

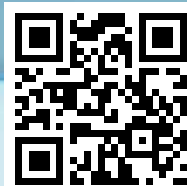
AUGUST 2023

Offshoot

The Official Publication of the California Landscape Contractors Association San Diego Chapter

www.clcasandiego.org

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Marybeth MacNaughton

President's Message

I hope you are all trying to stay cool during what is typically one of our busiest months.

Our chapter recently held an educational event that proved both enlightening and well-attended. Hosted by SiteOne Landscape Supply in San Marcos and Modern Builders Supply, the event aimed to provide educational and informative insights for landscape professionals.

The event was graced by a diverse range of attendees eager to expand their knowledge. There was an enriching session on artificial turf as well as lighting products, shedding light on the latest trends and advancements in the industry.

A hearty lunch provided by SiteOne Landscape Supply fueled the networking and camaraderie among participants. The event's success was further attributed to the contributions of education chair Mike Madewell

and SiteOne's Doug Chilton, who played pivotal roles in organizing and coordinating the event seamlessly.

A highlight of the day was a guided tour of the expansive Modern Builders Supply yard and supply store. Attendees gained firsthand knowledge of the latest pavers and hardscaping materials and equipment available, enhancing their expertise in the field.

The event concluded with gratitude extended to the vendors for their support and invaluable contributions.

The event's success was a true testament to the commitment of both CLCA and its partners in providing a platform for continuous learning and growth within the landscaping community. *See photos from the event below.*

Next up is the Beautification Awards at the Bernardo Winery on September 9. I hope to see you there!



California Landscape Contractors Association



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Chapter Beautification Awards Saturday, September 9, 5 p.m. at the Bernardo Winery

Join us at the Bernardo Winery for this year's Beautification Awards ceremony. Come mingle with friends in the industry, while dining on a delicious dinner and a host variety of wines, as you cheer on this year's winners being honored for the highest level of craftsmanship in landscaping around the county.



Didn't enter a project? Plan on attending anyway. Photos of the winning properties are showcased in a multi-media presentation during the awards ceremony, allowing you an opportunity to get ideas for your projects.

Looking to get in front of the largest crowd of contractors at any of our events? There are a variety of sponsorship opportunities available. Get more information at www.clcasandiego.org.

The Bernardo Winery is located at 13330 Paseo Del Verano Norte, San Diego, CA 92128.

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Keep informed and add to your MWELO expertise — gain new information and explore a new approach to understanding the ordinance! Workshop attendees will learn about recent updates and changes to MWELO and have the opportunity to participate in question and answer sessions with subject experts.

Presented in-person, this workshop will offer CEUs for your current certifications and provide you with a participation certificate.

This is free to all those in Southern California thanks to a generous sponsorship by the Metropolitan Water District.

To take advantage of this offer, you must:

- Register with CLCA and place a \$50 deposit* on the workshop you wish to attend.
- Attend the entire day's workshop.
- Upon full attendance at the workshop, you will receive your \$50 deposit back.

**Your \$50 deposit becomes non-refundable if you do not attend the workshop, attend less than 90 percent of the workshop, or if you cancel your attendance within seven days before the workshop session date.*

REGISTER AT CLCA.ORG/MWEL

**Connect, Learn, and Grow with CLCA!
Not a Member? Join at ccla.org/join**

Coming Events

Mark your calendar!

September 9

San Diego Chapter Beautification Awards.

Register online at www.clcasandiego.org.

Bernardo Winery: 13330 Paseo del Verano Norte, San Diego.

September 14

MWEL Workshop, Oceanside.

More information and registration at clca.org/mwel.

September 20-21

The Landscape Expo.

More information at www.thelandscapeexpo.com.

October 10

SD Chapter General Meeting & Elections, 9 a.m.

All welcome. This will be a virtual meeting.

Email bronwyn@eyescales.net for the link to attend.

November 8-11

CLCA Convention & Trophy Awards.

More information at www.clca.org/convention.

November 14

San Diego Chapter General Meeting, 9 a.m.

All welcome. This will be a virtual meeting.

Email bronwyn@eyescales.net for the link to attend.

November 30

San Diego Chapter Holiday Party, 5 p.m.

Amalfi Cucina Italiana: 1035 La Bonita Drive, San Marcos.



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Pay Philosophy

By Steven Cesare, Ph.D., The Harvest Group

A business owner from Oregon called me the other day to talk about his company's compensation system. The fundamentals were keenly in place: the company goals were well established, each company position had a tandem job description and performance appraisal form, the wage and salary scales were current, and the company culture manifested a results-based, team-oriented ambience. So far so good. Nice job!

Sensing increased financial pressure from the external economy, coupled with local competitor intrusion, the owner sought me out as a viable sounding board on additional elements to extend the utility of his company's compensation system to attract, motivate, and retain highly-talented employees. Our provocative discussion touched on several noteworthy components including non-discretionary bonus plans, a performance-based career ladder, and sincere rewards and recognition events intended to commemorate productivity, while reinforcing the entrepreneurial mindset within the company culture.

With the passage of time, I paused our insightful discussion and suggested the owner decide on his company's overall pay philosophy. Unaware of this concept, I informed the owner that a company should have an overarching theme that drives its compensation decisions relative to the local environment.

1: Match. This compensation philosophy sets pay levels that are equivalent to those of other companies in the local employment marketplace. In this case, the company targets its compensation plans at the market median (i.e., 50% of companies pay above this level, 50% of companies pay below this level). This "safe" option neither stimulates nor disenfranchises new talent from joining the team. This lack of capitalist flair, is often complemented by additional perquisites intended to attract qualified applicants (e.g., aggressive bonus potential, a well-matched 401(k) plan, and sundry paid time off options like vacation, sick leave, holidays, company closure between Christmas and New Year's Day).

Continued on next page...

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Pay Philosophy

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2: Lag. This compensation philosophy sets general pay levels below those commonly found in the prevailing labor market. Here, the company normally desires a pay system at approximately the 25th percentile (i.e., 75% of companies pay higher than this level). While certainly not ideal, especially in the current economic conditions defined by rapacious inflationary pressures and interest rates, this stance can work if the intangible aspects of employment with the company over-ride the penurious pay philosophy. For example, perhaps a company's brand image is sparkling, its culture is fraternal and engaging, the training and development programs enable employees to feel fulfilled and invested, and the uniforms, trucks, equipment, yard space, and charismatic leadership incite pride, all of which may entice employees to work for this company. While seemingly a tall order to fill, this compensation philosophy can succeed if said intangibles are indeed axiomatic. Lamentably, due to inveterate focus on cost containment, many landscape companies with a lag philosophy do not adequately supplement their low wages as described above, and consequently are simply viewed as being cheap.

3: Lead. This compensation philosophy establishes a compensation structure noticeably above that found in the local community. In practice, this means taking the 75th percentile of the market value as the salary scale mid-point and building around it aggressively (i.e., +20%). Predictably, this approach should increase the supply of high-caliber candidates, improve selection rates of qualified applicants, heighten morale and productivity, decrease employee turnover, and discourage unionization efforts. Naturally, this compensation philosophy adds significantly to overall labor costs and as such, the adjoining company budget, production rates, and gross margin goals must be closely monitored. A lead strategy is often most appropriate for organizations located in highly-competitive labor markets.

As a capitalist, I firmly agree with the timeless adage that "you get what you pay for," whether it is for goods, services, or labor. For the lead pay philosophy to be successful, all requisite drivers must be optimally aligned: ambitious revenue goals, aggressive hourly billable rates, challenging production standards, unquestioned job quality, and a performance management system fixated on employee accountability.

Do you know why? Because your customers expect to get what they pay for!

This article was excerpted from the Harvest Group blog, Tuesdays with Steve Cesare.

San Diego Chapter Member Milestones

Congratulations to the following companies for reaching membership milestones this month.

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Delivering 5HP performance, concrete finishers have the power and confidence to both pan and finish any slab. The 36" power trowel has a max blade speed of up to 130 rpm and the 24" edging power trowel up to 160



Milwaukee® MX FUEL™ 36" Walk-Behind Trowel

rpm. The MX FUEL™ RED-LITHIUM™ FORGE™ HD 12.0 Battery Pack allows the 36" trowel to deliver up to 25 minutes of run-time, approximately panning 2,000 square-feet or finishing 500 square-feet over five passes. The 24" trowel delivers up to 35 minutes of run-time, approximately panning 600 linear-feet of edging or finishing 130 linear-feet of edging over five passes. The new MX FUEL™ Super Charger provides 2X faster charging speeds for increased productivity and efficiency on the jobsite, charging the REDLITHIUM™ FORGE™ HD12.0 Battery Pack in only 65 minutes to 100% charge. The battery pack and new MX FUEL™ Super Charger are COOL-CYCLE™ capable, an Active Cooling System that provides high-speed cooling for less downtime, allowing users to stay productive when swapping batteries.

Both concrete trowels eliminate

the headaches associated with gas-powered equipment, requiring no regular maintenance or the need for users to mix gas and oil. The push-button start provides instant power, removing the repetitive motions of a typical pull-start and reducing downtime on the jobsite. Producing less noise and vibration, the battery-powered trowels have zero emissions, for a safer workspace, indoors or outdoors.

Designed with the professional concrete finisher in mind, the concrete trowels are easy to use. The handlebar height can be easily adjusted for the user's comfort, and a lift hook on the base allows for easy transportation around the jobsite.

New battery-powered trowels will be available soon for purchase. Find more info about MX FUEL™ Equipment Systems at www.milwaukeetool.com/Innovations/MX-FUEL.



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How to Handle Good and Bad Reviews



When it comes to receiving reviews on the internet, it can be incredibly overwhelming to think about the proper way to handle each review, bad or good. Reviews can be posted through multiple platforms, including Yelp, Google, Facebook and more, which are all popular websites to visit and have a ton of visibility. So, how exactly are good and bad reviews supposed to be handled?

Respond to Customer Reviews

Good or bad, it will make the customer feel valued by

responding to their review. Responding can result in better ratings and shows that your business cares about your customers' experience.

It also improves your business's online reputation and lets customers know that when they have something to say and want to be heard, they'll always receive a response.

Gather the Facts

Before you respond to any review, it's important to make sure you fact-check the customer's review, and it's especially important to make sure you fact-check your response. Writing a response with potentially untrue statements can land you in hot water.

Acknowledge the Problem and Empathize

Acknowledging the customer's problem and empathizing with them helps the customer to understand that their experience is unacceptable and your business is sympathetic to the issue.

A generic response could make your business look as if you don't care too much about the customer's experience and drive them away further; other customers will also be exposed to this review and potentially drive them away as well.

Continued on next page...

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How to Handle Good and Bad Reviews

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Stay Professional

Even though it is important to have a somewhat personalized reply to negative reviews to connect better with the customer, it's crucial to stay professional when constructing a response. The replies should be helpful and considerate. Because winning an argument with an unsatisfied customer can be very difficult, you don't want another negative review due to how the situation was handled.

When handling good reviews, thank them for their kind words. It's also important to have a professional reply to restrain from creating bias amongst customers.

Be Timely

When a customer is upset enough over their experience to leave a negative review, it is typically soon after a bad encounter with your company.

To reduce the damage that has already been done, it's important to respond as soon as possible to make sure the customer knows you care about their negative experience. The longer you take to write back, the more the customer will think that their issue is unimportant to your company, and that is the opposite of what a customer should think.

If Needed, Take it Offline

With positive reviews, this typically doesn't have to be done. However, with negative reviews, it might be necessary to leave an email or phone number or ask for their email or phone number to allow the customer to contact you directly rather than deal with the situation publicly.

This shows that you're ready to thoroughly handle the issue and not apologizing just for show.

Responding to reviews in a more professional manner is not only a great way to build goodwill amongst more

vocal customers, but it is also a chance to learn from them as well.

Encourage Additional Reviews

One of the best ways to improve customer service is to receive feedback from others, good or bad. It helps your company understand what the customers want and how exactly you can attend to their needs.

The more reviews you get, the better chance you'll have to perfect your customer service and improve the reviews you receive.

Continuously Monitor Your Online Reputation

The most important aspect of customer reviews is to monitor your online presence to stay on top of every review and reply consistently.

By doing this, you'll be able to keep with what was said, when it was said, and how you responded to it to ensure you don't repeat yourself and are able to make the customer feel appreciated.

This article by Lindsay Brisson was originally published on the National Association of Landscape Professionals' blog at <https://blog.landscapeprofessionals.org/>

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