

GreenSheet



RUPPERT
LANDSCAPE

Employee Newsletter

1st Quarter 2015

Creating a Standout Culture

By Phil Key



When we get together for Management Development Day(s), the time we spend is teeming with information. This year was no exception as we dug into the

specifics of organizing our daily routines, becoming better communicators, watching the pennies with our purchasing decisions, sequencing tasks for maximum jobsite efficiency, and providing better customer service...just to name a few topics we covered. Our theme this year was focused on how each one of us can do our part to incrementally improve our organization to help us become a standout organization. Keynote speaker Jason Jennings, researcher and author of several business and leadership books including *Think Big, Act Small* and *The Reinventors: How Extraordinary Companies Pursue Radical Continuous Change*, provided many tips for our team on how to continue developing a strong

culture that supports speed, innovation and growth. A few of the key points that are a hallmark of companies with strong culture include:

- **Focus on a larger sense of purpose**—By connecting to the non-financial reason of why you're doing what you're doing, it enables your team to have a greater connection to your organization's values. "When you show people the why of what you're doing, they will figure out the how," said Jennings. An example he provided was from the Grainger Corporation and how they have linked their construction related products such as steel toe boots with their overarching belief that their company exists so that people can get their work done safely.
- **Constant growth**—Another hallmark of a strong company culture is that they

are driven to constantly grow. Growth provides opportunity for promotions and raises internally and also helps to attract and keep the right people. The desire to grow forces a company to stay ahead of its customers by asking the question "what else can we do for you?" and it allows for reinvestment in the business and in the community.

- **Embrace change**—By letting go of the status quo and the ego around doing what has always been done, an organization is better able to deal with change. By eliminating the peripheral noise, a company creates a space where it can be more focused than its rivals, which ultimately leads to innovation and growth.
- **Make lots of small bets**—Instead of thinking about implementing new ideas and change in large chunks, making a lot of smaller, incremental bets.

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Rules for Making Small Bets

1. No "skunking" of bad ideas. This means that all ideas must be heard out and those listening are not allowed to say "this idea stinks."
2. Everyone gets acknowledged for bringing an idea to the table.
3. If something fails, it fails fast and then move on.
4. Don't punish people whose ideas failed.



Tim Baskerville provides his state of the branch update for day 1 of Management Development Day.

“A man wrapped up in himself makes a very small bundle.” ~ Benjamin Franklin

Corporate and Ruppert Properties raised approximately one-third of the total \$325,000 donated as part of the Bright Stars Campaign benefiting Easter Seals. Our organization has had a long-standing relationship with Easter Seals and this year **Craig Ruppert (CEO)**, **Bill Meissner (President, Ruppert Properties)**, and **John Harich (LAM Branch Manager)** participated in the event serving respectively as Co-Chair, Executive VIP, and Host VIP. This campaign, comprised of a select group of professionals and business leaders working together to raise funds, helps to make the future brighter for people with disabilities. In conjunction with being VIP partners, nearly 200 of our Ruppert employees and their families were treated to an exclusive performance of the Ringling Bros & Barnum & Bailey Circus on Wednesday, March 18th.



From L to R: Jack Ruppert (ALM Branch Manager), Craig Ruppert (CEO), Major General Carl McNair (Founding member of Bright Stars), Lisa Reeves (President & CEO of Easter Seals Serving DC/MD/VA)

Syed Ali, Jimmy Watson, and Jeff Baggett (GAM) attended a silent auction fundraiser at the Elaine Clark Center Exceptional Evening event on March 7, 2015. All proceeds went to the Elaine Clark Center, which works to enable children of all abilities to become confident and contributing citizens of the community through an innovative model of education, therapeutic play, and experiential opportunities.



One of the ways that we work to continuously improve our business is through innovation. Finding better ways to get something done—whether through new actions, systems or technology—helps us grow. That concept, when applied to safety, is just as important. While it's vital to dissect what happened when we have an incident, it's perhaps even more important that we focus on areas before we experience an

issue so that we can avoid an accident or an injury. We are fortunate to have some very experienced team members helping to round out our safety effort with the addition of **Joe Ketterer** (Field Efficiency Manager) and **Kory Beidler** (Senior Employee Development Manager) and the shifting of **Ken Thompson** to Director of Quality & Efficiency. What these extra eyes and ears on the ground are conveying is helping us to get a better handle on where our challenges lie and how we can make the necessary adjustments and relay potential hazards to our team before they become a problem. Here are a few areas where we would like to see additional focus as we head into our traditionally busy spring season:

- **Avoid sprains and strains**—One of the best ways to avoid an issue is to size up a job. Minimize the amount of lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling or carrying you're doing and get help when a load is heavy or awkward. During mulching season, we often use trash cans to move mulch around on a jobsite. When doing so, be sure the trash can is the proper size with an appropriate amount of mulch so it's not too heavy. Also, when you have to lift something, use your legs not your back and hold what you are lifting close to your body to provide more stability and minimize strain.
- **Use edging equipment as designed**—Before using an edger or re-definer, check the area and remove objects that could be thrown then continue to watch the discharge direction carefully so it's directed away from people, pets, windows, cars, etc. Work with the upper body turned toward the unit, walking forward while pulling the unit toward you. Never push the unit. Always watch where you are walking—never walk backwards.
- **Never jump onto or off of equipment**—When climbing onto or off of heavy equipment, always use the Three-Point System. This means that three limbs are in contact with the vehicle at all times; either two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand. The Three-Point System creates maximum stability and support, thereby reducing the likelihood of slipping and falling.
- **Look for hazards to avoid slipping/tripping**—Before beginning any task, do a visual inspection of the area where you are working to monitor conditions and familiarize yourself and your team with problems, potential problems or corrective measures. By making a mental note of where potential tripping hazards are (as well as other potential safety issues) you can minimize the chances that you or a team member will fall or trip.

As we head into spring, be sure to do your part to help us become a safer organization!

Ruppert Participates in The National Collegiate Landscape Competition



Alex Brooks Leads Session

Ruppert Landscape participated in The National Collegiate Landscape Competition (formally known as Student Careers Day) at the North Carolina State University from March 12th to March 15th. This program is hosted by the National Association of Landscape Professionals (formally known as PLANET) each year and is a three-day event for students enrolled in horticulture programs from colleges across the country. During this event, students have the opportunity to meet prospective employers and compete in several events that are related to the skills needed for a career in the industry. This year, there were almost 800 students in attendance from over 60 schools.



Stephanie Carrillo with student

A small team of Ruppert employees represented the company during the event, and together they hosted a faculty forum lunch, led a maintenance cost estimating workshop, and sponsored two competitive events as lead sponsors (Business Management and Maintenance Cost Estimating). Each event focused on skillsets important to the landscape industry, including cost and accounting methods and estimating bid prices on maintenance

contracts. At the conclusion of the three-day event, there was an awards ceremony to congratulate the top three students in the two competitive events. The company also awarded a \$1000 Ruppert Landscape Company Scholarship to Victoria Bolden of Penn State University.

In addition to participating in Student Career Days, we hosted a facility tour of our Raleigh branch for three schools. Participating in these events provides students a chance to ask questions about a career in the green industry, and affords organizations like Ruppert an opportunity to meet some of the up and comers who could be the next generation of leaders in our company. A special thanks goes out to the National Association of Landscape Professionals for hosting the event and to the following employees for representing Ruppert Landscape: **Eric Blevins (RAM), Jon Clifton (RAM), DJ Lloyd (BAM), Andy Pedonti (RAM), Jay Long (CORP), Ryan Schupp (BAM), Tim Baskerville (NCL), Joe Ketterer (CORP), Alex Brooks (FOM), Stephanie Carrillo (NCL), Kory Beidler (CORP), Josh Richardson (RAM), Jack Ruppert (ALM).**

Ruppert Announces Changes to 401K Plan



By Craig Ruppert



At our recent Management Development Days interactive town hall session, we discussed that Ruppert was going to better encourage employees to take advantage of our available 401(k) plan and prepare (save) for their future. During that discussion, we talked about the fact that most people know the right thing to do is to save for the future, that it was difficult to get started. Our new auto-enrollment will help many people who are not in the plan to take that first step. Ruppert's 401(k) plan is a great tool to help save for retirement, but is currently underutilized. An important change affecting all employees is that we are adjusting our philosophy to "Opt Out" instead of our current "Opt In". Here's what you need to know:

- **Auto-enrollment begins May 15th for ALL employees:**
 - If you are currently using the 401(k) plan, your current withholding will not change.
 - All eligible employees will have 2% of their salary withheld into the 401(k) plan each pay period.
 - Employees will be able to Opt Out of the auto-enrollment at any time.
 - Employees will be given the option to direct their investments or they may default to a fund chosen based on their retirement date.
- **New 401(k) Plan Record-keeper:**
 - The Meltzer Group is our new 401(k) advisor.
 - A new portfolio of investment options have been lower management fees.
 - ADP Retirement Services will provide record-keeping and investment management services beginning May 2015.
 - The reasoning behind the changes is to reduce the fees that we pay in our 401(k) options and to provide employees a user-friendly website to manage their plan.
- **Increase in Match:**
 - In addition to the auto-enrollment change, the 401(k) match will increase from 30% to 35% (up to 6% of salary).
 - We anticipate there will be over 80% employee participation and have budgeted \$230,000 in company contributions for plan participants.
- **More Inclusive Eligibility:**
 - Eligibility requirements have been changed from age 21 with three months of service to age 18 with 3 months of service.
 - Distributions begin on the first of the month following three months of service.

Mark Your Calendars
2015 Field Day will be held on Friday, September 18th!

Growth Spurs New Branch Openings and Promotions in Mableton, Georgia and Washington, D.C.

Ruppert recently expanded its Georgia and Maryland/Virginia operations to include branches in Mableton, GA., and Washington, D.C. The opening of both these branches is right in line with the company's Five Year Plan according to **Phil Key**, President. "Every time we grow in the markets we serve it gives us more density, which means less travel time to our jobs," said Key. "This provides value for our customer, which, in turn, perpetuates more growth."



The Mableton Landscape Maintenance Branch started as a satellite branch over one year ago and will be run by **Thor Grenier**. According to **Fred Key**, Vice President and Regional Director of the Landscape Management Division, Thor was instrumental in helping **Steve Faber**, Georgia Maintenance Branch Manager, get the branch up and running. "Thor has played a major role in building a strong presence in the southern region," said Key. "He not only helped prepare the facility for opening, but he also managed its operations starting in September 2014. There is no doubt that his leadership and efforts will continue to forge a strong presence and high level of customer service in the Mableton market."



Thor has over 22 years of industry experience and has been with Ruppert for 14 years where he's served in multiple positions including field manager, senior supervisor, area manager and enhancement manager. Thor holds a Bachelor of Technology degree in plant sciences from SUNY Cobleskill and is a Georgia Certified Landscape Professional (GCLP), a Georgia Certified Pesticide Applicator and he holds a Georgia Soil and Water

Conservation Blue Card. In 1997, 2007, and 2010, Thor was recognized with Ruppert's Branch Impact Award for his outstanding dedication and contributions made in the Georgia Landscape Management Branch.



Charlotte McGehee will be managing the D.C. Landscape Management Branch. As we are currently seeking a permanent location for the branch in the D.C. metropolitan area, Charlotte and her team will be operating from Forestville, MD. We expect to have a location finalized within the next six months. "Charlotte's strong leadership traits, determined approach, and passion for both customer and employee satisfaction will be instrumental in

helping us maintain and further our presence in the D.C. market," said Doug Halsey Vice President and Regional Director of the Landscape Management Division. "We are looking forward to the contributions she will make within the branch and the relationships she will create with our existing and new customers."

Charlotte has over six years of industry experience and has served at Ruppert in a variety of capacities including landscape construction division executive assistant, landscape construction purchaser and a project manager. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in foreign relations from the University of Richmond and is OSHA 30 certified. Charlotte has been a key part of many high-profile projects in the Maryland/D.C. area, including Pike and Rose in Rockville, MD., and Quarry Springs in Bethesda, MD.

Baltimore Landscape Maintenance Branch Moves into its New Home

The Baltimore Maintenance branch moved into its new facility this past month. Since 2010, the branch had been operating out of a location on Washington Boulevard in Baltimore City, but had outgrown the location (that location will be kept as a satellite location). The new facility, located in Essex, MD., is owned by Ruppert and enables the company to customize the facility to fit its exact needs, which increases efficiency as well as employee pride in the branch's image. The new branch is located at 4 Harko Court, Essex, MD 21221.



Movin' On Up

Each employee should know that we are committed to his or her growth and development." ~ Ruppert Values, p. 2



Dathan Bailey (MAM) was promoted from Assistant Field Manager in GAM to Field Manager in MAM.



Joshua Baumgardner (GAM) was promoted from Assistant Field Manager to Field Manager.



Stephanie Carrillo (NCL) was promoted from Contract Administrator to Project Manager.



Anthony DaSilva (MAM) was promoted from Field Manager in GAM to Business Development Manager.



Cody Erickson (FOM) was promoted from Field Manager in FRM to Area Manager in FOM.



Kirk Hickson (GAM) was promoted from crewman to Assistant Field Manager.



Angela Howes (VAL) was promoted from Business Developer to Operations Manager.



Brian Kinsella (KIM) was promoted from Enhancement Field Manager in TOM to Enhancement Manager.



Michael Lopes (ALM) was promoted from Field Manager to Enhancement Manager.



Jalyssa Martinez (MAM) was promoted from Receptionist in GAM to Branch Administrator.



Kevin McKenney (FOM) was promoted from Enhancement Field Manager in KIM to Enhancement Manager in FOM.



Kelly McGuire (VAL) was promoted from Purchaser to Business Developer.



Joshua Mickey (GAM) was promoted from Field Manager to Area Manager.



Chris O'Shea (NCL) was promoted and will now be taking on both his previous role of Business Developer and his new role as Operations Manager.



April Rose (VAL) was promoted from Chief Estimator to Project Manager.



Bryant Sanderson (GAM) was promoted from Assistant Field Manager to Field Manager.



Alex Spychalski (FOM) was promoted from Field Manager to Area Manager.



Jimmy Watson (MAM) was promoted from Field Manager in GAM to Area Manager in MAM.

Not Pictured: Daniel Watson (CHM) was promoted from Assistant Field Manager to Field Manager.



Major Milestones



A HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES:

PROUD PARENTS & GRANDPARENTS



Caleb Collins

Cody Collins (RIM) and his girlfriend, Mary George, welcomed a boy, Caleb Thomas Collins, on December 30, 2014.



Thomas Hopkins

Chad Hopkins (FOM) and his wife, Jamie, welcomed a boy, Thomas C. Hopkins V (they will call him TC), on March 16, 2015.

Matt Jones (GAM) and his wife, Elizabeth, welcomed a girl, Skylar Elizabeth Jones, on November 20, 2014.



Skylar Jones

Zac Czapko (GAL) and his wife, Jennifer, welcomed a boy, Tucker John Czapko, on January 19, 2015.



Tucker Czapko

Heather Lowe (CORP) and her boyfriend, Chad English, welcomed a boy, Logan Quinn, on January 27, 2014.



Logan Quinn



Ellie Rose Fadrowski

Collin Fadrowski (BAM) and his wife, Heather, welcomed a girl, Ellie Rose Fadrowski, on March 9, 2015.

Kenny Safrit (LAM) and his wife, Christine, welcomed a boy, Connor James Safrit, on February 13, 2015.



Connor James Safrit

Mike Felts (MDL) and his wife, Sophie, welcomed a girl, Daphne Rose Felts, on February 3, 2015.



Daphne Rose Felts

NEW HOME

Cameron Meads (RIM) purchased his first home.

David Sharry (RIM) purchased a new home.

BRANCH ABBREVIATIONS

- ALM-** Alexandria Maintenance (VA)
- BAM-** Baltimore Maintenance (MD)
- CHM-** Charlotte Maintenance (NC)
- CORP-** Corporate Branch (MD)
- DCM-** D.C. Maintenance (DC)
- FOM-** Forestville Maintenance (MD)
- FRM-** Frederick Maintenance (MD)
- GAL-** Georgia Landscape (GA)
- GAM-** Georgia Maintenance (GA)
- GVM-** Gainesville Maintenance (VA)
- KIM-** King of Prussia Maintenance (PA)
- LAM-** Laytonsville Maintenance (MD)
- MAM-** Mableton Maintenance (GA)
- MDL-** Maryland Landscape (MD)
- NCL-** North Carolina Landscape (NC)
- RAM-** Raleigh Maintenance (NC)
- RIM-** Richmond Maintenance (VA)
- TOM-** Toughkenamon Maintenance (PA)
- VAL-** Virginia Maintenance (VA)

Creating a Standout Culture

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Jennings used the example of how the CEO of Starbucks, Howard Schultz, implemented 150 changes in just 18 months.

- **Led by and filled with good stewards**—Good stewards are those who try to make things better for others (employees, customers, vendors/suppliers, society etc). Qualities of good stewards include: they share information, are accessible and keep themselves in the mix, are coaches and mentors, have a sense of urgency, are fearless about growth and get rid of superficial distractions (such as big offices etc).

As we grow, evolve and add new team members to our ranks, one of the biggest challenges we face is advancing our Ruppert culture and sharing it company-wide. By implementing some of the ideas that resonated with you from Management Development Day(s) and passing along what you learned with others on your team, we will all help to create an organization that supports efficiency, welcomes innovation and encourages growth.



Appreciate and Celebrate

Matt Case (RAM), who attends Alamantz Community College and is working towards his degree in Horticulture Technology, competed in The National Collegiate Landscape Competition and placed third overall in the nation. He placed first in the Small Engine Repair competition and third in the Skid Steer Operation competition.



Matt Case wins third place (center)

Employees Recognized at the 2014 Awards Banquet

On February 20th, employees were recognized for outstanding achievement in 2014 at Ruppert Landscape's annual awards banquet. Congratulations to the following recipients:

Crewman of the Year honored:

Congratulations to the following employees who were honored as "Crewman of the Year" in their respective branches. Each was selected for their superior self-motivation and exceptional field production:

Nelson Buruca (ALM)
Martin Rios-Robledo (BAM)
Antonio Wright (CHM)
Daveon Ward (FOM)
Manny Kazanjian (FRM)
Antonio Zamago (GAL)
Tyler Pereira (GAM)
Adan Herrera Lopez (GVM)

Andres Jurado (KIM)
Ricardo Chavez (LAM)
Gilberto Figueroa (MDL)
Neftali Figueroa Acosta (NCL)
Hipolito Zarco (RAM)
Cameron Meads (RIM)
Isaias Pizano (TOM)
Rodrigo Acosta (VAL)

Branch Impact Award Winners:

Congratulations to the following employees who were honored as Branch Impact Award winners in their respective branches. Each was selected by their peers for their outstanding dedication and contributions that have made a positive impact on their branch:

Pedro Pina (ALM)
Mike Fleming (BAM)
Charles Braxton Williams (CHM)
Jayme Whatman (CORP)
Alex Brooks (FOM)
Glenn Hall (FRM)
Joe Maes (GAL)
Kurt Myers (GAM)
Oscar Miranda (GVM)

Kim Gasper (KIM)
Mary Ellen Burton (LAM)
Jim Wachter (MDL)
Chris O'Shea (NCL)
Juan Carmona (RAM)
Butch Rinker (RIM)
Dave Wakeling (TOM)
Kelly McGuire (VAL)



Impact Award winners back row L-R: Oscar Miranda, Kurt Myers, Pedro Pina, Charles Braxton Williams, Kim Gasper, Dave Wakeling, Juan Carmona, Jim Wachter Front row L-R: Mike Fleming, Alex Brooks, Glenn Hall, Mary Ellen Burton, Kelly McGuire, Jayme Whatman, Chris O'Shea, Rufus "Butch" Rinker

Achievement Award Winner:

Ken Railey (Director of Fleet Operations, CORP)



L-R Phil Key (President), Ken Railey (award recipient), Bob Jones (President of Landscape Construction Division)

Clyde Vadner Merit Award Winner:

Mike Ward (Director of Pre-construction Services & Estimating, Landscape Construction Division)



Merit Award: L-R: Bob Jones (President of Landscape Construction Division), Mike Ward (award recipient)

New Faces

WE WELCOME THE FOLLOWING
NEW LEADERS TO RUPPERT'S
GROWING RANKS:



**Luke Alexander
(CORP)**
Estimator



**Brenda Arreola
(GAM)**
Receptionist



**Jeffrey Baggett
(GAM/GAL)**
Mechanic



**Brandon Bahel
(TOM)**
Asst. Field Manager



**Ross Bretches
(RIM)**
Enhancement Manager



**Kenny Copeland
(GAM)**
Field Manager



**Scott Fell
(TOM)**
Asst. Field Manager



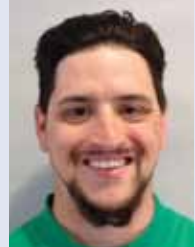
**Jose Gonzalez
(NCL)**
Asst. Field Manager



**Joseph Henry
(TOM)**
Asst. Field Manager



**Wendy Hildebrand
(CORP)**
IT Manager



**Mike Inzeo
(MDL)**
Asst. Field Manager



**Gabby Juarez
(LAM)**
Branch Admin.



**Ron Keller
(ALM)**
Shop Manager



**Shane Lear
(MDL)**
Estimator



**Bryan McHale
(KIM)**
Asst. Field Manager



**Gregory Murphy
(GAM)**
Asst. Field Manager



**William Paxton
(CHM)**
Area Manager



**Gordon Pruitt
(GAL)**
Field Manager



**Kenny O'Quinn
(RIM)**
Field Manager



**Zachary Renfroe
(GAM)**
Asst. Field Manager



**Kevin Robinson
(KIM)**
Asst. Field Manager



**Mike Ryan
(VAL)**
Production Manager



**Brian Shadrick
(MDL)**
Project Manager



**Matt Siter
(KIM)**
Asst. Field Manager



**Fabian Williams
(CHM)**
Field Manager

Not Pictured:

**Richard Stanaitis
(KIM)**
Shop Manager

**Tim Schofield
(LAM)**
Field Manager

*Welcome to
our new
and returning
crewmen!*

Career Opportunities

Looking to move up the ladder or know someone in the industry seeking a position? Ruppert Landscape has the following positions immediately available:

Landscape Construction

GAL – Crewmen (12), Production Manager (1)

MDL – Asst. Field Manager (1), Estimator (1), Field Manager (1), Project Manager (1)

NCL – Crewman (5), Estimator (1), Field Manager (1)

VAL – Concrete Field Manager (1), Concrete Finisher (1), Crewman (1), Estimator (1), Field Manager (1), Project Manager (1), Purchaser (1)

Landscape Management

ALM – Crewman (6), Enhancement Field Manager (1), Field Manager (1)

CHM – Field Managers (2)

FOM – Area Manager (2), Assistant Field Managers (6), Crewman (23), Crewman (night shift) (2), Field Manager (5)

FRM – Assistant Field Managers (4), Crewman (20), Field Managers (2)

GAM – Chemical Applicator (1), Enhancement Field Manager (1), Field Manager (1), Horticultural Technician (1)

GVM – Crewman (10)

KIM – Field Manager (1)

LAM – Field Manager (1)

MAM – Enhancement Field Manager (1), Field Mgr. (3)

RIM – Area Manager (1), Field Manager (1)

TOM – Assistant Field Manager (8), Enhancement Field Manager (1)

For more information or to apply, please contact the branch noted.