



# A PROPERTY MANAGER'S GUIDE TO HIRING THE RIGHT LANDSCAPE COMPANY





# Table of Contents

<b>About the Artist</b>	Page 3
<b>The Enormous Job of Managing Your Landscape</b>	Page 4
Year-Round Work, Too Many Providers	Page 5
Value vs. Price- What the Bidding Process Leaves Out	Page 7
Service You Can Count On, But Can You Really?	Page 8
<b>A Solution that Makes Sense</b>	Page 9
Dependability You Can Always Trust	Page 10
Expert Service That Can't Be Beat	Page 11
Value vs. Price: Determining the True Cost of Service	Page 13
<b>Why Choose Twin Oaks Landscape?</b>	Page 15

## About the Artist



Chris Speen is the owner and General Manager of Twin Oaks Landscape, a full-service lawn and landscaping company serving Ann Arbor, Michigan and its' surrounding regions. With more than 20 years of experience in the landscape industry, Chris shares a passion for creating and maintaining beautiful outdoor living environments. He is committed to providing reliable landscape services to residential and commercial clients through his experience, adaptability and loyalty, and he provides them with the education necessary to understand and help maintain their landscaping beauty in the future.



# The Enormous Job of Managing Your Landscape

The job of a property manager is a tough one. Your job responsibilities are endless and fall in a wide range of categories. Not only do you have to make sure the property is looking its best at all times, but you also must make sure that the residents are pleased with, and able to enjoy, their surroundings. As soon as one person is unhappy, you hear about it. If it were as simple as planting a few flowers and trimming some hedges, the job would be relatively stress-free. But we all know that the job often requires more than one property manager can handle alone. The obvious solution is to hire that work out. That's when the professionals come in.

There are numerous landscape companies around that can help you get the job done. Some focus on the simple yard maintenance; others offer far more service options. It may be tempting to think that, in the end, they're all pretty much the same. But the truth is, they aren't. But too often, before you can discover that for yourself, you run into a few problems along the way.

**1**

**YOU HAVE YEAR-ROUND WORK; NOT ALL COMPANIES OFFER YEAR-ROUND SERVICES.**

**2**

**THE BID PROCESS CAN BE COMPLICATED, BUT REMAINS INSUFFICIENT.**

**3**

**VALUE AND PRICE DO NOT MEAN THE SAME THING.**

**4**

**CAN YOU REALLY RELY ON THE COMPANIES YOU HIRE WHEN IT MATTERS THE MOST?**



These problems, along with countless others, make the very real task of getting the job done when it needs to even more difficult.



## Year-Round Work, Too Many Providers

From January to December, the workload never ends. Many of these jobs are too much for a single property manager to handle alone. So, the obvious answer is to hire the work out to the experts to get it done. You'd think that this would be simple enough, but you know that it's not that simple. Not every company offers year-round services. This means that you might end up having multiple companies managing several different aspects of your landscaping needs. This can cause many problems that you're left to handle.



**Time is money.** You know that you only have so many hours in a day to get the work done. But, when you have to spend countless hours combing through resumes and bids, or making cold calls getting price quotes, you end wasting valuable time that could be spent on more important things.

**Communication becomes more difficult.** Keeping track of which companies are performing which duties often requires excess paperwork, numerous phone calls, and piles of invoices and work orders that must be sorted through. How many times have you spent all day playing phone tag with multiple landscape businesses, only to have a work order not be completed in a timely manner? How many times have you had to spend dealing with invoice errors or incomplete services from multiple companies? When you must outsource the work to multiple companies, the mistakes multiply as well.







**Overlapping schedules of multiple companies can cause problems.** Have you ever found that it can be challenging coordinating schedules with multiple landscaping companies for work orders? When certain seasons tend to be busier than others, finding the right time to get the work done can be a challenge. Are companies squeezing you in on a Saturday afternoon? Are multiple crews from various companies getting in each others' way on the job? Sometimes, having too many hands on the job can be a bad thing.

**LOW QUALITY**

**Cheap prices usually mean low quality work.** Simply hiring the least expensive company doesn't mean that you're going to get a great deal for your money. And when you're let down by poor quality work from numerous companies

performing various jobs, you're stuck back at the beginning, combing through price quotes over and over again throughout the year.

**A long-standing working relationship is hard to find.** You may have discovered that you spend so much time in between landscape companies that you have little time left to build longstanding working relationships with the providers themselves. This increases the chances of communication errors and unsatisfactory results that you'll regret later on down the line.





# Value vs. Price - What the Bidding Process Leaves Out

The terms *value* and *price* are widely thrown around in the service industry. While often used interchangeably, they actually have very different meanings. One refers to the sheer numbers; bottom line, what's the work going to cost. The other offers a more detailed look at what work will be done, the overall level of experience and service to expect. When you go through the bid process to hire a landscaper for your property, you might accept a number of bids and ultimately decide on the cheapest one. After all, you want to get the best deal for your money. Who wouldn't? If you decide to hire the landscaping company with the lowest initial cost, you will save some money upfront on your work, which seems great. But, when it comes down to the quality of your landscaping work, you may have already found that overlooking value in lieu of price alone could be more expensive than you'd think.

Here are a few facts to consider:

- 1** Bids and price quotes don't tell you the most important information about the company you're hiring. They only give you a number to consider.
- 2** Completing a job the right way requires far more than just money. A bid doesn't usually tell you about a company's work history or level of experience, a detailed breakdown of all services provided, or their reliability with past and present clients.
- 3** **VALUE** and **PRICE** have different meanings. When you look at a bid or a price quote, you only see one bit of information to consider. But the value of the work provided is determined by a number of factors, few of which have anything to do directly with price. Do you have to spend countless hours making follow-up phone calls because a landscaper is unreliable? What are the long-term benefits of choosing this company over another? Does the company hire workers who are experienced and have the training to properly get your difficult jobs done right, the first time? You might save a few bucks up front, but your time, energy, and patience may be taken advantage of along the way.





## Service You Can Count On, But Can You Really?

One of the ongoing challenges common among property managers is the struggle to find dependable, qualified contractors that can be counted on for every job, every time. When emergency situations arise, property managers like yourself don't have the time or patience to deal with a service that won't return your phone calls or answer emails right away, or get the work done the right way, right away.

- Do their crews show up **LATE** on the job?
- Do they have a **HIGH TURNOVER RATE** of seasonal employees who are not thoroughly trained or certified to get the job done right?
- Does the company you're entrusting your property to clearly and effectively **COMMUNICATE** with you their questions and concerns throughout the process? Do they perform courtesy care calls to ensure you're fully satisfied with your service, or do they avoid speaking with you except via invoice?
- Do they have strong, trained **MANAGERS** on every job site making sure that every project is completed on time and exceeding your expectations?
- Is your landscaping company (or companies) willing to attend your community board meetings **FREE OF CHARGE** to ensure that all your residents are satisfied and their voices are heard?

These are all questions you should regularly be asking yourself. You need a company that you can trust time and time again to perform the best work possible. You deserve it, and your residents expect it.



## A Solution That Makes Sense



When the time comes to look for a new landscape management company, you have a few choices in front of you. You can choose the cheapest company on the market, and save your residents a few bucks. They might be extremely thankful. Or, in the end, they might not be either. You might also create a piecemeal strategy where you have multiple companies performing various tasks around the community. This might not be a cost saver, however, and does not guarantee the highest quality work either. Or, you can spend a little extra time in research in order to determine which company will offer you the highest quality service at a fair price. You may spend a little extra money up front, but service and experience will prove well worth it in the end.

**WHAT YOU NEED IS A SOLUTION THAT  
MAKES SENSE FOR YOUR NEEDS!**



# Dependability You Can Always Trust

If you're in the process of finding a landscape management company to handle your property design and upkeep, reliability and dependability are probably on the forefront of what you're looking for. You want to work with a company that you can trust 100 percent of the time. If you're looking for service that you can count on, then it's important to look for a company that employs highly trained experts in various fields including Horticulture, Bricklaying, Landscape Design, and engineering to ensure superior quality work on every job. Landscape companies that are staffed with true experts within the Green Industry can help provide their clients with a high level of confidence in knowing that their pros truly do know the best solutions for their landscape management needs, and how to effectively make those solutions a reality.

Have you had a bad past experience working with a landscape company that was:

- **ALWAYS LATE TO THE JOB SITE**
- **FREQUENTLY RUNNING BEHIND SCHEDULE**
- **PERFORMING SUB-PAR QUALITY WORK**
- **MODIFYING WORK ORDER AGREEMENTS WITHOUT CONSENT**



These are just a few of the signs of a half-rate landscape company. The best of the best have a longstanding history of dependability, professionalism, and attention to detail that shines through every landscape project they handle. The solution to finding a dependable landscaping company is to ask prospective companies about their past work history, possible client references, and their best organizational practices for scheduling, processing, and managing their clients. How many crews do they employ to meet client needs? A company that isn't prepared to answer these questions up front is the wrong company to care for your landscape.



## Expert Service That Can't Be Beat



With many landscaping companies, the cost of service is directly related to their employees' level of experience. With these companies, having trees or shrubs pruned is minimized to simply trimming them back. However, when you hire true professionals, these projects are managed by experienced, highly trained Horticulturalists who will guarantee that the projects are completed in the proper way at the best time. Did you know that there is a right way and a wrong way to prune a bush, and that size and type can impact when a bush should be pruned? A highly trained horticulturalist does, and will make sure your landscape looks beautiful year round.

Brick pavers, landscape designers and contractors, irrigation specialist, and drainage solution pros will guarantee that every project is completed to meet or exceed client expectations and industry standards every time. These are the types of trained professionals who understand your vision and are committed to helping it become a reality through beautiful landscapes you can be proud of day after day.



If you want to guarantee that you're getting the highest level of service and commitment on every project, then it's important to make sure that the best is actually on the job. Be sure to:



**VERIFY THEIR LICENSES  
AND CERTIFICATIONS**



**LEARN WHAT TYPES OF GREEN INDUSTRY  
PROFESSIONALS ARE EMPLOYED OR  
CONTRACTED BY THE COMPANY**



**ASK HOW THEIR  
INDIVIDUAL CREWS  
ARE MANAGED ON  
EACH JOB**



**ASK IF THEY ARE  
INSURED, AND WHAT  
GUARANTEE DOES  
THIS MEAN FOR YOU**



**INQUIRE ABOUT THEIR SAFETY STANDARDS AND PRACTICES ON THE JOB**

On paper, it might seem like most landscaping companies are the same, but when it comes down to it, some simply stand out above the rest. These are the true professionals that provide exceptional service and craftsmanship on every project, providing a one-of-a-kind experience that can't be beat by the other guys.

# Value vs. Price: Determining the True Cost of Service

We've previously laid out the fact that value and price do not mean the same thing. However, the terms often get confusing when it comes to hiring a landscaping company. Your natural instinct may be to go with the cheapest company available in the area. After all, you'll get the job done and save some money in the process. But when comparing landscape management companies on paper, it's important to get a true apples-to-apples comparison of the work provided to get a true understanding of who's right for the job.

For a simple solution for getting a true comparison on value vs. price, consider the following:



## **Full Service Landscaping**

Is the company a full-service landscape company that offers year round services that work together to create and manage healthy, beautiful looking landscapes as part of a comprehensive plan? When you hire one company that handles every aspect of your landscaping needs, you can be sure that the work will be uniform and complementary. No single project will outshine the rest because the work is exceptional across the board.

## **A Greater Degree of Work**

When doing an apples-to-apples comparison of the landscaping services provided by each company, do a side-by-side comparison of exactly what each service consists of. That means, does one company offer extra treatment applications as standard (compared to the others)? Does one company offer greater, more consistent and clear communication through reports and emails than their competitors? Is each company willing to make additional visits to the property, even when landscaping isn't being done, to ensure board member or resident satisfaction? Does one company offer additional services as part of a standard package that might cost extra with a competitor?





## **Expert Level Training**

How experienced are the managers and project leaders that would be working on your property? What education and training backs up the work they do? Do they truly have the experience and knowledge to help take your vision and turn it into a reality? You shouldn't have to worry about minimally trained laborers ruining your property with low quality, unprofessional work. Ask to see a list of their licenses, certifications, and credentials. The best companies will be ready and willing to provide this information at any time.

## **Clear, Effective Communication**

Clear communication between a property manager and a landscaping company is always essential to ensure that the work is done on time, the right way, and to the client's expectations. You shouldn't have to play phone tag with your landscaper, waiting to speak with them directly about an emergency or job request. High-level service may even include attendance at board meetings at no extra charge to you, in order to ensure that the work being provided is meeting your expectations. You shouldn't have to wonder when your lawn will get mowed in case of inclement weather; you shouldn't have to be surprised when invoices arrive unexpectedly. When you and your landscape management company clearly communicate with each other and understand the expectations from the start, it can help to prevent mistakes and misunderstandings from ever arising later on down the road.

Simply put, level of service matters. Period. Simply hiring a company based off of a single set of price quotes could rob you of your peace of mind and your residents' satisfaction if you're not careful. Take time to consider all factors before making a decision on a landscaping company. Be sure that you're truly getting an apples-to-apples comparison of the services you'll be receiving from each company.



## Why Choose Twin Oaks Landscape?



Time and time again, project managers come to us, thankful for the high quality, professional service that we provide year after year. We pride ourselves in offering a degree and depth of service that simply can't be beat by many of our competitors. Many of our clients have come to us **AFTER** being disappointed by "the other guys." Unfortunately, they experienced firsthand that cheap prices often mean poor service and low quality work.

We don't want you to make the same mistakes that they did in the past. We truly believe that when you partner with Twin Oaks Landscape, you'll experience a degree of service and expertise that isn't matched by our competitors. As a state and nationally recognized landscape service provider, we pride ourselves in the fine work we do, and believe that your property deserves the best care possible. Our goal is to be the ones that make that happen. We truly do cater to you.



At Twin Oaks Landscape...

***“We focus on your landscape so you can focus on what matters.”***

Here’s what one of our longtime, satisfied clients has to say:

*“I have worked in the Condominium Management industry for more than twenty years, and I have worked with dozens of different landscape firms throughout that time. I found Twin Oaks to be one of the best in the industry. They are prompt and thorough when it comes to communication and response time; they provide exceptional service, increase property values, and manager peace of mind when it comes to follow through. I highly recommend them to anyone looking for more than just cost when it comes to choosing a landscape firm.”*

***- Mariah Sroka, CMCA, AMS, PCAM  
Community Manager  
Select Community Management***



On paper, it may look like Twin Oaks Landscape is a little more expensive than the other guys. However, if you take the time to do an apples-to-apples comparison to other area landscape companies, we're confident that you'll find a level of service and work offered by our highly trained Green Industry professionals that won't be beat by our competitors. As a fully licensed and certified landscape management company that employs professional landscape designers and contractors, engineers, brick pavers, and a trained horticulturalist, we are ready to handle any project, no matter how large or small, with the care and attention you expect and deserve.

Contact us today at **734.213.6911**, or find us online at **[twinoakslandscape.biz](http://twinoakslandscape.biz)** to learn more about our full range of landscaping and drainage solutions, and how Twin Oaks can be the ideal solution for your property's landscaping needs.



# TWIN OAKS

## LANDSCAPE