HAPPY NEW YEAR
from your Chapter Boards
CLCA Presents Trophy Awards to Outstanding Contractors

CLCA presented Trophy Awards to outstanding landscape contractors at its annual Convention in November. The Trophy Awards were established to encourage interest in landscaping, recognize crafts people who produce outstanding landscapes, create pride in superior workmanship and bestow public recognition on companies, institutions, municipalities and residents for their interest in a beautiful California. A total of 55 awards were presented from more than 121 entries. Two highly regarded landscape contractors traveled state-wide to personally inspect each of the Trophy Award entrants and rated projects on artistic and technical merits.

“The CLCA is thrilled to recognize outstanding California landscapers and their projects. Our association’s core goal is to support our members as they create beautiful, enduring landscapes that improve the quality of life,” said Sandra Giarde, CLCA Executive Director. “Winning a Trophy Award not only supports our members, but instills pride in our community and recognizes quality workmanship that only a licensed contractor can offer.”

The 2014 Special Award winners are:

Stuart J. Sperber Memorial Sweepstakes Trophy (Best of Show): Jensen Landscape of San Jose for the Hillsborough residence in Hillsborough

Jon R. Aldorf Memorial Award (the best entry from all residential categories): Visionscape Inc. of Laguna Beach for the Johnson residence of Laguna Beach

John Redmond Memorial Award (the best entry from all maintenance categories): Modern Landscaping Inc. of Campbell for the Selby Estate in Atherton

Gary Vallen Memorial Award (the best residential landscaping under $150,000): Past the Gate of Martinez for the Collison residence in Fremont

Herb Frank Memorial Award (the best entry from all commercial installation categories): Gothic Landscaping of Valencia for the Villa Metro-Cielo Townhomes in Santa Clarita

Bob Baier Memorial Award (the best entry containing sustainable installation elements): Envision Landscape Studio of San Diego for the Modern Urban Farmstead in San Diego

Continued on page 3
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State Trophy Awards, continued from page 2

For information on local events, contact your Chapter Board Member

Special Effects Award (the best use of unique methods or materials and/or special artistic effects):
Falling Waters Landscape Inc. of Carlsbad for the Duke residence in Encinitas

Excelsior Award (awarded to a company who has been a CLCA member for less than a year for their outstanding project):
Envision Landscape Studio of San Diego for the Modern Urban Farmstead in San Diego
& Cadre Landscape of Los Angeles for Wateridge project in Los Angeles

The 2014 Installation Award winners are:
Johnny Appleseed Landscaping Inc. of Beverly Hills; Lazar Landscape Design & Construction Inc. of Oakland; Modern Landscaping Inc. of Campbell; Steve Hanson Landscaping Inc. of Santa Barbara; Frank & Grossman Landscape Contractors Inc. of San Francisco; Cadre Landscape of Los Angeles; Falling Waters Landscape Inc. of Carlsbad; Gothic Landscaping, Inc. of Valencia; Conserve Landcare, Inc. of Thousand Palms; The Celtis Group of San Jose; Visionscape Inc. of Laguna Beach; Wilson Environmental Contracting of Santa Barbara and Land Mechanics Inc. of Orange.

The 2014 Maintenance Award winners are:
Visionscape Inc. of Laguna Beach; Johnny Appleseed Landscaping Inc. of Beverly Hills; Frank & Grossman Landscape Contractors Inc. of San Francisco; Gachina Landscape Management of Menlo Park; New Way Landscape & Tree Service of San Diego; Marina Landscape Inc. of Anaheim; Stay Green Inc. of Santa Clarita; Cadre Landscape of Los Angeles; Conserve Landcare Inc. of Thousand Palms; Past the Gate of Martinez; Falling Waters Landscape Inc. of Carlsbad; Envision Landscape Studio of San Diego; Modern Landscaping Inc. of Campbell; Gothic Landscaping Inc. of Valencia and Jensen Landscape of San Jose.

This year’s judges were Bob Kirtley of CLCA’s San Francisco Bay Area Chapter and Larry Cleveland of the San Fernando Valley Chapter. They spent eight days and covered more than seven hundred miles with 101 stops to carefully inspect every entry. Both men have nearly 40 years of landscape experience, were presidents of their local CLCA chapters and have won numerous landscape installation and maintenance awards on the local and state level.

CLCA SJV Grapevine & YC NewScape  December 2014  3
Dear Green Industry Professional...

The year 2014 marks our 25th anniversary exclusively serving the landscape industry. On behalf of our entire organization, I want to thank you for sharing this historic milestone with us. I am proud to tell you that we have continuously insured over forty of our clients since our inception in 1989, and well over four hundred who have been with LCIS for over 15 years.

The end of the year is always a good time for self-reflection, so I am taking this opportunity to review the many benefits that come from being a Golden Oak Member and LCIS policyholder.

In the past year we have added or enhanced an array of key services, the likes of which are unmatched by any other agency/broker of our type. Many of these services are provided by industry leading companies with whom we have negotiated exclusive arrangements, like BizAssure and the Harvest Group landscape consulting firm. Our suite of services is now so well-rounded that we relate to it as the “LCIS360” Program. This is the lineup:

**Insurance Services**
- Bonds Program
- Business Auto Coverage
- Contractor’s Equipment Coverage
- Employment Practices Liability
- General Liability Coverage
- Group Health Benefits & Life Programs
- Personal Auto & Homeowners
- Umbrella Liability Coverage
- Workers’ Comp Program

**Client Services**
- Rebate Program
- Equity Sharing Program

**Financing Services**
- Premium Financing
- Equipment Financing

**Business Services**
- Free Unlimited Legal Consultations
- Free Employee Handbook Review
- Free XMod Review & Cost Analysis Report
- Free Injury & Illness Prevention Plan Review
- DISCOUNTED Business Consulting by the Harvest Group

As a member-owned, industry-focused insurance agency and brokerage, we are deeply committed to providing you with this unique combination of insurance products, services, tools, customer service, and assistance that surpass all your expectations. More importantly, utilizing just some of our most popular services can make a dramatic impact on your bottom line.

Continued on page 6
Four Reasons to be Ready to Sell Your Online Business Right Now  By Mark Daoust, submitted by Peter Mehit

Having an online business is great. Not only are you your own boss and can dictate your own hours, but you can also sit in casual clothes at the computer during conference calls and filling orders. But even if your business is going smoothly, and the profits are rolling in, it is still absolutely essential that you prepare the business for sale. Even if you have no absolutely no intention of selling.

Confused? Read on and you won’t be.

In the excitement of running a new business and watching it succeed beyond your wildest expectations, selling the company is probably the last thing on your mind. But the fact is, most business owners eventually end up selling to an investor or an individual at some point in time, and usually when they aren’t expecting to do so. You may be lucky enough for someone to come to you with an acquisition offer, but more likely than not, you will be looking for a buyer, not the other way around.

So in preparation for that day possibly coming, it is essential to have an exit strategy ready, so you can sell quickly and easily, and move on to your next business idea. Even if you vow never to sell your business, it is still good to perform an exit strategy exercise on a regular basis. Here’s why:

It’s good for your business now. First of all, it forces you to take a good long hard look at your business. Examining every inch of your business structure, business practises, employee records, accounts, detailed financial records (including loans due, loan repayments, leases on suppliers, and so forth) may show you areas where you are most vulnerable, such as wastage. Any potential buyer would be examining these things, and if you did it first, you may find the one thing that could sink any prospective acquisition deal. This will, in the long run, make your business stronger than before.

Bad Things Happen, Unfortunately. Things happen to us every day, whether we want them to or not. You might be forced to sell your business if you become burnt out and unable to continue running the company. (This is far more common than you may realize.) Nobody likes to talk or think about their business impacting their health, but unfortunately, life being what it is, these things do and may happen. If it does, then do you have a plan for the company to be bought out, and for you to get the rest and care you need? If the business is not at least moderately prepared, and essential records not organized, then any interested buyer that comes forward may take one look and run a mile. Or you may take so long in getting things together that the value of the business tumbles to the point where you are collecting pennies for the carcass of the business.

Look at This Great New Opportunity! Thirdly, not everything is so bleak, so smile! You may get up one day, the sun is shining, the postman is singing, and you get a new business opportunity. Or the lightbulb may ping in your head and the Next Big Thing On The Internet is something you will want to work on right away.

But what about the business you already have? You may need to sell it to come up with business capital, or to simply get rid of it, so you can devote all your time to your new venture. But if the books are a mess, and the record keeping a shambles, then it would take you so long to get it straight that the business opportunity will simply slip away.

Prepping Takes Time. Last of all, don’t be fooled into thinking that you can get your business ready for selling by lunchtime. It can potentially take well over a year to get everything prepared and ready. When you want to jump ship from the business and pass it on to a new owner, do you want to wait a year while you get the place cleaned up, the lease wrapped up, and the tax returns from 2 years ago found and organized? In your frustration to wind up the business and move on, your impatience may impel you to take far less money than what the business is worth. And if you need that money for the next venture, taking a big hit in the price could prove a fatal blow.

So the moral of the story is that it pays a great deal to get into “sell mode”, the moment you start a business. Think like a potential buyer and examine your business the way they would. See what would make them blanch and fix it. Make sure the records are so organized that the tax man would faint. Your health, your bank balance, and your future career will thank you for it.

About Mark Daoust

Mark Daoust’ passion for creating sales agreements that benefit both sides of the table led him to create Quiet Light Brokerage in 2007. Guided by the bedrock values of honesty, integrity and transparency, Daoust built Quiet Light to help sellers of Internet businesses, recruiting a highly qualified team along the way. Mark got his start at Alabanza Corp., a hosting company, and went on create his own online publication, growing its subscriber base to 220,000 after starting from scratch. Mark is a sought-after presenter at top business conferences and is a guest author. Quiet Light and Mark are headquartered in Minnesota, where Mark sometimes gets to run home to help his wife teach a quick class to his four children.
Dear Green Industry Professional... continued from page 4

In addition to the many benefits we can offer you, in 2014 LCIS also contributed in excess of $50,000.00 to State and local association sponsorships, to support and attend various statewide and annual conventions.

So what’s next? Each year, we continue to initiate new ways to grow and enhance the quality and value of the products and services we offer you. We are presently rolling out a new package insurance and Workers’ Comp program provided to LCIS exclusively by a leading U.S. carrier. This new program delivers important enhancements and additional coverages. Plus, in certain cases, we will be able to combine the package and the Workers’ Comp coverage all from the same carrier for even greater savings. In addition to monetary savings, the convenience of maintaining all your insurance services - renewals, billing, claims and certificates – with one insurance carrier, can be immeasurable.

In closing, thank you for allowing me this opportunity to review some of the many benefits that come from being a Golden Oak Member and LCIS policyholder. Thank you, as well, for making Landscape Contractors Insurance Services, Inc. your insurance agency and broker. We value your trust in us and remain committed to always exploring new and innovative ways to provide you with unique services, combined with excellent customer service. If you have suggestions on how we can better serve you, please do not hesitate to contact me at 800-628-8735 ext 511 or email kayala@lcisinc.com.

On behalf of myself and the entire LCIS team, I extend our best wishes for a wonderful Holiday Season and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

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Independent business owners are some of the hardest-working folks around. After giving your business all you’ve got, the last thing you want to deal with is employee theft. Here are a few tips to prevent theft from happening, and handling it when it does.

Hire smart
Your risk for employee theft starts with the hiring process. The deeper you dig at the start of the hiring and interviewing process, the better. Do a thorough background check and spend time talking to the potential hire’s references.

Watch behavior
Be very observant of employee behavior. Look for any abrupt changes or suspicious behavior. The U.S. Small Business Administration says to keep an eye out for employees who display some of the following behaviors:

- Not taking vacations – many violations are discovered while the perpetrator is on vacation
- Being overly protective or exclusive about their workspace
- Prefers to be unsupervised by working after hours or taking work home
- Disappearing financial records
- Unexplained debt
- Unexpected change in behavior

Invest in security
Cameras and other programs like fleet trackers help you to keep a close eye on the conduct of employees. It will also help your case when you bring any theft to the attention of the authorities.

Be on top of things
Regularly audit your finances and inventory. If you keep a close eye on matters, you have a better chance of catching any thefts or discrepancies before they become a pattern. Employees knowing about your watchful eye could also help deter theft.

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Report theft
According to a survey of small businesses conducted by the University of Cincinnati, small businesses only report employee theft 16% of the time. The main things stopping them are emotional ties and concerns about the criminal justice system. That’s startling, considering how 64% of those surveyed had experience employee theft. Reporting employee theft sets the tone for the employees who remain. Protect your assets first and foremost.

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This free, private consultation is presented by expert CLCA Insurance Solutions agents. Space is limited — pre-registration is required. To pre-register, email insurance-check-up@clca.org

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