

Network News

Produced by:



A monthly newsletter informing
and educating the LandOpt Nationwide Network



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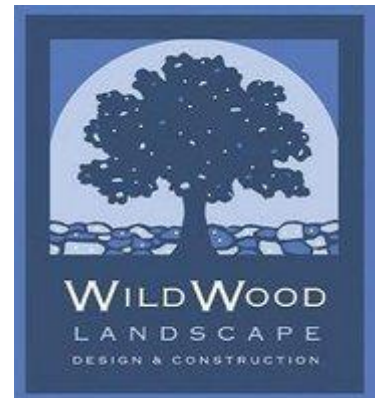
WildWood Landscape Becomes Virginia's First Powered by LandOpt Contractor

The LandOpt Contractor Network continues to expand! Recently we welcomed Purcellville, Va.-based WildWood Landscape as our 17th landscape service provider.

WildWood Landscape was founded in 2005 by Jason Dengler, who was motivated by a passion for gardening and design. The company has since grown to become an award-winning landscape design and construction firm serving Northern Virginia and surrounding areas with core services that include master plans, landscape, masonry, outdoor kitchens, water features and maintenance. Realizing that his once-small business had grown into a large, in-demand company, Dengler began to research ways to improve business operations to better serve his clients. He quickly recognized that LandOpt could provide expert guidance on how to improve company operations, resulting in his team's ability to deliver a higher level of customer service. As a LandOpt licensee, Dengler now has additional resources to continue to deliver outstanding performance while securing healthy, well-defined careers for his staff.

The continued growth of the LandOpt Contractor Network helps to set the standard of excellence for all contractors within the landscape services industry by introducing a business-focused approach to service delivery along with a proactive, professional sales process. "WildWood is a perfect complement to our Contractor Network and we are very much looking forward to working closely with them to achieve the growth and continued success that they desire," noted LandOpt President & CEO Tim Smith. "The LandOpt tools, systems, coaching and training will enhance all aspects of their business and we are thrilled to be able to welcome them to our Network."

To learn more about WildWood Landscape, visit their website: www.wildwoodlandscape.com.



LandOpt Professional Development Activity

Training & Events

- Jan. 9 -11: Sales Rep Boot Camp ([register now!](#))
- Jan. 24 -26: Principals Meeting and Success Celebration ([register now!](#))
- Feb. 6 -9: Transformation Training

Webcasts

- Dec. 15: Finalize Your 2012 Plans!
- Jan. 5: Presenting Your 2012 Plan to Your Team

The all-important 2012 **Critical Dates Calendar** has been released and can be found in the [Licensee Center](#). The calendar includes the complete schedule of the year's Transformation Trainings, Continuing Education Trainings, Boot Camps, Webcasts and LandOpt Events. Take the time to review the calendar as a team and block the appropriate key dates on everyone's schedule! If you are unsure which team members should attend or might benefit from a specific training, don't hesitate to ask your Success Coach for guidance.

Network Success!

- Heading into our final weeks of 2011, total sales in the Network have crested \$16.4M, a 16% increase over the same period in 2010. Total Maintenance Base in the Network stands at \$16.01M.
- The LandOpt Network's GPM is currently tracking at 34%, which represents 109% against plan. Outstanding!
- Nice work by Miller Landscape Sales Rep Chuck Harkins on closing a \$15K maintenance agreement in December!
- Kudos to Account Manager Jeff Powell of ProScape Lawn and Landscape Services for expertly managing his book of business and coming in 2% *under* budgeted man hours.
- Excellent work by Tim Hildebrand from PROCARE Landscape Management for putting his training in action. At September's Snow and Ice Continuing Education training, David Gallagher shared with the group some tips on perfecting plowing techniques for maximum efficiency. Tim took David's tips to heart and we hear that, in advance of the real white stuff, the parking lot at PROCARE was covered in mulch and the plow teams were hard at work removing it in the most efficient way possible.
- Congratulations to Miller Landscape for recently earning MGIA (Michigan Green Industry Association) honors! The company was recognized for their Outstanding Achievement in Commercial Landscape Beautification for their Marygrove College project. Nice to see this type of recognition for the efforts of a talented team.



Are You LandOpt Conditioned?

A Message from Tim Smith, President/CEO



The end of the year always seems to bring a great deal of self-reflection. I think we all conduct an inventory of sorts, taking stock of where we are in our personal and professional lives, looking back at where we've been and setting goals for the future. Those goals, of course, ultimately become our New Year's resolutions which may or may not be forgotten by the time February rolls around. (I admit to being a guilty party there!) This end of year goal-setting is driven by the fact that, for the most part, we are all very forward-looking. We are driven to become better, smarter, bigger...the list goes on. No matter where we stand, we push ourselves to do more, sometimes not realizing that our consistent focus and constant quest for improvement has conditioned us to a level where we are already leaps and bounds ahead of our peers. Here are two examples:

- **At a recent green industry leadership conference, Eichenlaub's Angela Barr** had the opportunity to network with owners and general managers from companies very similar to hers, and the value of the LandOpt experience was strongly reinforced. In one instance, the discussion centered on putting a bid together and one of the gentleman stated that he just, "took the hourly wage and multiplied it by 10% so all the 'other' costs would be covered." Certainly the importance of knowing your costs and applying the appropriate gross profit margin to cover those costs was a lesson he had never learned. In another discussion around work schedule, a business owner remarked how there was just no work out there, clearly an opposite mindset from LandOpt where the importance of diversifying your work type between project and recurring is emphasized.
- **Stuart Ward, Principal at Buckhead Turfcare**, visited his bank recently to secure capital for the upcoming year. Casting a doubtful eye at his projected needs, the bank asked how he could be certain of his situation so far in advance. At this, Stuart presented his annual financial and cash flow plan to the surprise of the loan officers. They were excited to take next steps and even asked if they could share his plan with others in the bank because the detail and thoroughness was something not seen from companies of his size or much larger. The LandOpt financial plan was a clear differentiator.

My point here is quite simple. Don't ever stop trying to improve and get better. Don't stop asking yourself what more you can be doing. These are the traits that have allowed you to rise to be among the best of the best within the industry. That said, I caution you against becoming overly conditioned to this level of excellence that has become your "new normal." Take the time to attend industry events, to network with your peers and read the trade publications. In doing so, you'll realize that your "normal" is now head and shoulders above the rest and, as a LandOpt Contractor, you truly are positioned for success. The sky's the limit!

PA and OH Contractors Gather

Taking advantage of the relatively mild winter weather and their proximity to one other, LandOpt Contractors from Ohio and Pennsylvania recently got together for an informal, day-long networking event. The event was hosted by Dan Eichenlaub at his facility just north of Pittsburgh, and the group's discussion centered on a prepared agenda that included 2012 financial plans, recurring services agreements, marketing tactics, team communications and daily challenges. By sharing best practices and aligning discussion with common issues, all of the participants – **Luke Henry, Brian Trace, Jake Silvis, Dan Eichenlaub, Jay Nurney, Ann Warner, and Barry Burkholder** – were able to both contribute and receive helpful advice and insight. The attendees also had the opportunity to tour the Eichenlaub facility and see a lot of the best practices in action at this particular LandOpt Contractor location. Overall, it was a great day of networking for all involved.



Dan Eichenlaub gives a tour of his facility and yard.



The LandOpt Network gets down to business!

What's "New" in the New Year?

Just as many have done in their personal lives, the LandOpt team has collectively looked ahead to set some goals for the delivery of new products and services in 2012 in order to help the Network improve and enhance day-to-day business. Among the items on our agenda are a hosted desktop solution, outsourced bookkeeping services, and marketing coaching via webcast. You'll hear more about each of those, along with anticipated delivery dates, at the upcoming Principals Meeting in Savannah. Another item that we expect to roll out prior to the end of 2011 is the [Next Generation of the Licensee Center](#), a project about which you've been hearing a good bit over the past few months.

The week of December 20, you will receive notification that the new Product Library within the Licensee Center is active and ready for use.

You will be able to find all of the documents that existed in the previous Product Library (still accessible for a short transitional time period), but all documents have been re-titled, re-organized and classified according to both the subject matter (i.e., Sales, HR, Marketing) and role (i.e., Sales Professional, GM, Success Coordinator). What does this mean to you?

- New and extensive navigation which will allow the user to narrow the search by categories
- Clear and concise document titles
- Complete document descriptions that clearly identify the purpose and use
- Distinct categories that classify each document according to both subject matter and role
- Cross-reference fields that allow easy access to related and referenced documents

Along with the notification of the roll-out and a link to the new site, we'll be providing two pre-recorded training webinars, one of which will focus on a tour of the new features and fields within the new Product Library and the other will provide a complete review of the available navigation options. Additionally, we will schedule a live webinar to provide a concise, hands-on overview in real-time and field any questions that might exist.

We're excited to unveil this new Product Library as part of the Next Generation Licensee Center. Our goal is to make it easier for you to find and utilize the many tools and materials available within the LandOpt Network. Keep an eye out for our announcement and work directly with your Success Coach to resolve any questions or usability issues.

Understanding Social Media: A Look at Facebook

Facebook. Twitter. LinkedIn. From a business perspective, where do you start and how do you make sense of all these sites? Many small businesses and companies are just beginning to dip their toe in the oversized pool that is social media and trying to quickly learn how to swim – or at least stay afloat.

The virtual universe is vast and it requires a rather major paradigm shift in the way you look at marketing and advertising. With social media, gone are the days of pushing your company's message, products, services and slogan out to an audience who was willing to simply sit and listen. Now, we live in an age where your customer wants you to connect directly with him or her, and respond to his or her needs as an individual. They want to talk to you, they want you to hear them, and they don't want to be "sold" as much as they want to be educated, entertained and made to feel special. And, they want it to happen on-demand and in real time. Whew! That's a tall order for any business, so where and how do you start?

Currently there are a lot of great books and online resources that can prove helpful to everyone from the beginner-level to the self-acclaimed social media guru. One I can personally recommend is *Likeable Social Media: How to Delight Your Customers, Create an Irresistible Brand, and Be Generally Amazing on Facebook* by Dave Kerpen. His is an entertaining, easy to digest guide to properly establishing your Facebook presence.

As this author and many experts in the field will reinforce, when you get started don't try to be all things to all people. Pick one social medium and focus your time and energy on really establishing your presence well. Learn all you can about it, present your company (and yourself) professionally and work to make sure your messaging is on target. One of the most challenging aspects is the fact that you must provide a constant flow of content. At the outset, you need to make a commitment to have your voice heard once a week or once a day or twice a day – whatever level is most reasonable for you. Choose a frequency that is sustainable, because there is nothing worse than silence in the social media universe.



Network Announcements

- Registration for both the Principals Meeting and Success Celebration (formerly the Sales Luau) are open. The events will be held in Savannah, Ga. Jan. 24-26, 2012. If you haven't already registered, [click here](#) to do so prior to the Dec. 22 registration cut-off! Questions or concerns can be directed to your Success Coach or to Office Manager [Becky Broderick](#).
- This has been a record sales year for the Network and it's no surprise that we have many sales professionals within the Network who have hit their adjusted sales breakpoint. (Those who have met both overall and long-term maintenance sales goals.) We're looking forward to recognizing many of these outstanding LandOpt Sales Professionals at the January event in Savannah. The current list (as of 12/12) includes: Dave **Vaniel**, The Silvis Group; **Jason Holloway**, Mountain View Landscapes and Lawncare; **Kevin Prall**, Eichenlaub; **Ryan "RJ" Johnson**, Eichenlaub; **Anthony Smith**, Eichenlaub; **Michael Dimeo**, Burkholder Brothers; **Rebekah Oman**, Miller Landscape; **Scott Schmidt**, Carolina Creations; **Jason Rogers**, Carolina Creations; **Joe Menzione**, Cut Above Landscaping. Can't wait to celebrate with all of you in January!
- Even though we are still working on achieving 100% LPI reporting by the Network, we're happy to share that 80% of the Network did get their numbers in on time this past month, allowing for a comprehensive snapshot of sales activity across the board. Thanks to all who reported. Let's make on-time LPI reporting a New Year's resolution for everyone!

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Understanding Social Media: A Look at Facebook (cont'd. from page 3)


In looking at Facebook, remember that Facebook is not free! In the simplest form, managing your company's Facebook presence requires dedicated time and attention for which there is a human cost. Consider that. Also, know that a Facebook page is not a magic elixir that will bring you instant results. It's not a direct response ad, and you need to be able to wrap your head around that concept.

As well, Facebook simply can't make up for a bad product or service. You can be slick and witty and have the best page around – but if your sales professionals, account managers and field crews aren't representing your company professionally, if they're not delivering what they promise and if they're not paying proper attention to keeping your customers happy, Facebook isn't going to be able to right all of your company's wrongs. Among the key Facebook strategies that Kerpen outlines in his book, he cites the following:

- Listen first... and never stop listening to your customers
- Think and act like your customer
- Compel your customers to be your first fans (before all other audiences)
- Respond quickly to all negative comments
- Respond to good comments, too!
- Determine your unique brand personality and be authentic
- Should you ask a lot of questions? (The answer here is "yes")
- Provide value for free
- Share stories and inspire your customers to share stories
- Integrate Facebook into your entire customer experience
- Consistently deliver excitement, surprise and delight
- DON'T SELL! Just make it easy and compelling for customers to buy





Within the LandOpt Network some, but not all, of our contractors have Facebook pages. If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to visit and "Like" your fellow contractors' pages, listed below. By doing so, you're helping to broaden their audience and increase their exposure as a company and also as part of the LandOpt Network. And of course, don't forget to visit [LandOpt on Facebook](#). In fact, those who "Like" our page before the end of the year will be entered into a drawing to win a copy of Dave Kerpen's book. We're only making this available to "fans" within our Network, so get out there and check us out! (Those of you who already "Like" our page will be automatically entered to win.)

We'll be bringing much more about social media to you in the coming weeks and months – offering some custom webinars for our contractor audience and providing additional resources and feedback on how to make the most of your online presence. Watch our Facebook page (and future issues of the newsletter) to learn more!



- [Buckhead TurfCare](#)
- [Carolina Creations](#)
- [Good Earth Landscape Contractors](#)
- [Miller Landscape](#)
- [Nurney Landscape & Design](#)
- [PROCARE Landscape Management](#)
- [ProScape Lawn & Landscape Services](#)
- [Silvis Group](#)
- [Southern Scape](#)
- [Trace Lawn & Landscaping](#)
- [Twin Oaks Landscape](#)
- [WildWood Landscape](#)

Business Transformation

	Human Resource Management	LandOpt helps to transform your business by focusing on our four pillars of success:
	Business Management	
	Operations Management	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.
	Sales and Marketing	

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 businesses.

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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