

Looking for a landscape management firm?

- Do your homework. Look around at other properties in the area to see how they are being maintained.
- Call different landscape contractors. Ask a few key questions such as: Do you have degreed horticulturists on board? Do you have insurance to protect both your employees and the property owner? Do you provide continuing education and training for employees?
- Talk about specifics. Make sure the company you select understands your expectations and that you know how it plans to deliver on them.
- Be wary of the lowest bid. The company placing the low bid may not fully understand the job parameters, or it may be relatively inexperienced in the field.
- Be patient. Once you decide on a company, give it time to perform up to your expectations. If you landscape has a serious problem, it will take time for even the best landscape contractor to correct it.

Services

- Landscape renovation
- Athletic field renovation
- Retaining walls
- Overseeding
- Pruning
- Foundation plantings
- Fall cleanup/mulching
- Fall weed control/fertilizing
- Snow removal
- Plant installation/maintenance
- Irrigation system maintenance
- Mowing/maintenance
- Pesticide application

Contact us on our Web Site! www.dukeslm.com



Offices in Hackettstown and Rockaway.
Main Office is located on
50 Route 46 West,
Hackettstown, NJ 07840



THE DUKE REPORT

From Duke's Landscape Management, Inc.

Volume 16, Number 1

We're selling a promise, not a commodity

The landscape management industry is changing at a very high rate of speed. Technological advances, competition, environmental issues and concerns, new government regulations, changing markets, and, yes, rising costs have presented challenges to everyone working in our industry. Yet, one of the more subtle changes is in the perceived value of the products and services that landscape contractors like us provide. Currently, the unfortunate trend is to define mowing and maintenance, especially commercial mowing and maintenance, as a commodity. With little or no perceived difference among service offerings, customers tend to focus on price alone.

A good friend of mine and veteran landscape contractor Ron Kujawa, CCLP, has some timely advice for industry peers. As recently quoted in a national trade magazine, he reminded all landscape management contractors that "service is not a commodity. No one can store or inventory service. Unlike a commodity, service cannot be evaluated or measured until it is delivered. Therefore, selling your services is the same as selling your promise to do something in a certain way for a certain price to the satisfaction of the client."

He went on to say that fulfilling that promise to customers is more important today than ever before, to help dispel the commodity label and differentiate competitors. Again,

talking to other landscape contractors, he said that "your reputation, your retention rate, and your references are the best indicators that you will deliver as promised."

.....
Unlike a commodity, service cannot be evaluated or measured until it is delivered.
.....

Our promise to our clients is spelled out clearly in our Client Bill of Rights. In fact, this important document includes not one but nine promises. Among them, we PROMISE to be an industry leader, innovator, and operate at the highest level of professionalism, integrity, and honesty. Duke's will always work in partnership with our clients to maximize their investments, and we will continue to be environmentally conscious. Providing a responsive, consistent service and being a resource that offers creative solutions are among other very important promises to you.

It's no secret that our industry has become more competitive in recent years. Especially now with the construction market in a downturn, more and more landscape contractors are looking to offer mowing and maintenance services to supplement their revenue stream. Duke's, however, has been offering these services and

others since we started in business 22 years ago, and our mantra has always been to offer quality service at a fair price.

No, we may not be your least expensive choice for a landscape management company, but I guarantee that when you sign up for our service, you won't get a commodity; you'll get a promise that we will deliver our service to your satisfaction.

At Duke's, service has always been and will continue to be our number one priority. It has to be – because that is what separates us from the competition. We know it's a lot easier to make a promise and talk about good service than it is to deliver, yet delivering (and keeping a promise) is the key to success in this business.

Eric Cross



Eric Cross,
CLT, CLP
President and
Owner of Duke's

Rising prices affect all of us

Fall growing season

Get a jump on winter

Looking for a landscape management firm

INSIDE

Hackettstown, NJ 07840
50 Route 46 West
Landscape Management, Inc.



"Expect The Best"

Hackettstown
Rockaway



Main Office:
50 Route 46 West
Hackettstown, NJ 07840

Rising prices affect all of us

As our country continues to deal with a sluggish economy and rising costs, getting the numbers to add up is an ongoing challenge for all business owners in all industries. In landscaping, for example, it's not just fuel that is going up, it's everything from the cost of equipment and repair parts to mulch, fertilizers, and just about everything we touch. Unfortunately, we cannot absorb these increases without passing some of them along to our customers. That's just a fact of business life, and it's a fact that's impacting every landscape contractor in every part of the country.

That being said, Duke's is being proactive looking for ways to increase efficiencies and stretch dollars without affecting our service offering. We realize, too, that our customers are in a similar situation, and just when we're focusing an eagle eye on keeping expenditures in line, you're doing the same thing. The last thing you want to do is spend more on services.

One of our promises is to work in partnership with our clients to maximize their investments. In our newsletter several years ago, we referenced our effort to help out our hotel customers who were going through a tough time following 9/11. With revenue dropping like a rock, there was no way these properties could maintain their current level of expenditures. So we felt some of their pain and worked with them to modify landscape and snow specifications to maximize their dollars.

Thankfully, this is not a repeat of 9/11, but the economic crunch is real, for all of us. We will always work with our clients and deliver a product to meet their budget criteria, and we would ask them for the same, to understand our pain, as well. Rising prices affect all of us, but working together we will be up to the challenge and continue to provide an outdoor environment second to none.



To see more photos, please check out our on-line portfolio at www.dukeslm.com

Take advantage of the fall growing season

Cooler days and evenings, lower humidity, and timely moisture spell good news for lawns, trees, shrubs, and flower beds.

For flower beds. Fall growing conditions are perfect for planting perennials for next year and for heightening curb appeal and brightening up a few flower beds for the remainder of the growing season.

For trees and shrubs. This is the best time to plant and transplant trees and shrubs. Having them in place this fall will give them several months head start next spring.

For lawns. Overseeding, aerating, and fall fertilizing will help ensure lawns will be in top shape for next year.

Is your property beginning to show signs of wear? If so, give us a call. Fall is not only for planting, it is also for planning. To help with your planning and to see more images of our work, check out our Web site at www.dukelm.com.

Three ways to get the jump on winter

- Applying a layer of mulch now will insulate against winter temperature extremes.
- Pruning dead or diseased branches will help to protect your property from damaging winter storms.
- Developing a snow removal strategy before that first storm hits will ease the transition into winter.

