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A New Day, A New Way

There are very few words in the English language, which, when used together, can make my blood pressure rise. Lately, though I’ve been hearing those words, over and over again, and it troubles me, because those words are “We’ve never done it that way before.”

Consider the things that our society would be without if nobody ever tried doing something in a new way. There would be no chain saws, for instance, and no bucket trucks. There would be no improvements in modern medicine, and no advances in world peace. Think of the inventions inspired by somebody who thought “there has to be a better way...”

I field a lot of calls on the NAA hotline from members who need advice on legal or business matters. I very much enjoy talking to these members. I like to hear about their companies, how they are doing, the gains they have made this year. Their dilemmas alert the Association to problems that the entire industry might be facing. Occasionally, though, a member calls for advice and finds the answer unacceptable. Why? Because “We’ve never done it that way before.”

I recently spoke with a member who had a question about obtaining references for potential employees. During the course of our conversation, he indicated that he had a policy against hiring women as climbers, and likewise he has never hired a man for landscape crews. We discussed his policy from a legal standpoint. I advised him to run his policy manual over to a good attorney in his area. While we were on the subject, I asked if his labor law posters were up, if his harassment policy was written, and if he had complete personnel files. “Why? he asked. “I’ve never done those things before.”

Another member called with a question about business forms. We talked about the NAA Handbook on Forms and I sent her a copy. She called me a few weeks later. None of the samples in the book served her needs. She was looking for a way to increase productivity and record keeping. We discussed a number of options. “Well,” she said as we concluded, “you’ve got some good ideas, but I don’t think they’ll work for us. We’ve never done anything like that before.”

To stay successful in business, you have to keep an eye to the future. Challenge yourself every day to find a better way to do one thing. Try a new idea. Solve a problem. The people who get ahead in this very competitive world are not the people who find one way of doing something and then cling to it forever. The movers and shakers among us are the people who say, “why not, let’s give it a try.” These are the people who make innovation work for them, who are ready for changes in the marketplace and come out on top, who are never caught unprepared. The future is coming no matter what. You can control your place in it by evaluating new things and trying them, or you can let the future control you by clutching the past like a life raft.

Did you hear about a good idea today? Something you’ve never done before? Go ahead, give it a try.

Amelia Reinert
Deputy Executive Director

TCI’s mission is to engage and enlighten readers with the latest industry news and information on regulations, standards, practices, safety, innovations, products and equipment. We strive to serve as the definitive resource for commercial, residential, municipal and utility arborists, as well as others involved in the care and maintenance of trees. The official publication of the non-profit National Arborist Association, we vow to sustain the same uncompromising standards of excellence as our members in the field, who adhere to the highest professional practices worldwide.

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By Keith Regan

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Training: For Safety and Efficiency

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By Rip Tompkins
ArborMaster Training Inc.

Everyone would like to have a company that is profitable, safe and free from accidents. A well-oiled machine that runs smoothly and efficiently is more productive. And a more productive machine is more profitable. Greater profits with fewer accidents means everyone wins. So how do we arrive at this goal?

If we work together and through our own ANSI Z-133.1 committee, which sets industry standards, we can control our own destiny. However, if people refuse to comply and continue with unsafe working practices, then OSHA will come down hard. Our goal should continue with unsafe working practices. then

Companies need to institute training systems or seek out already established programs to help them work more safely. Unfortunately, profit margins in the short run often steer company policies. Training programs cost money and result in a temporary loss in production time and potential profits. We need to see the bigger picture and look at the long-term benefits.

Let’s face it, the fastest and easiest way to get a job done many not always be the safest. It can be very easy to take shortcuts and once this starts, bad habits begin to form. This type of thinking will get passed on down through the ranks like a virus. The young guys will learn from and look up to the crew leaders, so it pays for them to be learning more good habits than bad. Though we would like to think that all of our employees are safety conscious, this is not always the case. Most workers will need guidance to become safer and more efficient in their work practices.

I know that I did not always working as safely as I could have. But through experience, meeting certain people and getting involved with safety training, I have seen the benefits of safety. This is how I know it can be so rewarding to pass on knowledge to others, see the excitement in their eyes and know that they will be working more safely in the future.

There will be some work and effort involved in instituting a new program to weed out bad habits, but the long term results will benefit everyone. Make training fun by setting up small competitions with rewards for achievement. This gets the workers excited and gives them something to work toward. This is turn will give them a better sense of self-esteem and a feeling that their employer cares enough about them to invest in their future.

A good training program will teach workers to use certain thought processes. Though every job is different, by using these thought processes they can tackle any situation. I have always been amazed by the resourcefulness of tree workers in finding ways to get the job done. A well-trained worker will look for hazards and obstacles, make a work plan, decide on the equipment needed, then complete the job. Plan the work and work the plan. This repetition will not only help them work more safely but also more efficiently. With good training and coordination, there can be efficient planning.

A good maintenance program for equipment results in less downtime. Similarly, good training and follow-up programs for employees will reduce costs and time off the job in the long run. Look for the problem areas before they become liabilities. This leads to more time producing for the company and less time cleaning up after mistakes. It may even lead to reduced insurance rates. This would be money and time very well spent.

Climb safe!... See you at the Top.

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Responding to Changing Needs

Specialty rope products replace one size fits all

By Keith Regan

Many of the technological advances engineered for arborists by rope and safety equipment companies developed in an empirical fashion: They were invented at the base of a tree or modified by working arborists who would borrow an idea here, a piece of equipment there—and see how the innovation worked.

Likewise, most of the companies serving arborists today have a long history of making rope or climbing equipment, but that history dates to other industries. For example, Yale Cordage—founded almost 50 years ago—first supplied nylon twines for lobster traps. Wall Industries was incorporated in 1830, but the arborist products division is five years old.

As the arborist market has grown in recent decades, so too has research and development targeted specifically toward tree care. Arborists in the United States spend an estimated $6 million a
year on rope and related products, according to the Cordage Institute, an industry trade group. To serve that market a half-dozen major rope manufacturers offer a dizzying array of climbing lines, bull ropes, rigging lines, lanyards, throwing lines and related equipment. With an increased market has come more specialized products.

Synthetic rope fibers were first designed during World War II to substitute for scarce natural materials. The products were used mainly in the marine industry until the early 1970s, when the first true arborist ropes were produced. Before that, states Peter Hopkins, marketing manager for New England Rope, arborists relied on rope made for other uses. “The days of an arborist having one rope in the tool box for all occasions are gone,” he says.

“There is a lot of room for growth and new products in the arborist market,” agrees Tom Selman of Samson, a Ferndale, Washington-based division of the American Group. “This is an industry that is less than 20 years out of manila.”

“There’s a lot of competition, considering it’s a pretty small market,” notes Dan Pockman, sales manager of the Buccaneer Rope Company. The

Clearwater, Fla., manufacturer sells its ropes nationwide through catalogue sales and a network of distributors. Its two biggest sellers in the climbing line field are the Arbor Boss, a braided rope, and its three-strand counterpart, Safety Orange.

Pockman credits a small number of major rope companies with most of the technological advancements in the industry. In his view, arborist ropes have undergone dramatic changes in terms of safety through increased strength over the years. “There aren’t a lot of fancy products, but the basic tools have gotten better and stronger over the years,” he says.

There are two main types of synthetic rope. Three-strand tends to be stiffer, more likely to stretch under heavy weight, and more closely mimics the feel of old manila rope. Braided rope, on the other hand, appears to be preferred by most arborists for its softer feel and ease of handling and is gradually coming to dominate the market. See Sidebar, “Arborist Ropes: A Primer”

While different ropes from different manufacturers may look and feel different, the ropes begin in the same place: a laboratory. The strong ropes used to lower tree limbs or allow a climber to hang safely above the ground begin at a chemical company such as DuPont or Dow. Polyester, polyolefin and similar materials are spun into thin fibers that resemble fishing line. The same raw material used to make ropes goes into

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Arborist Ropes: A Primer

Arborist ropes are made of synthetic polyester, polyolefin or a similar material. In the past two decades, man-made ropes have replaced natural fiber lines, since the most popular natural rope, manila, is weaker, more susceptible to rot and less predictable. According to the Cordage Institute, a 1-inch diameter manila rope has a breaking strength of 8,100 pounds. By comparison, Samson’s 1-inch Stable Braid has a breaking strength of 37,200 pounds.

The first dedicated arborist ropes were made in the early 1970s. The Samson Division of the American Group produced its Arbor-Plex ropes about the same time New England Rope unveiled its Safety Blue line. Today, those two companies and Maine-based Yale Cordage control more than 80 percent of the U.S. arborist rope market, estimated at about $6 million per year.

While three-strand rope, which more closely mimics the feel of natural fiber lines and tends to stretch more under the strain of a heavy load, are holding their own in sales, the easy handling of braided line is helping to make the faster growing segment of the market. There is little difference in strength: Much of the difference comes down to personal preference, which is why most firms offer a variety of models with similar properties.

Bull ropes or rigging lines, which have become stronger and lighter, are a fast-growing segment of the arborist rope market. Many are now coated with special materials to help them withstand the friction of constant rubbing against a tree limb or sling. Several companies have introduced products designed to be used with block and tackles, cranes and pulleys—as those methods of lowering trees become more popular.

Most rope makers recommend a two-year life expectancy for climbing lines, slightly longer for rigging lines if they are used less frequently. However, ropes that are cut with a saw or repeatedly exposed to harsh conditions and heavy weights can wear out faster. Visual inspections should be done regularly, but cannot always detect breakdowns in the internal rope fibers.
or less the same way. Micro-thin fibers are spun around one another, gradually and carefully increased in thickness. Each time a strand is wound, the direction is switched, preventing unraveling in the final product. The machines that do most of the work twist the fibers together tightly, adding to the strength of the final product. High-quality synthetic fibers, together with the added control of the fibers made possible by today's modern machinery, are responsible for the dramatic leap in rope quality over the last 20 years. Several companies mark the cores of climbing lines with brightly colored strands to provide an alert when the lines are badly worn. Bull ropes are often color-coded as well, with each company designating its own color scheme to identify the diameter of a rope.

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ing, cutting and packaging each length of rope and performing splicing and other custom additions to the rope.

Despite the care put into making rope, a rope’s useful work life depends on how it is treated.

“When you tell people that their rope is made of the exact same material as a pair of pants, that helps them understand,” relates Hopkins. “If you wore the same pair of pants every day, they would wear out pretty quickly, too.”

Industry experts recommend a two-year life span for most ropes. That useful life can be shortened though, by chain-saw nicks or constant high-weight impacts on the rope. Much of the wear on ropes takes place out of sight, on the internal core that provides the line’s strength. While ropes have improved, their costs have also risen over the years. But given the longer life and improved safety, today’s ropes are probably a better buy.

Changes in throw lines, lanyards and other accessories will continue as arborists change the way they work. The never-ending concern with improving safety will help drive new product innovations, as will different attitudes of the next generation of tree climbing professionals.

“We seem to have hit a plateau,” reports Foster. “There hasn’t been a major breakthrough recently, and the technology seems to have found its level. But one never wants to say never.”

While there may have been few breakthroughs in rope-making in recent years, there have been some recent innovations in the products that rope makers offer. Most arborist ropes now feature special protective coatings that help the lines withstand the high heat and friction that is an inevitable byproduct of roping heavy logs, whether it’s through a pulley or against a limb.

Yale Cordage was the first company to introduce colored lines, first for the sailing market. “Now, people can recognize the Yale brand and the type of rope it is by the color,” says Susan Cook, Yale’s arborist products manager. “Color has become fashion.”

Yale’s best seller now is the XTC plus, a red and white, 16-strand rope. “We know when we go to shows, we talk to hands-on users,” notes Cook. “They are the ones who are asking the tough questions. Because arborists are so involved in the safety of equipment, the users are far more aware and educated than rope users in other markets.

“What makes the climbing lines unique is that they all use a taut-line or Blake hitch,” explains Cook. “It is the only rope market for which we recommend the use of a knot. If the rope is not constructed so it will run with a taut line hitch, it really has no place in an arborist’s gear bag.”

In 1993, Samson introduced its Stable Braid ropes, used in heavy industry for 20 years, specifically to handle the rigors of rigging techniques. “They needed something with higher strengths and easier handling,” says Selman. “That made it an easy transition for that product.”

Adapting products originally designed for other uses is a common theme among manufacturers. “Arborists we
interviewed said they were just throwing money away buying new products, then trying to integrate them," says Wall President Stanley Swider. "At climbing demonstrations, nationally known climbers show off all these products, but in the real world it takes too much time to rig all of this. Arborists need speed to make a living.

"We designed a rope, Ultramax, that has a firm ‘hand,’ which is an old rope term meaning ‘able to go around a pulley without flattening,’” explains Swider. "And since arborists don’t have the time to splice in the field, we splice in the factory.

"A chain saw might sever the flipline, so we built one with a steel cable inside. Initially, a cable was pushed through a hollow-braided rope. Then we braided a jacket over the cable. For our new rope,” Swider continues, "we buy aircraft cable, run it through the machine and braid a rope over the cable, which helps eliminate slipping because it is braided so tightly. I defy you to cut it with a chain saw."

Wall Safety Products recently unveiled what it calls a complete rigging kit designed to eliminate the need for arborists to search out all of the products they need. Swider credits working arborists with the idea. "We watched what they were doing and we learned.

"Look in their tool boxes. They have things they bought from a catalog or a hardware store, all thrown together,” continues Swider. "We are trying to eliminate some of that guesswork and trial and error."

The kits, which were developed after sales representatives spent hours at job sites watching certified arborists take down trees, have been tested on 10,000 tree removals. They include the company’s bull line, slings, pulleys and accessories. In other words, everything an arborist needs to take down a tree 22 inches in diameter at eight-feet off the ground.

Making an arborist rope means making something that lasts, is reliable and can withstand daily use—even occasionally abuse. "An arborist rope is a tool,” says Hopkins. “It doesn’t need to be flashy like a mountain-climbing line. It just needs to work."

Keith Regan is a certified arborist and freelance writer.
Don't Miss ...

Tree Care Industry Exposition '97 (TCI EXPO '97), the trade show for the business of tree care, will be held at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Columbus, Ohio from November 6 - 8, 1997. Co-sponsored by the National Arborist Association and the International Society of Arboriculture, TCI EXPO is the nation's largest tree care industry show under one roof.

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The Greater Columbus Convention Center is a modern-day architectural marvel located in downtown Columbus. This facility offers convenience, accessibility and an active central location. Numerous restaurants, galleries, historical sites and museums, shops and city tours are just a few of the adventures Columbus has to offer.

The host hotel for TCI EXPO '97 is the Hyatt Regency Columbus. The hotel is located at 350 North High Street and is connected to the Greater Columbus Convention Center. Room reservations can be made by calling 1-614-463-1234. Callers must reference the National Arborist Association room block.

For information about reserving a booth or attending TCI EXPO '97, please contact: The National Arborist Association, P.O. Box 1094, Amherst, NH 03031-1094; 1-800-733-2622; Fax: 1-603-672-2613.
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(32) Material Handling Buckets In Stock: 16', 20', 30', 50' & 55'; Holan, Asplundh; Telect, Teco, Etc... Call for List

(20) Hiab, IMTCO; National; Etc. Knucklebooms Unmounted Or Mounted $4,500 And Up

(2) 1988 GMC 4x4's; 8.2 Diesel; 8 Spd.2
Spt. Transfer; 35,000# G/W; Chassis & Cabs $22,500 Each

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(10) Chip Body Dumps In Stock; Call for Price & Descriptions

1989 Int. 2554; 2674 Cummins 316; 8Spd.
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(5) Under CDL Ford & Int.; Crew Cabs. Stakes or Utility Bodies Call for List

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Ton National Crane 4T-26; 36' Hook Height $22,500

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Close OSHA?

The gauntlet has been thrown down. The Cato Institute, a conservative public policy organization, has called for a shut-down of OSHA in its latest handbook for Congress. The handbook, released February 28, 1997, stated that “As it currently operates, OSHA does not increase worker safety in a cost-effective manner.”

At a minimum, the handbook recommends that OSHA should be prevented from issuing new citations or federal standards to employers. The Cato Institute further calls on Congress to reduce OSHA’s enforcement budget, increase exemptions for companies with strong worker safety and health programs, and repeal the general duty clause of the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Anyone who has been cited by OSHA knows this as the clause that requires employers to provide a workplace free from recognized hazards which could cause death or serious injury to employees. When the inspector visits and cannot find a particular section of code to enforce, it is often reference to this clause that appears on your citation.

The Cato Institute recommendation is sharp criticism of a federal agency designed to improve health and safety conditions in the workplace. Others have criticized OSHA as well. Members of the last session introduced several bills that targeted OSHA for reform. Specifically on the table, among other things, were OSHA requirements that field inspectors fulfill citation quotas and the vast amount of paperwork which business owners must complete in order to be in compliance. None of the bills were signed into law last year, but it would appear that the alarm had been rung.

OSHA might have been prudent to begin initiating internal changes that would satisfy critics. Substantial changes in the agency’s operations could have been gracefully attributed to the Clinton Administration’s line-by-line review of government. Some real heroes could have emerged from OSHA had one of its own come forward with a plan to make it easier for employers to comply with record-keeping requirements, or by concentrating efforts on training field personnel so that inspection visits resulted in a safer workplace, not in high fines and confused business owners. The National Arborist Association receives calls daily from business owners who have been cited, but have no idea why.

Unfortunately, bureaucracy blindly plods ahead. OSHA recently announced that it intends to re-issue an injury and illness data-collection survey that was first attempted in 1996, only to be interrupted by a lawsuit from the American Trucking Association (ATA). The ATA claimed that OSHA did not have the authority to collect data that could later be used against the responding employer. A federal district court judge agreed.

In February 1996, OSHA decided not to use the collected information for enforcement purposes, even though the survey regulatory preamble suggests the agency could inspect or seek administrative subpoenas against employers who did...
not respond. This is language similar to that used in state Voluntary Participation Programs, where the threat of “respond or get inspected” was so thinly veiled that OSHA had to withdraw the programs.

To add fuel to the fire, field inspectors are increasingly criticized by the green industry for improper or incorrect citations, or for issuing citations unreasonably. Consider these instances suffered by members of the National Arborist Association:

- A company is cited because employees are not wearing steel-toed shoes. When the job foreman tells the inspector that steel-toed shoes are not required for the tree care industry, the inspector cites the logging standard. The foreman repeats his position. The citation is issued under the general duty clause.

- In another case, in another state, an individual owns his company and his bucket truck. He has no other employees. The business owner, his wife and his teenage son happen to be using the bucket truck for transportation because the family car is in the shop. The family parks at a local restaurant to order a take-out dinner. The parents enter the restaurant, the son stays in the truck. The business owner and his wife emerge from the restaurant to find that there has been a citation for an unsecured hardhat. Even worse, the two week deadline for appeal had passed. The owner called his local OSHA office. OSHA’s response? In short, “tough.”

Is OSHA really a government agency that protects worker health and safety, or has it become a self-perpetuating bureaucracy that can’t see beyond its own walls? Does the agency answer to anyone?

Certainly the objections already raised about OSHA’s operations have not received much attention within the agency. Working Americans must be protected from gross negligence on the job site, which is why so many responsible employers offer safety training programs that far exceed government requirements. But who protects small-business owners from a government agency out of control, an agency that apparently feels so secure in its current state of being that it is willing to proceed with a data collection survey that a federal district court judge has already found improper?

Perhaps the Cato Institute is right. Perhaps OSHA should not continue to exist if it cannot carry out its mission successfully and cost-effectively. Maybe there are other measures, such as employer training programs and insurance guidelines, that will better protect worker safety. In the meantime, business owners in the tree care industry must continue to demand that OSHA citations are correct, proper and reasonable.

If you think you have been inappropriately cited by OSHA, call the National Arborist Association at (800) 733-2622.

Amelia Reinert is deputy executive director of the National Arborist Association.

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TREE CARE INDUSTRY - MAY 1997
Can Foresters Help CTLA?

By William M. Steigerwaldt

As many of you are aware, the Association of Consulting Foresters of America (ACF) has joined the Council of Tree & Landscape Appraisers (CTLA). Initially, this would appear to be an odd mix of talents and a rather poor marriage. Most consulting foresters are engaged with trees at the forest level and spend little time involved in landscaping, arboriculture or single tree matters.

Many consulting foresters, however, are very active in real estate and tree damage appraisals. National membership in ACF is now approximately 475, of which more than 80 members are licensed or certified real estate appraisers. For many of us, our entire professional focus is the valuation of many types of real estate—from traditional timberland to more urban properties with significant numbers of trees and elaborate landscaping. Many ACF members are also involved in tree damage appraisals for the same situations as many arborists, landscaping contractors and nurserymen.

My personal interest in serving on CTLA is to bring various aspects of real estate valuation to the tree appraisal profession. Quite often individual tree values are estimated without any relation to the overall real estate value of the property in question. Frequent criticism of current tree valuation techniques is that the estimated values from the cost to cure, trunk formula or replacement approaches are too high. I have witnessed many cases lost by competent arborists and nurserymen because the tree values are excessive and the appraiser fails to consider the underlying property value. In most cases, the tree appraiser must analyze the total real estate value and then estimate the trees' contributory value to the property and situation at hand.

A few of the real estate appraisal issues that must be addressed and understood by tree and plant appraisers include highest and best use of a property, the contributory value of trees and landscaping, and perhaps depreciation of tree value (due to condition, quality, abundance, overstocking, location or other factors). It is our intention that these issues will be addressed as we work together on revisions to the Guide for Plant Appraisal.

For those of us actively involved in tree and plant appraisals, consulting with certified real estate appraisers or other real estate professionals in your specific area may prove very enlightening and rewarding. Many of us in ACF can be another source of advice and help on specific cases. I feel that the background in forests and real estate that ACF brings to CTLA can advance the tree appraisal profession.

I sincerely hope that ACF's role in CTLA will be constructive. I look forward to serving on CTLA and bringing many of these valuation issues to the forefront.

William M. Steigerwaldt is the ACF representative to CTLA.
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The Edge in Performance!

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Total Customer Service

The secret to sales, profits and happiness in the world of business

By Wayne Outlaw

In life as in business, when you give the right answers and do the right thing, you are rewarded. In the tree care business there is a tremendous need to satisfy the customer. In this profession customer service is a primary determinant of success.

You never know what is going to happen when you start serving customers. You think about how to make your biggest, most important customer happy and fail to realize that all of them are our most important customer. Yet just making a customer happy often is not enough.

Would you be happy if 90 percent of your customers were satisfied? You shouldn’t be. If your customers are merely satisfied with what you do, that is not enough to guarantee your success.

Of course, there are different levels of satisfaction.

1. The first level is the dissatisfied customer. You can relate to it, and you might be able to recall an unhappy customer’s face as you are reading this. A dissatisfied customer is someone who is unhappy with what you did. That unhappiness may be valid or not, but he is unhappy. You may have performed the work correctly, but your crew didn’t quite clean up as much as they should have. Maybe the customer looked at his trees or shrubs when you had finished and said, “I thought it would be prettier when you finished.”

Has a customer ever said that to you—especially after you have cleaned up from storm damage?

2. The second level is a satisfied customer. For this customer the job was done properly, you cleaned up and you were courteous. While there was not a lot of interaction with the customer, but when it was all over she was satisfied. That customer is happy with you, but guess what? She is not ecstatic about your company.

3. A very satisfied customer is a person who is happy with almost everything you did, and the work you performed went beyond her level of expectation. Now most people in business ask, “Can I afford to do something like that? Can I afford to spend that kind of time and money to make my customers very satisfied?”

You bet, and here’s why. AT&T did some consumer research to find out what made a difference in customer retention. If customers said they were very satisfied, AT&T lost 3 percent of them. Of customers who said they were merely satisfied, AT&T lost 32 percent of them. The effort it takes to take it up that next notch represented a difference of 29 percent. Now you understand why you get those AT&T sales calls about 7:30 every evening. They are trying to get some of those satisfied customers back.

Xerox Corporation discovered similar results. Xerox found that six out of seven people who were very satisfied would buy from them again. However, only one out of seven who were merely satisfied would buy again.

What does it take to get customer sat-
What is service?

Service is everything but the product itself. In other words, it is the way crews arrive at the job site, their attitude—even their grooming. It is everything the customer senses and experiences while the crew is on the job.

Over the lifetime of an average customer, what is that customer worth in sales? Ten thousand dollars, $50,000, do I hear a million? Whatever the number, they are valuable. They are like money in the bank, and we cannot afford to lose customers.

A little company called the Forum Group did a study on customer service and one of the things they found was that when people stop using a business, only 30 percent switch because of product or price. Fully 65 percent left because of the way they were treated or the attitude of the employee. Buying newer trucks and more types of equipment—doing all those things to expand your capability—will not make you successful unless you make customers happy when you interact with them.

Every company owner is interested in delivering great service. What is the one thing that is keeping you from delivering the level of service you would like? The problem is the owner doesn’t serve most customers. The way to improve service is to help employees recognize a customer’s importance, give them some customer skills, which will help them be more successful. Since you can’t interact with all of your customers all of the time, you must train and develop employees with customer service skills.
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Customer Service

Learn from other companies as to how to overcome barriers to deliver a higher level of service. SAS Airlines, for example, was losing $17 million a year. The problem in the airline industry is that every airline has the same planes and the same routes. One of the few things they can change to distinguish themselves is in increasing customer satisfaction. The CEO said that he wanted every contact with the company to be a positive one. In one year, SAS went from losing $17 million to a profit of $54 million.

A few years ago, Delta decided it wanted to cut costs. Most companies start there when they want to be more profitable. So they laid off some senior baggage handlers. Guess what happened? Their bottom line increased immediately, and the stock market was very happy about it. The problem was they hired contract workers to replace senior baggage handlers at Thanksgiving, a time with the greatest potential for error. They lost a lot of bags in 1995 around the holiday season.

What is interesting is most of the people laid off came back to work in February, but the customers did not come back with them. They remembered. Another airline, Continental, was not doing well a few years ago. Yet the CEO understood one key thing. Customers want to take off on time and they want to arrive with their bags. He also figured out that if the planes take off on time, the chances of bags being there when the passengers arrive increases.

He offered a $65 bonus for every employee for every month that Continental was in the top 5 in on-time departures. They recently had their first profitable year since their bankruptcy, and they had their highest level of profits in 61 years—all because he figured out what customers want.

He found a reward system that linked what the employees do to the satisfaction of the customer. Many times we say that if we don’t hear from customers—if they are not complaining—then everything must be fine. Trust me, a lack of complaints does not equal satisfied customers. Statistic after statistic proves that only a small portion of those people who are unhappy will ever complain. Instead, they tell other people about their negative experiences.

Studies have found that, on average, an unhappy customer will tell 14 people. Most people don’t have the time to write a letter or call a number to complain. So don’t assume that folks are happy. Find a way to make them happy because customers have choices. They can complain by taking their business elsewhere. And they can tell other people.

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Winning at the defining moment

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Customer Service

One of the things we found is that when people say they can get services cheaper somewhere else, that is a cover for “I really don’t want to tell you why I am going somewhere else because you let me down or you upset me.”

This is a defining moment—when something goes wrong in your business, when something falls through the cracks—from that point on, the customer will define you and your capability and your desire to satisfy him.

When something goes wrong, that is the chance to shine because if you jump on a problem and really change things dramatically, the customer will stick with you. Problems are not what lose customers: It is a failure to respond to problems.

If something goes wrong, react. Do it right the first time. If it is not right the first time, do it very right the second time. Go above and beyond and let the customer and your employees know what you are doing. Everyone in business has had a customer who is irate. Here are 10 steps to satisfy a customer.

1.) Show understanding. Figuratively put yourself on the same side as the customer. Don’t make yourself an antagonist.

2.) Deal with feelings. Get the emotion out of it. Let that person vent, then get logical.

3.) Express concern. A lot of people have trouble saying “I am sorry,” but it goes a long way.

4.) Verify the reasons and the situation. Tell the customer, “Now I need you to help me a little bit and tell me what exactly happened.”

5.) Suggest some alternatives. Your suggestions may not be what the customer has in mind, so listen as well.

6.) Ask for suggestions.

7.) Determine your solution.

8.) Verify your solution will make the customer happy. The one thing we often fail to do is ask the customer a simple question, “If we take these steps, will you be happy with us?”

9.) Do what you promised.

10.) Follow up. The most important phone call you can ever make in your business is to a customer who has been unhappy and you have done something to fix it. Pick up the phone and get some of that positive feedback, which also reinforces in the customer’s mind that you did do what you promised.

My philosophy is “The problem is not fixed until the customer feels that it is fixed.”

Customer Perception

A big problem in the tree care business is that a customer’s perception does not always match reality. Customers are dealing with tree care from another framework. Their perceptions involve judgments, what is right, what is wrong, what should be done, what should not be done. It involves evaluations of how well you did and also assessments on what could have been done. They make
these judgements, but how many have a degree in arboriculture?

As trained professionals, you know a lot more than they do. You are the expert. Nevertheless, you must figure out what is on the customer's mind because, right or wrong, that is what drives the customer to make decisions. The sum of a customer's perception is his level of satisfaction.

The key question to discover with customers is whether they would recommend your business to other people. If the answer is no, find out why. You either failed to impress them or you have done something to make them feel less than happy.

The number one hotel in America in terms of guest satisfaction is Ritz Carlton. Every time a guest checks in, he is asked if he requires anything unusual. A foam pillow instead of feather, ice in their wine or coffee. If a customer has an unusual request, they ask you to fill out a card, and they develop a profile for you. When you check in the next time, they know exactly what you want for a pleasurable experience. Collecting those profiles costs money, but they realize it is nothing compared to building a profile on a guest that will come back again and again.

**Measuring Customer Satisfaction**

The key factor in customer satisfaction. What makes a customer happy or unhappy in the tree care business? The airlines have figured it out, and the tree care industry should too. Figure out what four or five things customers value from your business. Do they want value? Do they want you to arrive on time and finish the job in a timely manner? Do they want you to meet their expectations? I might do a better job than the customer expected, but if I do something different than the customer expected, I have a problem. You have to make sure you and the customer have the same expectations.

Understand what customers want, because you cannot start measuring their satisfaction level until you clearly understand that. Forget about what you think they want. Ask them and listen to what they say.

Once you have created some way to measure satisfaction, determine how often you should measure it. Do you measure every customer or do you want to measure every tenth customer?

You also have to define the questions that will allow you to gauge it.

There are several ways to measure satisfaction. One is simply to listen. A more scientific way would be to create a survey or questionnaire. Also, tabulate...
Customer Service

developed a relationship with. She may buy from you all the time, and you may do all of her tree care work. You may even have a contract to care for her trees over a period of time. This is fine, but you need to get to the third level: the advocate.

3. An advocate is someone who is so happy with what you do that not only would he never consider buying from anybody else, and at every chance he gets he tells other people you should do their tree work. Create advocates because those people pay. In general, studies outside of the tree care industry have shown that it costs 15 times more to acquire a new customer than it does to service or sell to an existing customer. Yet if a business is to grow, new customers are a must. The most cost-effective marketing is creating advocates.

Create a Service Culture

Outstanding service starts with a commitment at the top. An employee does not wake up one day and say, “You know, today I am going to be the absolute best person ever, and I am going to make all my customers happy.”

Employees listen to and watch the owners. The owner does not deliver all the service, even in a small organization, so it begins at the top: The decisions made at the top in terms of hiring the right people, the resources they have and the commitment the owner gives to development, training and education. All of this is reinforced daily. Show me somebody who is passionate about delivering a great service to a customer and I will show you a person who has a tremendous potential to be profitable.

The employees are the key in creating and maintaining a service culture. Business owners often ask, “Why can’t I find people like me?” Well, they probably own their own businesses.

The key is to hire attitudes, values and capabilities. You can’t give an employee an attitude transplant, you can’t send them to a class on honesty, and you can’t make people with weak performance records perform miracles. Past

Levels of Customers

1. A buyer may pick your name from the Yellow Pages, call and say I have a job would you please come out and give me a quote. You go out and give them a quote, do the job, they pay you and that is it. They may be terrifically happy, but it is only a one-time event.

2. A client is someone that you have

the results to see your improvement. If you are going to measure something, you really need to track it to make sure that what you are doing is getting better. Track the quality of the sales force, their level of service, the delivery. How can you improve your service? What do other people do better than you? What do we do better than other people?

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TREE CARE INDUSTRY - MAY 1997
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Performance is the best indicator of future performance. If someone lands in a new job every six months, the same problems will follow him. Who you bring on to serve your customers is the most important decision you make.

Summary

If you really want to improve your level of service, you first have to declare its importance. Not just to yourself but to everyone in your business. Employers talk about developing the sales skills of employees, but it is people skills that you have to develop to make sure that the customer is happy. Being technically proficient in tree care is not enough if you or your employees can't interact well with the customer.

Measure customer perceptions, set some objectives and targets, track your improvement and reward performance. Psychologists tell us that if we make up our minds to do something, and we do not take action within 24 hours, there is only a 50 percent chance that we will do anything. If we wait 48 hours, it drops to 25 percent.

Within the next 24 hours take the time to decide what you want to do to improve the level of service you are giving to your customers. Serve your customers well and you will be very successful.

Wayne Outlaw spent 13 years with Xerox Corporation. At Xerox, he held the record for the quickest promotion to Branch Marketing Manager. He also developed the Benchmark Sales Strategy used worldwide by Xerox to beat lower-priced competition. He is a certified speaking professional and also holds a designation of certified management consultant. He is president of the Outlaw Group, Inc. in Mount Pleasant, S.C.

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Thinning the canopy

Improperly thinned tree has few if any secondary branches along main branches. Properly thinned tree has secondary branches and twigs along main branches. Potentially weak branches often droop or break.

Unpruned tree with foliage. Reduces susceptibility to wind damage. Displays attractive bark.

Nicely formed canopy. Reduces canopy density, but not tree size.

Improperly thinned tree has few if any secondary branches along main branches. Properly thinned tree has secondary branches and twigs along main branches.

Unpruned tree with foliage. Reduces susceptibility to wind damage. Displays attractive bark.

Nicely formed canopy. Reduces canopy density, but not tree size.

Improper canopy reduction by topping.

Proper canopy reduction using drop-crotch technique (Figure 3-8).

Don't top trees!

Tree is smaller and could be thinner if you desire.

Figure 1. Proper thinning of the canopy can improve tree strength and longevity, and it opens views (top and center). The service life of trees that are considered too large for a site may be slightly extended by properly reducing the size of the canopy (bottom).
disease resistance. Nursery workers, while training young trees, make the first important pruning decisions when they select which branches to remove. Arborists and landscapers make the crucial decision of selecting the best species and cultivar for the environmental conditions at the planting site, as well as selecting high quality, properly trained trees from the nursery. It is at this point that the arborist finally has some control of the trees' development through proper planting and pruning.

Gilman provides many diagrams that demonstrate the growth changes that a tree goes through and how arborists can direct those changes through pruning. In Chapter 5, "Pruning for Strength," a two-page diagram demonstrates how trees can be pruned at a young age to prevent low drooping branches from developing as the tree matures. The growth of two trees is traced with drawings at three separate stages of growth, representing the trees when young, 10 years later and 20 years later. One tree was left unpruned and the other was pruned with modest subordinating or thinning cuts designed to shorten and slow the growth of the lower branches as well as encourage faster growth in the upper canopy. Ten years later, the unpruned tree has long lower branches that are beginning to droop in contrast to the shorter, rigid lower branches of the pruned tree. After 10 years, the lower branches on the pruned tree are cut once again, utilizing similar subordinating and thinning cuts. In the third stage, representing 30 years later, the unpruned tree has lower limbs drooping to the point that they may need to be cut, especially if the specimen is a street tree. The procedure at this point is radical and will be costly to the client. The pruned tree, however, is in no need of further attention thanks to the modest, insightful work performed earlier.

Unfortunately, by the time an arborist is summoned to the scene, many of the important pruning and cultural choices that determined the mature tree's structural health were made incorrectly. Sometimes the tree simply was neglected and the arborist on the scene will give the tree attention for the first time in its life. Many issues such as these are addressed in Chapter 7, "Pruning Established Trees." The diagram titled Thinning the Canopy is shown in Fig. 1 and is another good representative of the book's illustrations.

In short, An Illustrated Guide to Pruning would be a welcome addition to your personal library. It is enjoyable reading that will teach even experienced arborists a thing or two.

Robert Rouse is staff arborist for the National Arborist Association.

An Illustrated Guide to Pruning is available from Delmar Publishers for $25.95. To order copies, call 800-347-7707.
Telemarketing: A Low-Cost Way to Boost Profits

Hear the phrase “telephone selling” and all you can visualize is a rude caller interrupting your dinner hour in a pitch to sell some obscure household product. Use telephone selling in your tree care business? “No way,” you might exclaim.

But wait. A lot of weighty research—and the enormous success of the constantly-expanding telephone sales industry—suggests that teleselling, when done courteously and well, can build profit and positive customer relations at the same time.

Here, then, are key ingredients of successful telesales programs. Whether you simply make an occasional sales call by telephone, or wish to begin a massive telemarketing effort, use these sequential steps to prepare to use the telephone as a sales tool.

Before You Get on the Telephone

1. First, sell yourself. Before you or your employees can attempt to sell services by telephone, you’ve got to be convinced that the telephone is a valid and valuable sales tool. If you have doubts, talk with a professional telesales consultant before moving further.
2. Know yourself. Before you can begin a true telephone sales program, you must know how to describe your tree care services to the general public. Be prepared to offer helpful details to someone who has never heard of arboriculture.
3. Target your audience. A telesales program works best when it’s targeted toward niches in the marketplace: new arrivals in town... young families with new babies who no longer have time to care for their properties themselves... a particular neighborhood of high-priced homes. The more tightly you can define your audience, the more tightly you’ll be able to target your telephone message. Of course, you might market different services to different audiences. (Fertilization services for new housing developments.) In this case, you’ll end up with multiple telesales messages as well. Naturally, you need to be able to identify the people who make up your target audience through your own data base or through a rented prospect list.
4. Condition your prospects. First time out, you’ll introduce yourself to prospects not by telephone, but by letter. The letter need not—and should not—speak about tree care or landscaping in any depth. Rather, it should assure prospects of your integrity and alert them that you’ll be calling.
5. Give prospects a chance to opt out. Allow them to send you a postcard letting you know they don’t want a telephone call. The result: fewer unproductive calls, and homeowners will be reassured that you care about their concerns.
6. Script the conversation. A good script really isn’t a script in the conventional sense. Instead, it’s a “call guide” or flow chart describing the key messages you want to get across while you’re on the telephone, as well as talking points you can use in response to common questions and objections. The result will be an outline. You and your employees will convey the points contained in the outline in your own words.
7. Train. Essential topics to cover in training: your call guide, unanticipated objections, voice patterns, the nuances of closing a sale. Quality training will also instill confidence.

The Telephone
A Tool of Sales and Service

While the telephone can be used to sell tree care services directly, it can help build your business in other ways as well. For example, you can use the telephone to:

1. Offer a free pamphlet or newsletter
2. Assess customer satisfaction
3. Call prospects who may have questions
4. Announce special sales
5. Extend invitations to special offers
6. Take a customer survey
7. Follow up on inquiries
8. Reach out to lapsed customers.
When You Make the Call

• Offer a warm, friendly, but speedy opening. Introduce yourself by name in a warm, but professional, tone of voice. Briefly indicate the services you’re offering. Absolutely avoid any hint of insincerity. For example, the all-too-common introductory line, “How are you doing tonight?” is inappropriate for most sales calls—and patently insincere.

• Observe the law. The Federal Trade Commission has adopted sweeping new guidelines for most telesellers. Chances are you must follow them. [See “New Telemarketing Regulations: A Quick Glance” for more detail.]

• Once again, allow the prospect to opt out. After you’ve introduced yourself, always ask if the prospect has time to talk with you. If not, offer to call back at a more convenient time.

• Make your presentation. A presentation during a telephone call is much shorter than an in-person sales presentation. You’ll generally have only 30 to 60 seconds to summarize your company and services.

• Vary your tone of voice. Your prospect will respond more positively if she visualizes you as a real, live human being. When describing your product, you might inject a touch of enthusiasm in your voice. When you’re summing up, you might speak with a hint of authority.

• Project professionalism. Keep personal references out of the conversation. Use the prospect’s courtesy title (Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr.) and meticulously avoid the guessing games and probing questions that have become the hallmark of shady telemarketers.

• Maintain the structure of a sales call. Although you’re speaking on the telephone, you’re still engaged in a sales call. The elements of a call still apply: introduction, presentation, trial close, presentation of objections, rebuttal of objections, closing. But the pace is intensely concentrated. Your voice and your descriptive abilities are your key selling tools.

• Limit your prospect’s choices. A telephone conversation is not the time to offer all of your services. Limit the number of options you offer, and wait until the prospect evidences interest before even broaching the subject of product options. A popular approach in telesales today is to avoid closing the sale on the first call, and focusing on subsequent sales opportunities: reviewing product literature, requesting a catalog, talking in person or offering a free property review.

• Listen. Always be conscious of the tenor of the conversation and the subtle verbal cues offered by the prospect. Listen for signs of interest and enthusiasm in the prospect’s voice as a signal to proceed onward. Listen, too, for signs of hesitation, frustration or anger. These are signals to move slowly and remain attentive to the prospect’s concerns or fears.

• Always say “thank you.” Even if the prospect hasn’t bought, thank the individual for the time she spent with you. You never know: this may...
Management Exchange

set the stage for a more productive relationship in the future.

- Negotiate with gatekeepers. When selling to commercial properties, you must often get past secretaries or administrative assistants. Don’t make your presentation to them, but do note the bottom-line benefits you’re offering their superiors. Other favorite techniques to get past gatekeepers: call at lunchtime or at the end of the day.
- Follow up. Whether you’ve made a sale, received a request for more information, or been the object of a complaint, follow up your call with a specific action: a quick shipment or a note, for example. This is one more visible symbol of your commitment to customer service.
- Keep records. Systematically track the outcome of all calls. These records will help you generate lists of prospects to call back in the future. More important, they will help you assess the effectiveness of your telesales program, and make it an ever-more profitable part of your business operations.

Richard Ensman is a freelance writer based in Rochester, N.Y. He specializes in business topics.

New Regulations: A Quick Glance

The Federal Trade Commission, in response to consumer complaints, established new rules for telemarketers not too long ago. If you’re selling by telephone, you must:
- Promptly identify yourself
- Let prospects know you’re selling goods or services
- Provide specific information about your offer
- Provide refund or all-sales-final disclosures
- Disclose all costs
- Disclose any restrictions on obtaining merchandise
- Limit calls to daytime and early evening hours
- Observe prospects’ requests that you avoid further calls.

The FTC also adopted rules for companies offering contests and promotions over the telephone, and established penalties for firms violating them.

The results of the regulations should be positive: They will help keep unethical telesales firms off the telephone lines and diminish telephone fraud.

Be sure to obtain a full copy of the FTC rules from the FTC, 6th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20580.
The Model 911 is the first in a line of chippers to be introduced by Doskocil Industries, Inc. Many of the patent pending features on the Model 911 are a direct result of suggestions and ideas from professional arborists like yourself. We at Doskocil Industries are dedicated to design and manufacture quality equipment for your needs.

Dosko turns exclusively to Key Knife for their state-of-the-art Chipper Knife System. The key knives are precisely positioned in place assuring accurate knife point location with no adjustments required. Installing new knives or reversing worn knives can be done in minutes even on the job site.

Doskocil Industries, Inc.
1324 W. Rialto Ave.
San Bernardino, CA 92410
Phone 909-885-0988
Fax 909-381-4743

Please circle 20 on Reader Service Card
The National Arborist Association, in collaboration with Altec Industries, invites NAA member tree care companies to participate in the Excellence in Arboriculture Awards program. This program recognizes companies and their clients who have distinguished themselves with excellence, as shown by their work and dedication, by preserving the health and beauty of trees in our neighborhoods, towns and cities. Such recognition promotes quality tree care and fosters a greater appreciation for the benefits of trees and the professional care of trees. The awards reinforce the arborist/client relationship, and cultivate higher standards for the tree care profession.

Companies that submit entries for awards do not compete with each other, but are judged against the high standards of the industry. Judges look for adherence to ANSI - A300 standards, sensitivity to species, impact of finished projects on site and trees, challenges involved in the project and appearance. The winners for this year will be announced at the NAA’s Winter Management Conference in New Orleans. Winners receive a wide range of publicity through various print media and trade shows. The awards have been a great motivation for employees of various companies and have helped increase the public’s ability to differentiate between professional and non-professional arboriculture in the community.

With these awards, the NAA promotes and recognizes the highest standards in the profession. The project nominated for an award should be one which has been completed in the last 12 months. The last date to enter is September 10, 1997.

Participation in the awards program is limited to NAA members only. For more information on membership or details on how to enter, call the National Arborist Association at 1-800-733-2622.
We Help Our Members Get to the Top...

And Stay There.

How? The National Arborist Association provides small and medium size tree care businesses with the same information and tools that large corporations have at their disposal.

Regulations, taxes, personnel—every facet of your business is changing. And we're there to help you manage this change. National Arborist Association members have access to the latest reports on industry trends, governmental issues, technology and more.

We'll help you get to the top and stay there with membership benefits such as:

- NAA Management Guidelines on Everything from Compensation to Compliance
- Professionally-Developed Advertising and Public Relations Materials
- Arborist Liability Insurance Programs
- Member Discounts on Safety Training Programs
- A Supportive Network of Knowledgeable, Experienced Peers
- Arborists Consulting with Professionals on a Toll-Free Hotline
- National Publicity Campaign to Raise Public Awareness of Member Companies
- An Entire Staff of Talented, Experienced People Working for You
- Free Company Listing on our World Wide Web Site
- The NAA Monthly Reporter—The Management Newsletter that Gets Read!

Put these benefits and more to work for you for just $150 for your first year's membership. Just a few cents a day gives you the resources you need to get on top and stay there.

Call us toll free today!

1-800-733-2622
NATIONAL ARBORIST ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 1094, Amherst, NH 03031
Fax: 603-672-2613; E-Mail: 76142.463@compuserve.com

Please circle 40 on Reader Service Card
It Takes a Village ... to Save a Tree

By Mark Garvin

When the City of Hot Springs, Ark., decided to build a new Civic Center to bolster its tourist business, a group of local residents became concerned. The downtown site in question was home to 15 mature water oaks that many felt gave the city its special character. The trees, some with 12- to 14-inch caliper trunks, were believed to be more than 100 years old.

The concern led members of the Hot Springs Council of Garden Clubs to call Jean Wallace, parks superintendent for the city. “People looked to me for advice, since I am past president of the Arkansas Urban Community Forestry Council,” says Wallace. “I was glad to offer advice, because trees are my passion, but as a city employee I was not comfortable in the leadership role” on a municipal project.

A private citizens’ group, called the Save the Trees Committee, was formed to raise enough money to move at least some of the trees. There were 15 at the site that were slated to come down, but an analysis showed that three had internal defects and probably wouldn’t survive transplanting.

Steve Clark, a consultant from Tennessee who was called in to look at the trees, speculated that some of them might have been planted by “Diamond Jo” Reynolds, a businessman who brought the first railroad to Hot Springs.

Wallace contacted several major tree-moving companies and found that their asking price was expensive for this ad-hoc group. “The group was given until October to raise $160,000 to move 12 trees,” recalls Wallace. “At that point, people wondered what to do next, because they knew they couldn’t raise that kind of money.”

In mid-September, the Hot Springs/Garland County Beautification Commission asked the city for $10,000 to “assess the value of the trees and supervise their removal.” Citing the “potential conflict in the scheduling of construction,” the city denied the request.

Not willing to give up, the Save the Trees Committee started raising money in a variety of ways. However, the people who had taken on the job of fund-raising

Does Your Community Have a Tree It Wants to Save?

The National Arborist Foundation (NAF) now provides networking resources and fundraising assistance to qualified local efforts to relocate significant trees in danger of destruction from road or building projects.

“We have long had the technical expertise in this country for moving trees of all sizes,” says NAF Director of Development, Martin Novom. “The professional tree moving services are also widely available. The missing part is often that community groups don’t think they can raise the money to pay for the tree moving costs. The NAF has developed the Tree Preservation Project to help communities gather those funds locally,” he continued.

Any community that has a significant tree can request and submit a Resource Request form. The NAF can then determine:

a) is this a tree of significant community value?
b) is there strong community interest in saving the tree?
c) is there a core group of individuals ready to create a “save a tree” project?
d) is there a public accessible site ready to accept the tree?

The NAF does not provide any funds for such projects, but rather provides the core group with the skills and techniques to marshal local publicity and raise the funds locally to pay for the relocation of an endangered tree. Assistance is limited and based on timeliness and the potential for strengthening community self-perception. Those interested may phone the National Arborist Foundation at 603-673-3311 to request a Resource Request form or further information.
benefit that came out of all this may have
up to $60,000 to $70,000."

As hard as the group worked, their late start meant that not all of the trees could be saved. While the group was still in the process of raising money, on December 17, bulldozers arrived at the site and started knocking down the trees. The largest ones were the first to fall.

"When seven trees were knocked over, we were all in shock," reports Wallace. "We were at our wits end after that, when people stepped forward and helped save the remaining trees."

On January 2, a virtual army of volunteers sprang into action to move the remaining trees.

With the largest ones gone, the volunteers and city employees concentrated on the remaining five—the smallest of the original group—that stood up to 35 feet high and weighed 25,000 pounds.

"The methods we used were kind of crude, because of the timing," admits Wallace. "Unfortunately, we didn’t have time to put burlap around the root ball. We had to move these trees, bare root and all. We had the material there and ready, but the bulldozers had already taken out seven trees and they were up there on the hillside, chomping at the bit. The trees had been thinned and trenched, but then we ran out of time. We used bulldozers to gently push the trees off some rock. A crane lifted them and placed them on a house-moving trailer. On a scale of 1-10, I would give the transplant methods a one and a half."

The five trees were moved six blocks into a new area the city is developing called Transportation Plaza. They now

...
Gloves In A Bottle is rapidly absorbed into the outer layer of skin, forming a matrix between the dead skin cells. The result is a one-way barrier that helps prevent most irritants and toxins from penetrating the skin. This barrier will allow the skin to breathe and perspire naturally, while it increases the retention of the skin's natural moisturizers. It protects against a wide range of irritants, including grease, solvents, thinners, paint, herbicides, pesticides, poison ivy, poison oak, industrial detergents and disinfectants, epoxies and glues, cement and lime, gasoline, diesel and most other chemicals. Gloves In A Bottle leaves no greasy or tacky feeling. All ingredients in Gloves In A Bottle are accepted as safe by the FDA and USDA, and are non toxic and hypoallergenic. Call 800-600-1881 for the store nearest you.

Vermeer introduces the TG-400A and TG-400AL with all-new thrown object restraint system. Powered by a 400 hp (298 kw) Caterpillar engine, both the 27 foot (8.2m) loader and non-loader models feature thrown object protection mechanisms. This system includes an all-new tub cover and rotor deflector that together reduce the quantity of thrown objects and the distance those objects can be ejected. Additional safety features include: the Falling Object Canopy, which is positioned directly above the ground-control panel; an enhanced load operator cab with .25 inch (.64cm) LEXAN windows and a front intrusion guard. Vermeer also offers a Tub Grinding Specialist Certification Program that allows participants to receive tub-grinding instruction and hands-on field training. For more information, contact National Sales Manager, Doug Hundt or International Sales Manager, Daryl Bouwkamp at 888-VERMEER (888-837-6337), or at www.vermeer.com.
New Ergodyne ProFlex 700 insoles modify work shoes and boots for personal anti-fatigue and shock absorption benefits. Made with PPT, a medical-grade soft-tissue supplement, ProFlex insoles absorb shock and impact, and dissipate pressure generated during walking. The Ultalux top covering pulls moisture away from skin to help guard against odor and bacteria buildup. Available in men’s shoe sizes seven through 14, and women’s sizes five through 10, ProFlex brand insoles can be trimmed with scissors for an exact fit. Accepted by the American Podiatric Medical Association. For more information, call 800-225-8238 or visit www.ergodyne.com.

Trees weakened by insects are prone to attack from disease organisms. In some cases, insects are vectors of diseases, such as the elm bark beetle in Dutch Elm Disease. Maugel’s Abasol solves two problems with a single treatment. This low-exposure, micro-injected product places long-lasting Abamectin insecticide and Fungisol fungicide in the tree’s vascular system. Debacarb, the active ingredient in Fungisol, is highly effective against Fusarium and Verticillium wilts, Ceratocystis and Cytospora cankers, and anthracnose of sycamore and ash. Abamectin provides season-long control of spider mites, leaf miners, elm leaf beetle, fall webworm and the sycamore lace bug. For a distributor near you, contact: J.J. Maugel Company, 5435 Peck Rd., Arcadia, CA 91006-5847. Phone: 818-444-1057.

Ladder Help-Mate is a new bracket fabricated from 3/4 inch ID, zinc-plated steel tubing with vinyl coating for padding on protective contact surfaces. It may be used singly or in pairs. Singly it serves as a seat, safety harness/retainer, wall stand-off, ground-level stabilizing base, ladder jack and a tool platform. In pairs, it teams up with two extension ladders as a staging support. Ladder Help-Mate has been laboratory tested to withstand 900-1,000 pounds. It fits either 'O' rung or 'D' rung type aluminum extension ladders. For further information contact: Burton Madison, Ladder-Help Mate Division, Embassy Studio, 3029 Grand, Kansas City, MO 64108. Phone: 816-531-1502.

You KAN-DU large or uprooted stumps
• Designed by tree men for tree men.
• Self propelled - Fast walk travel speed.
• Except for cutting wheel, all work done with hydraulics - including steering.
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• Will out perform all grinders on the market today in all around grinding.

Don't say you can't, say you KAN-DU!
Sustainable Tree Care Conference

From September 4-6, 1997, an intensive conference on soil fertility, tree health and insect/disease resistance will be held at the University of California at Los Angeles. The conference is presented by McCullough's Tree Care, ISA, Western Chapter and several other organizations.

Many arborists are becoming concerned about the continued use of certain kinds of chemicals in tree care. The purpose of the conference is to offer practicing arborists new information, ideas and procedures to solve tree and landscape problems—primarily through optimal nutrition.

The conference features 14 speakers who will share their thought and expertise on a variety of subjects. Below are some of the presenters and their topics:

- Neal Kinsey, a consultant and author of *Hands-On Agronomy: Soil Fertility in Tree Care*
- Bob Perry, owner of Perry Agricultural Laboratory: *Lab Procedures and Soil Fertility*
- Dr. Donald Marx, chairman and chief scientist of Plant Health Care, Inc.: Mycorrhizae, The Root's Best Friend
- Dr. Marion Moses, founder of the Pesticide Education Center: Pesticide Health Concerns
- Malcolm Beck, president of Gardenville Fertilizer Co.: Compost and Humus

For more information, call McCullough's Tree Care at 818-248-4425.

Calling All Cartoonists

American Arborist Supplies is looking for a few good comic strip artists for a national ad campaign. A contest is being held and prizes in the form of AAS gift certificates will be awarded. The search is open to anyone with amusing, yet simple, tree stories to tell via illustration. All ideas are welcome, and drawings need not be perfect to win. All ideas used will be awarded with prizes.

Send your most clever ideas and comics to: Lapchick Advertising, 82 Main Street, Yarmouth, ME 04096. Materials will be returned with SASE.

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**INDUSTRY NEWS**

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It is common sense that electric wires can be hazardous to anyone doing tree work. OSHA Standard 1910.331 states that only qualified employees can come within ten feet of an overhead energized electrical conductor. Plus, OSHA Standard 1910.269 clearly defines who is legally permitted to work within the ten foot boundary. Finally, ANSI Z133.1 dictates very specific training and operational requirements that all tree care personnel need to follow for safety's sake.

NAA Training Makes Sense. The National Arborist Association has exactly the training you need, whether you are a residential/commercial arborist or municipal arborist. It's our Electrical Hazards Awareness Program. EHAP offers a simple, economical and practical way to provide training needed by your employees. This program creates awareness of electrical hazards, which is absolutely essential for all tree workers. Plus, EHAP can be used by line clearance tree workers to supplement mandatory training requirements specified in 1910.269.

Like all NAA training materials, EHAP is easy to use and easy to apply. The program is self-paced, to put your employees in control of meeting their goals, and presented by you, to keep you in control of your business. For more information about EHAP, or any NAA program, or to order, call our toll-free hotline, or send/fax the coupon below.

National Arborist Association
P.O. Box 1094, Amherst, NH 03031-1094
Fax: (603) 672-2613

☐ YES I'm ready to provide my personnel with training in Electrical Hazards Awareness.

☐ I'M interested in the EHAP program. Please send additional information.

Send Me EHAP Programs for ______ enrollees, at $____ per enrollee. Enclosed is $____.

Bill my □ Mastercard □ Visa Number: __________ Exp. Date: ______

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Address: __________ Phone: __________

City: ______ State: ______ Zip: ______

☐ Please send me membership information.

*RETAIL: $135.00 per enrollee; MEMBER DISCOUNT PRICE: $85.00 per enrollee. If ordering, please include a list of enrollees.

Please circle 39 on Reader Service Card.
picture this: It's late fall, and you are reclining in the backyard enjoying a cup of coffee while drinking in the rhythms and colors of the season. As you sit appreciating the wonders of nature and the beauty of your carefully maintained yard, a leaf drops on your shoulder. What if that leaf had fallen from the live tree chair in which you are sitting?

If Richard Reames has his way, live tree chairs, coffee tables and gazebos will become a special touch, a piece of outdoor art, that completes the perfect landscape. His new book, *How to Grow a Chair*, is an introduction to using live, growing trees as a building medium. Would you enjoy a set of table and chairs in your backyard made with trees?

It sounds a bit strange to tell somebody, "My chair grew an inch this year." Reames' book tells you all about how you can grow a chair or create other living sculptures using trees. Written with co-author Barbara Delbol, the book explores the intriguing field known as Arborisculpture. It is dedicated to Axel Erlandson, the pioneer of this art. Sharing Erlandson's work with the public was Reames' principal motivation in writing the book.

"I wanted to give recognition to Erlandson, as his work is so unknown," says Reames, who made arborisculpture his career five years ago.

One of Erlandson's original works. The tree was moved to Gilroy, Calif., when the Tree Circus closed.

A chair and coffee table under cultivation at Arborsmith Studios.
"I asked the universe for the best possible career, and immediately I had the vision of Erlandson’s trees. Knowing no one else had done this, it was a great opportunity. With his trees, Erlandson opened up a number of possibilities as to what trees can do and how they can be used and shaped. He opened the door to a field of possibilities that he only started to scratch the surface of. I’ve only just begun to grasp the potential," he says.

Thirty years ago, Erlandson created “The Tree Circus,” a tourist attraction in Scotts Valley, Calif., featuring all of his work. Reames has done an incredible task of rediscovering Erlandson’s secrets through old photos and trial and error. He does not plan to open his own “Tree Circus” yet, because his works are young and his present location is not ideal to attract tourists.

"Axel strikes me as someone who really had an imagination, at a time when people were satisfied with a farmer’s life," relates Delbol. "He saw there was something more. Old photographs show him as a dour sort of a guy, but he couldn’t have possibly been that way. To create these wonderful arbor sculptures, you must have a great sense of humor about it, and as well as a skill level in botany and grafting.

“His imagination stretched beyond the not-so-practical to the visually stunning,” says Delbol with a sense of wonder. “He must have had an incredible imagination.
"I can make tree chairs and coffee tables for people who want them," explains Reames. "I made some two years ago that are done now. They seem to have grown well in the pot, so far, but they have a great potential to be really fine art works—even if they don't survive for more than 10 to 15 years."

If a tree chair were to die, Reames plans to cut the tree off at the soil line and bring it inside. "Then I would have chair without any glue or nails," he notes.

He has about 200 tree sculptures growing at his studio, most of which start in pots so he can plant them wherever he is commissioned. Some of his creations can't be contained in pots, however. On his property, he has planted 27 red alder trees in a 20-foot diameter circle. He believes the trees will grow together to the point where they will become a solid, circular wall. He hopes to see that in about seven years.

Reames has found red alder to be very flexible and best-suited for chairs. He is experimenting with 14 other species to see which survive and thrive the shaping process best. None of his works are completely finished, and most are still in the early stages, though he is most pleased with the peace sign he created in the trunk of a tree.

He completed two years of college study in horticulture and botany, but no school teaches this kind of artwork. He seems to have a true love for the shaping of the trees.

Delbol describes her co-author as "a creative, imaginative plant lover. He truly loves plants and tries to infuse those plants with his spirit as he sculpts them into various shapes. He has an enthusiasm for the various growth patterns and what can be achieved in terms of these unique sculptures. People have seen all these various techniques before, but they've never seen them in a form that is art."

Some might view Reames work as torture to trees. Delbol jokes, "Having been in the nursery business as long as I have, I think that the people would perhaps be a little anthropomorphic about trees. If they feel that way, they would never prune a shrub, shape a fruit tree or mow their lawn."

How to Grow a Chair is a nuts-and-bolts book that is meant to open people's imagination and help them to see there is more to plants than providing shade or fruit. There are so many other aspects of trees and shrubs, this is another aspect to which arborists could bring into their horticultural skills.

The book covers most of the techniques used in the field, with some good pictorial displays of works by Reames and Erlandson. Reames shares some of his imagination and ideas with readers, giving a good overview of the various tree growth and shaping techniques. This book covers how to grow and select trees, grafting, bending, framing and multiple planting to create living works of art. This is visionary art, an art form that embraces time. Live housing and furniture just may be the ultimate ecological solution.

Sachin Mohan is staff writer for TCI.

To obtain a copy of How to Grow a Chair, write to Richard Reames, 1607 Caves Camp Road, Williams, OR 97544. Phone: 514-846-7188; E-Mail: arborstu@magik.net. The cost is $18, including shipping and handling.
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WATCH FOR MORE INFORMATION IN UPCOMING ISSUES OF ARBORIST NEWS
All images courtesy of The Salt Lake Convention & Visitors Bureau
One of the costliest problems facing tree care businesses is fraud and theft by employees. According to insurance company data, business losses from theft exceed those from fire. Small businesses are especially susceptible because few are likely to have effective systems to monitor employees. Also, the close nature of small businesses means that employees are often treated like one of the family (who would never lie, cheat or steal). Don't assume that friends or even relatives can automatically be trusted. According to the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, fraud and other employee crimes cost more than $400 billion a year, or about $9 a day per employee. The Association also found that women are more honest than men.

Who steals? Everyone.

Why do they steal? To pay for a drug or gambling addiction, a personal financial setback, or revenge because a raise wasn't large enough. Maybe the employer made it too easy and they couldn't resist. Or, they are criminals and stealing is what they do.

How do you protect yourself?

1. Screen employees

Any number of companies specialize in pre-employment screening. Some offer tests to gauge an applicant's honesty through a series of questions. Others will check references and verify degrees, certification and past employment. (Experts report that the level of exaggeration and outright fraud or resumes is rising.) Drug testing can help weed out those who would steal to pay for their drugs — and head off a variety of other potential problems.

2. Establish financial and inventory controls

In a small tree care business, it might seem excessive to have more than one person involved with bookkeeping. But money, goods and equipment come in, and they go out. If the same person is in charge of reconciling both, the opportunities are endless. For example, an accounts-payable clerk could include his or her own telephone, gas and electric bills into the checks being written for the company. A payroll clerk could put his or her spouse on the payroll as a phantom employee. Owners should review the books at least quarterly.

3. Understand technology

Company owners should educate themselves about the computers in their offices and monitor them the same way they keep an eye on ropes and chain saws. One of your most valuable possessions just may be your list of customers and history of service.

Experts in theft prevention admit that no system is foolproof. People will steal, but hiring employees with proven work records — whom you have verified as honest — is a good start. One question for employers is whether the level of theft justifies the expense of insurance coverage or employment-screening consultants.

Fortunately, the tree care industry isn't regarded as high risk. Consider yourself lucky you aren't in the restaurant, liquor or retail business.
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<td>24. GFX Corporation</td>
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<td>25. Green Manufacturing Inc.</td>
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<td>27. The Hartford</td>
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<td>28. Hodges Manufacturing Co., Inc.</td>
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<td>29. Husqvarna Forest &amp; Garden Company</td>
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<td>30. International Society of Arboriculture</td>
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<td>31. Kan-Du Stumpers</td>
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<td>32. Key Knife, Inc.</td>
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<td>33. Kramer Equipment Company, Inc.</td>
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<td>34. Leonardi Teeth/Simonds Industries</td>
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<td>35. Lewis Utility Truck Sales, Inc.</td>
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<td>46. Peavey Manufacturing Company</td>
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<td>47. Pete Mainka Enterprises, Inc.</td>
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<td>48. Rapco Industries Inc.</td>
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<td>49. SavATree</td>
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<td>50. Schodorf Truck Body &amp; Equip. Company</td>
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<td>51. Sharp Edge, Inc.</td>
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<td>52. Sherrill, Inc.</td>
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<td>53. Shigo &amp; Trees, Associates</td>
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<td>54. Shindaiwa, Inc</td>
<td>Inside Back Cover</td>
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<td>55. Simon-Telelect, Inc.</td>
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<td>56. Simon-Telelect, Inc.</td>
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<td>57. Southco Industries, Inc.</td>
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<td>58. Southeastern Equipment Company</td>
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<td>62. Time Manufacturing Company</td>
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<td>63. Tree Moving Network (TMN)</td>
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<td>67. Yale Cordage Inc</td>
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<td>68. Zenith Cutter Company</td>
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* Please circle this number on the Reader Service Card for more information.
The tragic fate that befell the tree in these photographs was the result of treatments that amount to a torturously sad and preventable outrage.

In the beginning, the mature bur oak pictured here was a magnificent, open-grown type specimen of a rugged species with legendary landscape character. The observations that follow are of a sequence of events, the specific details of which are unknown. From what is know of the current condition of this tree—and the treatments it suffered—a cause-and-effect relationship is surmised.

The tree was apparently valued as an asset to the property by its owners who as good stewards of a valuable resource thought it should be pruned. However, they were not armed against the uninformed, or ill-informed, “professionals” who proposed to trim it. In keeping with archaic tradition, the tree was “thinned” to reduce weight on heavy limbs and to reduce the “sail effect” of the canopy in the wind. To accomplish these objectives, the tree was egregiously over-trimmed. Large volumes of woody vegetation—and with it a large proportion of the tree’s ability to capture and store life-giving energy—was summarily removed.

As insurance actuaries have learned, the subsequent probability of storm damage to the tree, and as a result the house, was increased instead of reduced. More important, however, is the fact that old trees like this cannot make up for such an extensive loss of food storage and productive capacity. As starvation inevitably sets in, major branches begin to die back dramatically. An opportunistic insect called the two-lined chestnut borer was found in the dying branches, but that was because they lacked sufficient resources to defend themselves from the attack of even such a weak invader.

At this point, the ill-informed professional crossed the border all the way into a state of ignorance. Apparently, he must have hoped that what life remained in some of the major structural branches would flow into the dead ones if they were all cut back at the same length. As you can see, the tree is now a very large “hatrack” burning up the last of its stored reserves in a vain attempt to stay alive. It will soon be completely dead, the sad victim of well-intended ignorance.

This same fate need not befall our invaluable mature trees if we take just a moment to understand them, even if only in a small way. It is imprudent to prune mature trees by the pound, where the quality of the job is measured by the size of the brush pile when we are finished. There is no benefit to making sure the trees look pruned. In fact, the best maintenance practices result in safe and healthy trees that meet both our practical and aesthetic needs. Judicious pruning when indicated, supplemental water during periods of dry weather and occasional fertilization are all important practices that lead to safe, healthy and attractive trees.

Invaluable mature trees deserve the services of competent professional arborists. Professionals will not be found going door to door and offering “today only” bargains. They will not use climbing spikes, recommend topping trees or rush to suggest removal for healthy trees. They will have technically competent personnel and field staff who are certified by the International Society of Arboriculture. Customers have every right to expect prompt, courteous service from professionals who can provide current insurance certificates for automobile liability, property damage, personal injury and workers’ compensation. Customers should also be able to expect a wide range of tree care services, including pruning, fertilizing, structural-support systems, and disease and insect management. Highly qualified professionals are rarely the source of the lowest bids. Our irreplaceable trees deserve the best.

Mark Stennes is a plant pathologist with Top Notch Treecare in St. Louis Park, Minn.

Do you have a story for From the Field? TCI will pay $100 for published articles. Submissions become the property of TCI and are subject to editing for grammar, style and length. Entries must include the name of a company and a contact person or they will not be considered for publication.
Mike Whitsell, Two W Tree Service
Rochester, New York

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