



Blog Profile: Landscape Concepts Management

Interview with George Markoutsas, Director of Marketing

1.) Who are you and who is Landscape Concepts Management? What services does your company provide?

Among the many hats that I wear at Landscape Concepts Management, my chief function is to handle the execution of our Marketing Plan and to control the marketing spending. Many of the resulting ancillary duties include brand management, advertising, public relations and networking.

Landscape Concepts Management is a full service commercial landscaping company serving most major metropolitan areas in the Midwest. The company started in 1982 by Mike Kerton, who is still with us today and built his business on the basic precepts of quality, integrity and customer service. Today LCM stands as one of the largest landscaping companies in the Midwest. We provide our clients with a single point of contact and offer a wide array of in-house services including Landscape Maintenance, Construction, Water Management, Tree Care, Seasonal Color and even Holiday Lighting - which reduces the tedium of having to deal with multiple contractors. Many of our clients really enjoy this aspect of our company, because it saves A TON of time!!!

2.) What has LSC done differently in today's challenging economic environment?

Wow, is that a loaded question! What haven't we done? Seriously though, these tough economic times have forced us to aggressively evaluate our production rates, internal operations and, believe it or not, our clients. I am not going to lie to you, we have had to dramatically cut costs, but lucky for us we have a great team here at LCM! We came up with some really innovative ideas and indubitably we had no choice but to become more efficient at what we do. Most of all, while many praise the ability to multi-task, we have had to restructure a number of our positions to have narrower work focuses. Now I'm not saying we've created work in silos, because we are all still a team and collaborate quite often, but the resulting impact has been a higher level of accountability, productivity and success; it also took many of the common place excuses away.

I can honestly say that the one thing we have not compromised on is our quality, and I am proud to announce that just recently, we were notified that we are being awarded two very prestigious awards (One through the Greater North Michigan Association and the other through a National Organization: PLANET). While we do not like to gloat about winning awards, we are so thrilled to get this kind of news especially since much of what is out there is so negative. Let's hope for everyone's sake that this turns around and soon.

3.) Do you have a favorite job/project you've worked on?

Oh yeah. Me, personally, I have had a blast working with the Greater North Michigan Avenue Association (GNMAA) during the Holiday Season. We work on a number of properties up and down the "Mag Mile" in the way of Seasonal Color, which allows us a ton of creative flexibility. Last year we were approached by the GNMAA to install the holiday lights for 401 North Michigan Avenue in exchange for a spot in the Magnificent Mile Lights Festival Presented by Harris. It was crazy; we had a float and everything!!!! Rolling down the "Mag Mile" with millions of people watching you, let's just say, it was intense!

This year, we are excited to announce we have been contracted to install a 35' tree in Pioneer Court (plaza on Michigan Avenue: Chicago). I am sworn to secrecy about the details, but it's going to be extreme! And of course, we will again be parading down the Mile this year in the Lights Festival.

4.) We see you at many networking events and tradeshow. Give our readers some feedback on the benefit(s) of getting involved.

My favorite analogy about groups and organizations is they are a lot like joining a health club. Often I hear people exclaiming, "I didn't get anything out of that group," but when likening it to a health club, all of a sudden they better understand their purpose. As far as the networking aspect, it's not about what you know or even who you know these days, it's about who knows YOU! So get out there and meet some people. Always ask questions that assist in uncovering if there are possible business synergies and - be up front with people about your true intentions. Remember, you're not always the right fit for everyone, so whether it's a prospective client or synergistic partner you should always preface that you may not be able to help them, but it's always worth having a conversation.

When networking, don't try to meet everyone. Scope out one or two key contacts and make sure to follow up with them after the event. And don't forget, current members are always evaluating the people in a group. They are more perceptive than you might think. They know who the "grabbers" are and who's genuinely there to participate in helping both the members and the organization (givers gain).

5.) How can our readers contact you?

Well, email is always good, Gmarkoutsas@landscapeconcepts.com or feel free to call **866.655.3800**.