


Growing a Business in the Green Industry




Where are we going in the next few minutes?




- Communicating with Customers
- Recordkeeping Components of a Successful Business
- Insurance & Liability Insurance Requirements
- Safety Programs (Pesticides to Driving)




Communicating with Customers




Customer Service *





- Do you have an employee who is habitually late?
- How do you feel as a supervisor / owner?
- Consider your customer's perspective when your company fails to meet expectations.



Customer Service *

- What can I do on this job that lets the client know we care?
 - Clean up outside of work area?
 - Straighten up the hose?
 - Pick up paper?
 - Stop by for a visit with the client to "Check-in"?
- Customer retention


Customer Service *




- Be sure to share promises made to customers with your staff!
- Give them the resources to help them make the goal (promise to customer).

Customer Service *

- Who is on your front lines?
- What influence do they have on the client relationship?
- How do we show appreciation to our workforce so they will reciprocate to the client?




Customer Service *



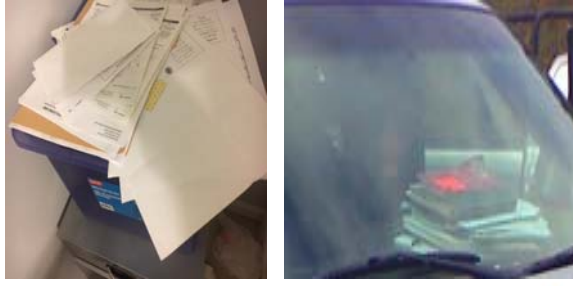
- Share victories with staff!
- Provide incentives for the staff to continue excelling
 - Bonuses?
 - A Meal Provided?
 - An Extra Day Off?
- How do this help the customer?

Business Recordkeeping



extension

Different methods are out there...



Successful Businesses...

- Keep good records
 - One of the most important responsibilities of a small business owner
 - Separate business and personal records and accounts
- Incorporate their staff at all levels for accuracy
 - Front Line
 - Supervisory / Managers
 - Company Leaders

Detail Tracking

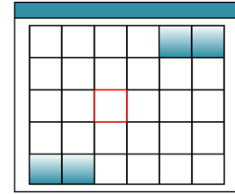
What are some details?

- Customers
- Sales
- Inventory
- Purchases



Planning

- Why plan?
 - Tracking Customer needs facilitates inventory management.
 - Better anticipate cash flow and financing needs.



Legal Compliance

- Types of legal compliance.
 - Contracts, leases, and other agreements
 - Licenses, insurance, and permits
 - Payroll and personnel



Taxes

- Taxes can be **complex**.
- Easily managed when a business is organized and systematic.
- Spend the time to put processes in place.
 - Software
 - Outsourcing



2017 Federal Tax Preparation

- Federal
 - Withholdings - Single, Married, & Dependents
 - FICA
 - Medicare - 1.45% EE&ER
 - Social Security - 6.2% EE&ER
 - FUTA
 - Percent of Wages - 6%
 - Supplemental Wage/Bonus - 25%



2017 State & Local Tax Preparation

- State (Alabama)
 - Withholding - Single, Married, & Dependents
 - Bonus - 5%
 - State Unemployment Taxes - ER
 - Rate varies from 0.65% - 6.8%
- Local
 - Occupational Taxes
 - Examples include:
 - Auburn - 1%
 - Birmingham - 1%
 - Gadsden - 2%
 - Approx. 23 others in Alabama



License Information

- Local, state, and federal governments
- Examples include:
 - OTPS / SLP / LD
 - Professional Services
 - City Business Licenses
 - Business Privilege License
- Resources:
 - ADOR
 - ADAI
 - AGITC
 - ACES
- OTPS / SLP / LD
- Professional Services
- City Business Licenses




Call on us! We can help!




Types of Payroll and Personnel Records


- Hiring and evaluations
- Basis on which wages are paid
- Social Security Numbers
- Total Hours worked
- Additions / Deductions
- Total Wages Paid each pay period
- Income tax withholdings
- Fair Labor Standards Act required information
- Injury reports
- Employment records
- Copy of annual performance evaluations
- Resources:
 - Professional payroll service
 - Accountant
 - IRS – Publication 15: Circular E – Employer’s Tax Guide



Record Retention – Sample

(Subject to business-specific requirements)


Item	Duration
Accounting and Fiscal Invoices and Receivables	5 years
Checks and Payables	5 years
Auditor’s Reports	Permanently
Annual Statements	Permanently
Inventory Reporting	4 years
Personnel Payroll	6 years
Contracts	5 years
Personnel Files	3 years
Insurance Records	5 years
Time Cards	2 years
Retirement Plans	Permanently



Record Retention – Sample

(Subject to business-specific requirements)

Item	Duration
Business and Corporate Contracts	7 years
Copyrights	Permanently
Correspondence	3 years
Leases	6 years
Property Records	Permanently
Customer Records	AOD
Sales Records	AOD
Licenses	As Required
Permits	As Required
Insurance Policy	As Required
Tax Returns	Permanently




Record Retention – Sample

(Subject to business-specific requirements)

Item	Duration
Employee Withholding	7 years
Tax Bills & Statements	Permanently
1099 form for Contractor / Non-employee Comp	Permanently

Notes:

1. This table is a guide.
2. If pending / threatened litigation involving business, discuss with your attorney the need to preserve business records for litigation purposes.



Types of Financials

- **Balance Sheet** – provides overall financial snapshot of business
 - Current Assets
 - Fixed Assets
 - Short-term Liabilities
 - Long-term Liabilities
- **Profit & Loss Statement (Income Statement)**
- **Cash Flow Statement**
- If you are a small company, you don’t have to be the expert!




Other Considerations



- It is very hard to negotiate for a business **loan from a bank without** properly prepared financial statements
- Responsibility of records falls on taxpayer
 - Federal, state, and local income taxes payroll taxes, sales taxes, use taxes, personal property taxes require reports that a easily obtained and substantiate



How well do you sleep at night?



Commercial Property Insurance

- Protects building(s) your business owns or leases
- Protects your business personal property if a fire, theft or other covered disaster strikes.
- Check coverages, policies differ



Equipment Insurance



- Protects the business for loss of mobile equipment due to a fire, theft or other covered disaster.
- Some carriers will offer replacement cost if the equipment is 5 years or newer.
- Installation coverage should be considered for inventory and materials left at job sites overnight or prior to installation.



General Liability Insurance

- Protects your business from property damage, bodily injury & personal and advertising injury claims that could put your business's assets at risk.
 - A customer slips, falls & becomes injured in your store or on premises
 - While on the job, you accidentally damage a customer's property or injure someone.



Commercial Auto Insurance





- Helps your business cover the financial cost of an auto accident
- Physical damage and liability



Workers Compensation



- Covers medical care & loss of income for employees.
- Make sure all employees are **classified correctly**.
- Most states offer a discount (Alabama – 5%) if you are a Drug Free Workplace.
- Consult your attorney for guidance on injury coverages

Workers Compensation

In Alabama –
 If you regularly employ less than five (5) employees, full-time or part-time and including officers of a corporation in any one business, other than the business of constructing or assisting on-site in the construction of new single-family, detached residential dwellings, the Alabama Workers' Compensation Law does not require you to have workers' compensation insurance coverage.

fAlabama Department of Labor

Umbrella Insurance



- Commercial Umbrella Insurance extends liability coverage for an additional layer of insurance over auto liability & general liability (primary underlying) to further protect business assets.
- Umbrella should go over Employers Liability. Check with Agent.

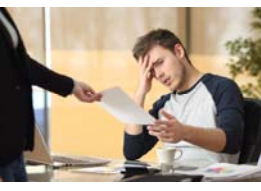


Pollution Coverage


- Sod Farms – On & Off premises pollution,
 - i.e. pollution damage on your property, drift, overspray or runoff on neighbor's property (a 3rd Party) or creek.
 - Policy should apply to clean up, 3rd party, fuel in tanks or auxiliary tanks installed on vehicles if there is a spill.
- For Landscape companies:
 - Pesticide Herbicide Applicators Coverage. Normally does not apply to tanks on vehicles.




Employment Practices Liability Insurance (EPLI)




- Covers wrongful termination, discrimination, workplace harassment and retaliation.
- Always request 3rd party coverage.
- Why do I need EPLI coverage?
 - My business is located in a "Right to Work State".
 - A "Right to Work" law in your State Does Not Protect you from Federal Laws.
 - The EEOC is taking on more and more cases each year.



Cyber Liability

- Data breach involving sensitive customer information,
 - social security numbers,
 - credit card numbers,
 - account numbers,
 - driver's license numbers and
 - health records.

Employee Dishonesty and Crime



- Coverage for employee theft of money, securities, or property.
- Employee dishonesty coverage is one provided in a commercial crime policy.
- Always request 3rd party coverage.



Business Income & Extra Expense

- Business Income coverage helps replace income lost when a business is unable to operate due to a covered property loss
 - damage from a fire, theft or wind,
 - i.e. Retail Garden Center.



Professional Liability (Errors Omissions)



- If you are a professional service business that gives professional advice
 - i.e. Arborist & Architect.



Commercial Flood Insurance

- The National Flood Insurance Program covers businesses from financial losses due to property damage caused by flooding.
- You still have to elect to pay for coverage, but it's an important financial safeguard—and it's backed by the federal government.



Safety Programs



Safety Committees

- If you do not have one, **do** put one together!
- Composed of all levels of employees; no owners.
- Regular meeting – Quarterly? Monthly?
- Meeting in a private setting.
- Accountable for setting policy.



Training Options

- Weekly Tailgate Training Meetings
 - Resources available for purchase and online for no charge
- Required Continuing Education
 - Pesticide Applicators
 - Landscape Architects
- Outside Training Source
 - Attend Association & Extension Events
 - Bring in outside training instructors



Resources

- *"Customer Service" segment based on reprint article in *Lawn and Landscape Magazine*, **Five Rules for Customer Service**, by Marty Grunder, October 28, 2016, 2004. <http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/>
- **Record Keeping for a Small Business**, Financial Education Curriculum, Small Business Administration, www.sba.gov
- Alabama Department of Labor – www.labor.Alabama.gov/wc/insurance
- Alabama Department of Revenue – www.revenue.Alabama.gov
- National Association of Landscape Professionals, <https://www.landscapeprofessionals.org/>



Resources

- Photo Credits:
 - Copyright: mindscanner / 123RF Stock Photo
 - Copyright: sabinezia / 123RF Stock Photo
 - Copyright: leeser / 123RF Stock Photo
 - Copyright: ivelinradkov / 123RF Stock Photo
 - Copyright: iculig / 123RF Stock Photo
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Thank you for your attention!

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