems to dramatically improve their growth, profitability and productivity.

The LandOpt team facilitates the transformation of landscape contractors by providing the best in class technology, along with proven business processes and systems.

LandOpt enables network licensees to efficiently utilize these systems to increase growth, profitability, and productivity in their

business.

Intensive coaching, followed with a continuing education curriculum ensures the success of the licensees. Training sessions pass along proven business practices in business management, financial planning, marketing & sales, operations and more. Coaching establishes a partnership between LandOpt and the licensee, which builds a growing successful business relationship.

The LandOpt network of licensees is a powerful resource in developing new relationships with peers in the Green Industry. The expanding network cultivates a growth of business experience and knowledge.

LandOpt continually measures and monitors the results gathered from each licensee location to evaluate the effectiveness of the LandOpt systems and ensure success.

Be proud to be a member of the Powered by LandOpt Network.



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