

•NATURAL•TECHNOLOGIES•

The 10 Step Guide To Harness the Power of the Organic Lawn Care Movement!

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If you've been in the industry for any length of time you probably noticed that your customers and potential customers started asking about it years ago. At first it just appeared that the ones asking about organic lawn care were strictly the environmentalists or the type of customer that really wouldn't be much of an account anyway.

Back then we would answer, "Sure we have an organic program. We just won't spray your weeds or apply insecticides." Well, if you've been in the business since those days you know very well that the system of inventing an organic lawn care program by just taking out the weed control didn't work out very well.

[Transitioning to a truly chemical free turf care approach is much more complicated than that.](#) It's vital that if you are going to do it you have to do it correctly! Organic lawn care is all about the soil and isn't something that you can just add to your list of services without doing so with care.

If you hadn't read about it in the trade magazines, the customer count at Trugreen decreased by almost two percent in 2010. We all know just how incredibly effective the marketing department is at Trugreen so this statistic is very telling. You could easily read into it that, as a whole our philosophies in terms of caring for turf are finally changing.

The typical consumer is looking for a better way to have a nice lawn. What better time than now to get into the organic lawn care industry. Grow your business and your bottom line by offering a truly chemical free approach to building healthy turf.

1. Take the leap

Based on the speed at which our industry is changing there isn't going to be too much room for those who are going to do things half way.

Many states and local governments around the country are actually passing legislation that makes it illegal to use pesticides and chemical fertilizers under certain circumstances. Chemical free and organic lawn care application companies are in high demand and there is no room for the novice. Many of the old school chemical lawn care services are a little bit stubborn and out of touch. We know this opportunity will pass them by and it's up to companies like yours to be there to fill the demand.

You can do this. You can do this the right way. Don't do it if you're not going to commit to it completely!

2. Do your research

Make sure you are implementing a program that will be effective and learn the philosophy behind organic lawn care. As we mentioned before, you can't just stop spraying weeds and call it good. A truly organic approach to this type of lawn care revolves firmly around the care of the soil and has very little to do with forcing the grass to grow by using chemical fertilizers.

Know your products! Many organic lawn care companies fail in the first year because they are not using the right products.

Sure, there are plenty of organic products out there but if they aren't being used properly you simply will not get the results that your customers will be expecting. Just because you have a bag of fertilizer that says "organic" on it doesn't mean that putting it down a couple of times a year will make the grass look nice.

You are the professional and your customer base will expect you to be the expert! Confidence makes sales!

3. Know your competition

One of the most important things in being successful at business is being aware of what your competition is doing. What companies in your area are offering an organic lawn care program? How much are they charging? What are they using for a product line? How have the results been if they have been in business for a couple of years?

Knowing things about your competition doesn't always have to revolve around adversarial issues. One of the most often heard lines at an industry conference is, "there is plenty of work out there for all of us." Just because you are in competition with another company doesn't mean they have to be your enemy! Shared knowledge can go a long way!
Be active in your industry!

4. Don't be afraid to expose the green washers

[Unfortunately as the organic lawn care movement grows there are companies out there telling their customer base that they've always been organic.](#)

Organic, when it is used in the lawn care industry is a word that can be defined in many different ways and some opportunists will take advantage of this fact. If you know of a company that is trying to be something they are not don't be afraid to convey this to the consumer. Naturally you always want to avoid trying to make your company look better by making your competition look bad but we need to be certain that we are protective of our industry.

For the record, a good definition of organic lawn care is the following. Organic lawn care is the care of turf by employing the use of natural products to build organic matter in the soil and discontinuing the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

5. Get into the commercial field

There is an enormous opportunity in the care of institutional lawns. Many companies are taking sustainability and environmentalism very seriously. So seriously that many large companies actually have a position called “Sustainability Officer” and it is this person's job to make sure that their company is being as environmentally responsible as they can possibly be. Many are absolutely shocked to learn of the dangers and potential for pollution that revolve around chemical lawn care.

It is now illegal in many states to apply pesticides to areas where children congregate such as day care centers and schools. These types of municipalities and business's are looking for companies to take care of their turf. You can be that company!

6. Be Professional

This should go without saying but if you are going to be a professional you have to look like a professional. Branding is huge when it comes to the lawn care industry and you must make sure you are portraying an image that is professional and easy to remember. Have your employees be in uniform at all time and make sure your trucks are clean and in order.

Sales and production collateral are of the utmost importance when you are trying to sell your service. Be sure that your brochures and estimates are precise and informative. Your leave behind information has to be clean and informational. Continuity in the message is vital! If your handwriting estimates on basic company stationary you need to change now!

7. Compete with the big guys.

Don't underestimate the power of positive thinking. The average corporate style lawn care branch has thousands and thousands of customers with dozens of trucks going out everyday. Can you think of one reason why you couldn't get to that point?

Naturally it isn't going to happen overnight but with hard work and dedication you can build your organic lawn care division into a very profitable business. If you think that you are "out of their league" your never going to come close to actually "being" in their league. Sometimes the big guys can be an easy target! Go get them!

8. Educate yourself

When you're building your organic lawn care program do not make the mistake of thinking that you can simply replace synthetic fertilizers with organic fertilizers. You will need to develop a SYSTEM and not necessarily a program.

One of the biggest mistakes companies make when implementing an organic program is thinking that they can simply switch to a granular organic fertilizer and apply it a couple of times a year. The secret to a good organic lawn care program is to use products that will build the soil food web. When you increase the organic matter in the soil many of the nutrients that are already there are now available to the grass plant. This isn't always an easy process to induce and for this reason you cannot go into things blindly. Become educated in how to make it work!

9. Do NOT be afraid to try something new.

You will never know if you can succeed if you don't try. Study all the signs that revolve around the organic lawn care opportunity. It's a service that is in demand and it requires professionals to supply the need. Getting involved in organic lawn care isn't an incredible risk but for most companies it's something different than they are used to doing.

If you are afraid to introduce a new facet of your operations because you are worried about failing this may not be for you.

If you want to be on the cutting edge of the green industry and ride the next generation of the service business than TAKE THE CHANCE!

10. Be the leader.

Every new industry needs pioneers. If you're in the lawn or landscape business now you know for sure how important it is to be the "go to" person for your trade. Currently there isn't a ton of those "go to" people out there when it comes to organic lawn care and the industry and the consumer needs them.

If you're familiar with how to run a business in the green industry and you have an established business, organic lawn care can take your company to the next level. Answer the demand and learn the business! So many people are looking for answers right now that there really are not enough people to answer them. Organic lawn care is the future of our industry and it could be you who is leading the charge.

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