



# Lawn & Landscape Technology Conference: Post-Show Report

This year we witnessed the inaugural Lawn & Landscape Technology Conference which is anticipated to be one of the leading software and technology events for the green industry. There were huge opportunities to learn from industry professionals who have successfully integrated software and technology into their organizations to become more connected and cutting edge.

The Lawn & Landscape Technology Conference was unique in the sense that it had a strong theme and was laser-focused on addressing topics of interest for the landscape companies in attendance. The attendees were all decision-makers who came with a mission to fulfill their responsibility of doing more research on the various technology companies that might suit their needs. In terms of interesting technology, we saw robotic mower companies, a zero-turn ride-on mower, completely electrically powered with no gas motor in it; impressive for a sizable piece of equipment.

Speaking of technology, software was the dominant supplier at the show. It was clear that winning businesses are using end-to-end operating systems with faster implementation processes, tighter out-of-the-box integrations and more cohesive ecosystems. Technology companies are competing with themselves to make sure they stay relevant and in line with industry trends and requirements. One of the questions asked here is, how good are landscape software technology companies at building custom integrations to match the future system integrations that landscape companies are predicted to have? What is the roadmap around this upcoming industry trend? And most importantly, how are landscape companies dealing with this change?

## The Importance of Being Integrated

The importance of integrations was essentially the overall feel, and this was echoed in the sessions at the conference; there was even talk around entering the fourth industrial revolution. Gabe Zichermann, an author and keynote speaker, delivered the keynote address at Lawn & Landscape's Technology Conference. His speech, titled, "The Future of Technology is People," updated attendees on the current state of technology. He talked about how changing technology was inevitable, and posed the question, "what will companies do strategically to encounter this industrial revolution?"



**We don't yet have a single unifying technology that we can point to and say that is the defining area of our revolution**

**- Gabe Zichermann**

Jason Cromley, the founder of Hidden Creek Landscaping, told attendees at the Lawn & Landscape Technology Conference that a small software program's lifespan is between six to eight years, and a larger program lasts 12-14 years. He talked about the importance of implementing technology and the hurdles that companies could potentially face with software implementation. The highlight of Cromley's presentation was essentially pointing toward how to use data and analytics to interpret the value of software implementation, and how companies should start listing their goals for software requirements regularly.

## Implementation Challenges

This, again, was a significant theme at the conference. It was discussed at many of the keynotes and presentations that companies shouldn't expect a smooth transition when switching from



Keynote speaker Gabe Zichermann gives his address on "The Future of Technology is People" at the Lawn and Landscape Technology Conference.

**Photo by Lawn & Landscape**

one system to another. This could be transitioning from manual, paper-based processes to automation, or even going from legacy software to more advanced technologies.

One of DynaSCAPE's most valued clients, Leslie Allebach from The Greenskeeper, talked about how she was able to implement our business management software, Manage360; some of the challenges she faced were around people.

She had people in her company of 30+ years who had been employed at The Greenskeeper since the beginning. For some, adopting a new piece of technology was not an easy feat. She spoke about a lot of the tasks they had to do in order to successfully implement software. They had pre-set office processes in place and implementing software doesn't always line up with business processes and procedures. They took the time to wipe the slate clean and create new processes as they were implementing the software; it was really encouraging to see they had the foresight at the time to do that.



Leslie Allebach of The Greenskeeper giving her presentation at the Lawn & Landscape Technology Conference.

Photo by Lawn & Landscape

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### **The Impact On People**

People are really what make up an organization. Some embrace change because they understand it's necessary to move the business forward; others operate on the "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" mentality. This is where strong leadership comes into play.

Each person in the company needs to not only understand their role in the changes, but truly own and be accountable for it. The question is, how do you motivate someone to adopt change when they've been stuck in their ways for such a long time? The truth is most people aren't afraid of the change itself, but more so of the work it takes to make that change.

Focusing on the benefits and outcomes of these changes can help your team get through the time

and effort it takes to implement new processes. Another way of looking at it is that people need to be needed in their community; if your people feel like they're contributing to the bigger picture, they might be more inclined to adopt the changes you're making.

### **Profitability And Culture**

Justin White, the CEO of K&D Landscaping in California's Bay Area, talked about profitability. He brought up an interesting perspective of combining culture and profitability, and how one leads to the other.

The question was, without a proper software system, how do you capture and measure these metrics? They use a couple of different software systems, of one is to help them manage their culture. This is a look into the future and interesting that there is a software application to measure something as intangible as culture.

In terms of tangible metrics, they rely on DynaSCAPE's landscape business management software, Manage360, throughout the entirety of their business to dial in their profit. Over the last three seasons, their actual profit has been within 1% of what they have budgeted for the entire year. They've made the profit that they budgeted at the beginning of the year, just by using Manage360 and sticking to their processes that is within the software.

### **Big Announcements at the Show**

DynaSCAPE and LandscapeHub announced a new partnership between the two companies to offer landscapers and other green industry professionals an automated sync between DynaSCAPE's business management software and LandscapeHub's wholesale management platform.

This integration of an end-to-end business management solution with a centralized order procurement process means landscapers and green industry professionals can spend more time generating real business and less time trying to figure out where they're going to get the plants and materials for the job.

## **The Future of Integrated Software for the Landscape Industry**

Many software companies are recognizing the importance of out-of-the-box integration offerings with their software solution(s) as an integral competitive feature.

As businesses grow, the competitive landscape grows, hence it is up to product owners to find new ways to differentiate their solutions. The average company wants to move away from using software that is in a silo. They recognize the value of speed to service and reducing the margin of error to stay relevant. At present, most landscape business management solutions have lite to medium CRM capabilities. We are beginning to sense the appetite for companies looking to connect to more robust CRMs like HubSpot and Salesforce.

Many businesses use multiple software applica-

tions in their landscape operations, and landscape businesses don't just have an estimating software that translates to job management and crew tracking; they have a design application, they have a CRM that they're using outside of their landscape software and estimating.

We can also anticipate and look forward to integrations with larger ERP systems like NetSuite and Dynamics 365 as companies may start outgrowing QuickBooks. It may be time to invest in that API and make these custom integrations as easy as possible so they can be packaged as an all-in-one solution.

What about design? It makes complete sense that your design product should be tightly integrated with your business management software. DynaSCAPE is one of the only companies that already has that as part of their product offering.

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## **About DynaSCAPE**

DynaSCAPE is a boutique software company specializing in design and business management software solutions for landscape professionals. For more than 20 years we've been an industry leader in CAD-based design solutions with our software being taught in over 150 schools across North America. Since our humble beginnings in 1998, we've expanded our design suite of software to include DS|Color and DS|Sketch3D.

Recognizing the green industry's need for a comprehensive business management system, our team enlisted the expertise of top landscape professionals and set to work on building Manage360 with streamlined workflows to align with industry best practices.