



# GO THAT EXTRA MILE AND MAKE YOUR CUSTOMERS SMILE.

It's The Little Extras That Make A Good Landscape Maintenance Company.

Having hired many landscape maintenance companies, and 'lawn mowing' contractors, I know what it is like to be on the other side. I would pay extra for extras, but why is it so hard to get anyone to do them. Doing extras will not only make your customers happy, but it can earn you a lot more income.

How many times have I asked a lawn mowing company to get rid of weeds or move things only to be told I just mow lawns. Get a gardener if you want that. To me, that is a red flag and time to try someone else. I do not want to be following a lawn mowing contractor around moving things for him so he can mow. This is how your customers feel if you are just a lawn mower. For those who are happy to do a little more, think of this as an opportunity to take work from the 'just a lawn mower'. Even if you are 'just a lawn mower,' there are ways to get things done without doing them. Read on.

Why would you want to do more than mowing? Firstly, it gives you more opportunities to do more work in winter. It also allows you to charge more for those extras and make more money. Most importantly however, it makes your customers happier. If you are a larger company, it can get you more work. Like anything, doing extras can benefit from planning. Now, if you want to be 'just a lawn mower,' then plan to make this possible without getting under your customers' skin.

To be just a lawn mower, you will at least need to move things around to mow correctly. For example, move that hose or trampoline. However, the extras can be done by others, and you can still make money out of it. Organise a weed control company if you do not like chemicals and charge a little on top. That company will also be happy to do fertilising or wetting agent applications. In spring, organise for all or most of your



clients to have their lawns aerated. Again, organise a company to do a lot of your customers' lawns together. You could hire them for a day, do 5 or more jobs close together, and probably make 30% to 40% or more for doing that. If you are ambitious, you could even find a garden maintenance company and hire them as sub-contractors to do gardening work for your customers. On a rainy day, sit down and contact possible companies that can do this, and put together a price list for these extras. Give this to your customers. Don't forget to remind them in spring.

You may decide to go the sub-contractor route as just outlined, or alternatively, you may want to hire people and grow your company. For ambitious people, this is a real opportunity. Not everyone is made for running a business with many employees, so for those that can, it can be lucrative, provided the business is run professionally and wisely. Again, planning is important. Sit down and write up all the possible extras your company can offer. Even if you do not plan to hire lots of people and plan to do all yourself, sitting down and planning extras could help you make a lot more money. Lawn renovation in spring is made easier by hiring equipment in early spring for a day, week or whatever time period is needed. If you do this in late August before the spring mowing rush, you can make a lot of extra money. Work out your cost of hiring the equipment, estimate how many lawns you can do in a day, and put a price per lawn or per 100 square metres for larger lawns. Print out something from the Internet showing how important it is to aerate lawns. Show this to your customers, and say you highly

recommend this. In most Australian regions, August is a great time to do things like this, or fertilising, applying a wetting agent, dethatching or even top dressing near the end of August. In cooler areas such as Melbourne and Canberra, it may be better to do these things in September. The idea is to get these things done before it gets busy, and the lawns need more mowing. All this will help new spring regrowth. Remember, a healthy vigorous growing lawn will need more mowing, so doing this will earn you more money through more mowing.

Other things can help make a lawn healthier, and some do not take much time, but can earn you extra money. Doing a soil test can help. Get a sample of the soil and send it off to a soil laboratory. Charge to do this. Most people will be happy to pay. The results will often come back suggesting action. More work to be done. Even if you do a simple pH test, there are many portable testers to help you.

In winter, why be quiet? This goes for small and large companies. If I was running a lawn mowing business or a landscape maintenance business, I would sit down and write all the extra things I could do for my clients in winter. I would then put together a flyer to give them. Some of the extras you may like to include are included in the mock-up flyer accompanying this article. The prices listed are just straight from my head, so you will need to work out the correct price for you. Having a price on the flyer will increase your chances of getting the work.



### Acme Lawn Care Winter Specials

In winter, the lawn grows slower, but we can work just as fast as we do in summer. In winter, we have time to do many things for our customers that we normally do not have time for. Would you like any of the following things done for you?

Path, Driveway House Wall Cleaning - We have a permit to use a high pressure water cleaner. Let us clean them so they look like they used to. Cost \$ 55 per hour. We can get a lot done in an hour.

Garden Maintenance - Weeding, pruning for those plants that can handle it, re-mulching, re-planting. (Remember, we can buy plants for wholesale prices, which is often half of retail). Cost \$45 per hour plus costs for plants, mulch etc.

Site Clean up or General Labouring - We can take unwanted junk to the tip with our trailer, clean up your untidy areas, or do most types of labouring. Cost \$45 plus tipping costs.

Car cleaning - Let us clean and detail your car. Cost: Wash and Vacuum \$50. Full detailing \$150 per car. Larger vehicles may have a small surcharge.

August/ September lawn renovation - Let us make your lawn even more beautiful this year. To make a lawn really shine, we need to apply a wetting agent, fertilise it, and aerate it. Cost: Fertilising and Wetting Agent From \$80 (Depending on lawn

size) Book now for August, and we can Aerate the lawn for \$150 for the average lawn.

Weeding - We can apply a pre-emergent that will stop weeds coming up in spring. We can also spot weed or do other types of weeding. Cost \$55 per hour plus chemicals.

Also available - handy man service, chainsaw wood cutting, gutter cleaning, leaf collection, watering system installation.

**Call Acme Lawn Care on 040? 294623.**

If you or your staff are quiet in winter, do a letter box drop with this type of flyer or even a business card. People tend to keep business cards more, and it will be in a draw for when they need a maintenance contractor in spring.

When offering these or any other extras you can think of, do it with a smile. The next time your customer asks for something to be done that is not just mowing, think, can I do it? Try to. If you are too busy and cannot, try to recommend someone who can, or offer to do it when it is quieter in autumn or winter. But always remember to do the little extras, like coiling up the hose, picking up the rubbish when mowing, raking up the leaves, using a blower on the paths, or moving those annoying obstacles when mowing, and putting them back or moving them to somewhere they should be. These little extras will keep your customers happy and make them smile. **LM**