

Get *Off* the Truck  
and *In* the Business



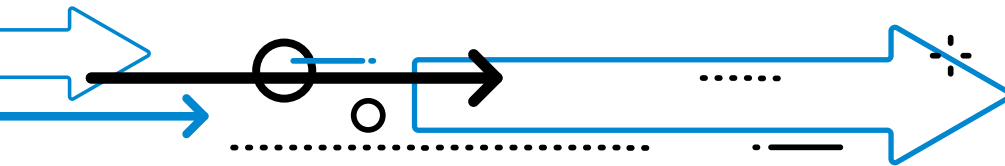
# Get *Off* the Truck and *In* the Business

Are you ready to get off the truck and start focusing on growing your business? Making the transition from an employee in the field to strategic business owner can be a difficult step to take. We want to help you. Included in this eBook are three articles with expert business advice from U.S. Lawns. It's time to get off your truck and grow your business.

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This eBook was co-produced by



**Ready to get off the truck?**

Read expert advice from Ken Hutcheson, President of U.S. Lawns, during our recent Ask the Expert live event on LawnSite.

[bit.ly/ask-expert-061317](http://bit.ly/ask-expert-061317)





# Fuel Business Growth by Investing in Yourself

Reignite your dream of owning your own business by learning how to build yourself, your people and your company. It's time to get off your truck and grow your business. BY RON HALL | TURF MAGAZINE EDITOR-AT-LARGE

**M**oney, passion and freedom — these may be reasons why you started your landscape business. Perhaps now, several years into your career, you're finding that the financial rewards you had envisioned aren't happening. Equally discouraging, even though you're calling your own shots, you have little time for anything but work. You're literally in your truck from dawn to dusk doing production and putting out fires.

Ken Hutcheson, president of U.S. Lawns and 30-year green industry veteran, says you don't have to stand for that. Read on for thoughts on how to increase revenues while also carving out more time for yourself.

## Satisfied with the status quo?

Says Hutcheson, "You may have quit your job working for someone else and started your landscape business, but at some point you realize that what you're doing is not making the living, allowing you to achieve the dreams that you had. You may even realize that you can't keep up the pace forever."

In fact, if you're an owner/operator out on jobs all day you're probably working for the wages that a skilled worker might be making rather than the greater rewards you deserve as an owner.

"As long as there is a direct connection between the hours you personally put into the services your company provides and the revenue you earn, you will never make the money that you dream of making. You put in an hour's work and you

earn an hour's wage," says Hutcheson. "The customer will only pay a certain amount for a particular skill set."

## Steps to fulfilling your dream

What to do? It's your call. You can keep doing what you're doing and continue to get what you're getting. Or you can implement and deliver a higher-margin service or services to boost revenues, such as irrigation maintenance/repair. That will likely boost your revenues, but you'll still be spending days driving from site to site and working long hours.

The third option is building a business based on "the efforts of multiple revenue-producing people" guided by industry-proven processes and procedures. And according to Hutcheson, it's

the surest way to free up your time as the owner and increase revenues and profits, too.

There is only one way you can take that step — as an owner, you need to invest in yourself, stresses Hutcheson.

"You need to learn to run a business like a business with processes, systems and financial controls," he says. "You have to learn how to lead, inspire people and motivate people so they work with a sense of urgency."

A huge challenge, yes. But as the company owner, if you're involved every moment in everything that is going on in your company, it's difficult to see how you will ever achieve your dreams, either financially or the personal freedom you envisioned. You need multiple revenue producers to make both of those happen.



## Building crew leaders to “own the job”

Commercial landscape maintenance is well suited for achieving those goals, according to Hutcheson. “In our world, what we see is commercial work that allows for the success of a crew leader,” says Hutcheson. Every commercial job looks fundamentally the same. While sizes and shapes vary, each site has a building, a turf area, ornamental beds and hardscapes, such as sidewalks, driveways, etc.

“When a crew leader pulls onto the commercial job, they know to always park around the back of the building. One man goes to the left, one man goes to the right and one man, perhaps the crew leader who might be spraying for weeds, goes straight ahead. Whatever the tasks might be on every job, they are repetitive, recurring tasks. That means the crew leader can own those jobs,” says Hutcheson.

Owning the job is critical. The crew leaders know exactly what is expected of them on each and every property.

Some other pluses of commercial versus residential service are that commercial customers expect to pay

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- Ken Hutcheson,  
President of U.S. Lawns

what it takes to have a reputable, professional company service their property. Commercial customers also rarely interact (or interfere) with the landscape company’s employees as they work on the jobsite.

## No need to reinvent the wheel

So, what can you do now as an owner to fulfill your dream? Begin developing processes and procedures that will grow with your company and attract good employees.

“You will attract smart employees if you are growing, employees that really want to be part of a bigger cause because they will see there is an opportunity for them to grow, too,” says Hutcheson. “If your company is stagnant, your company will be like a revolving door in terms of keeping good employees.”

You don’t have to reinvent the wheel here. U.S. Lawns, with a track record of 30 years of success, is constantly upgrading and improving its systems to maximize its companies’ financial returns while freeing up your time as a business leader, allowing you to carry. ●

# 5 REASONS

## Landscape Businesses Fail



Starting a business is hard enough before you think about the odds. And when you do, it seems they're stacked against you. Studies have shown that only 15 percent of small businesses survive beyond their first 5 years. Not very comforting; but at U.S. Lawns, the businesses we work with have a much higher success rate. So, what makes the difference? Let's look at 5 basic failures suffered by small businesses, and some solutions we've seen over the years. BY BRANDON MOXAM | VICE PRESIDENT OF U.S. LAWNS

**1 Self-reliance.** In most contexts self-reliance would be considered a virtue. But far too often, small business owners take their D-I-Y attitude too far, placing the entire bulk of the operation squarely in their own hands. If something were to happen to the owner, the entire business would suffer. A small business of that sort can't even comprehend expansion. Finding and recruiting trustworthy help becomes a time consuming drain. That's why, at U.S. Lawns, we provide each owner with a personal advisor—a business mentor to guide you through your growth process. We also make sure you have access to an entire support staff at our Home Office in Orlando, as well as a network of 270+ other franchisees who are willing to help you succeed.

**2 Drive-by estimating.** This one is particularly true for contractors, and it's one of the reasons the Small Business Administration deems construction the second riskiest business. The process of estimating and bidding a new site is a laborious one, and not always part of the owner's skill set. Bid too low, and you turn no profit; too high, and you lose the job. Fortunately, when you partner with U.S. Lawns, we provide extensive training in estimating and bidding. We start all of our new franchisees out with a six-day training session at our Orlando Headquarters, where you'll learn all the financial ins and outs of the business that hold most contractors back.



**3 Operational inefficiencies.** This includes everything from paying too much in overhead to not hiring the right labor. Many small business owners go into business because they love the work, but they don't necessarily understand the details of daily operation. At U.S. Lawns, we consider it our job to teach those skills, and to provide you with tools that will help manage those tasks. From increased purchasing power to our operational software to ongoing assistance with recruitment and retention, we help you get the essentials right.



**4 Lack of repeat customers.** Building a steady stream of customers can take time. Add the need to establish your brand, advertise and develop a reputation, and you've got a slow-growth business that's anything but sustainable. With U.S. Lawns, you could have access a pre-established portfolio of prospective clients that includes companies who renew their contracts from year-to-year. Some of our franchisees start working with Fortune 500 clients right away. Grounds care is a \$70 billion market that's just waiting to be tapped. Go get yours.

**5 Inability to replicate a profitable business model.** You need to find your niche in the market without spending a ton of money. Small businesses can lack the capital to compete with the big guys, and the newer the business, the quicker it has to act. Those "big guys" already have a plan and they can smell competition a mile away. It's a crowded market, and small operation struggle. However, U.S. Lawns has been in business for 28 years, and is currently the largest franchise in commercial landscaping. By converting your independent landscaping business to U.S. Lawns, your "niche" has already been established, and you instantly join the big game. ●

**Is your business struggling?  
Let your transformation begin  
with U.S. Lawns.**





# How To...

## Run Your Business with More Free Time

You've watched your small, landscaping business grow from an idea into a reality. You've poured money and time into your success, and it seems to be paying off. But at the same time, you know you can't keep up this pace up forever. Your free time is valuable, and your business is gobbling up more and more of it. If only there was a better way to earn your money, and still have the time to enjoy it.

At U.S. Lawns, we take successful landscaping businesses and help them grow even more successful. Over the last 25+ years, we've seen many owners take on multiple territories, and significantly decrease their daily workload. It may seem counter-intuitive, but here are some tips on how to run your business with more free time. BY BRANDON MOXAM | VICE PRESIDENT OF U.S. LAWN



### Go commercial

Residential landscaping can be exhausting. Often, the contractor has to underbid, and contracts aren't guaranteed from one year to the next, if there even is a contract! When the economy goes bad, real estate is one of the first areas affected. By contrast, commercial landscaping pays better on the whole, and the contracts are generally renewable. It's also fairly recession-proof, since landscaping is a line item in just about every company's budget. That's why at U.S. Lawns we work almost exclusively on commercial accounts, from small businesses to some of the nation's largest chains.



### Administrative efficiency

Along with your conversion will come a heavier volume of business . . . and a heavier volume of paperwork. A good franchise has a system in place to deal with the increased workload, allowing you more time to do the aspect of the business that you love. That's hard to do when you're a sole proprietor, but as part of a nationwide network, you can tap into the support and systems you need. At U.S. Lawns, we offer tools for your business to help you handle the heavy load, such as our operational software. And we also offer something else: personal support from fellow franchisees, business mentors, and a Home Office support staff, all of whom are just a phone call away.



### Human Resources

If you want to grow your business, you're going to need a staff to support you. This is the difference between a mom and pop shop, where the owner works 18 hour days to get everything done, and a growing business that allows you free time. Know how to recruit and train the best talent? U.S. Lawns makes it easy. We help you recruit constantly, using the web and other tools. And we also offer training in team building and employee retention. We also offer ongoing training to our owners, so they keep getting better and better at leadership. ●

**Want to learn more about how U.S. Lawns can help you join the ranks of successful business owners who've made it out of the daily grind? Contact us today and grab your share of all the opportunities that only a U.S. Lawns franchise can provide.**

# If Only Your Business Came With A Manual. Like Ours.

You had a passion for nature or a need for independence. You started a landscaping business. You were nervous and excited. With care and precision you grew your vision. You were proud.

With hustle and a knack for service perfection things became easier. The tasks at hand leveled out, but so did the growth. The resources and business solutions to cautiously take your enterprise to the next level have not been easy to find.

At U.S. Lawns, we understand. It's Ok. After 30 years we've seen it many, many times before. What worked then doesn't work now. You are not alone.

Every year we help hundreds of business owners in the U.S. Lawns family reach their goals and give back to their communities. People like you. Good people that just needed a little point in the right direction with systems and processes that get results. Smart people who benefited from on-the-ground training. Service minded warriors that recognized the value of a national brand with local commitment and the power of a network could separate them from the competition.

Converting an existing landscape business to a U.S. Lawns franchise may not be for everyone. However, if you're in search of a roadmap to reach a new destination, and have what it takes, we'll help you improve your community and improve your life.

(866) 781-4875

[www.uslawnsfranchise.com](http://www.uslawnsfranchise.com)



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Your Turf. Our Lawn.