

Like a Boss: How to Overcome Price Objection



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In his 30 years of business, Dean Stafford, owner of [Dean's Landscaping, LLC](#) in West Chester, Pennsylvania, says he's never had a client's budget be "too high" for the scope of work. In fact, rarely will a client even be right on the mark with their budget and their wish list. Like most landscape business owners in the industry, Stafford typically finds that clients don't understand the cost of time and materials in the landscape industry. Most clients undergo sticker shock when they realize what it will cost to complete the work they really want done. Facing this issue again and again, Stafford has found that he can overcome the objection by proving his company's value through superior customer service.

Although Stafford starts out every project by asking the homeowner their budget, he says the answer is rarely clear. Most of the time, the client will provide a budget range for a project. During this consultation period, Stafford says it's very important for the designer to be a good listener. Allowing the client to fully express their ideas – or what he calls their "wish list" – helps them become emotionally connected to the design. Stafford says a strong connection to the project is critical in the expectation that the client will ultimately accept the price to complete that wish list.

This is also the time when Stafford says a designer should allow his client to "dream big." Let them express their wants, even if it's beyond the scope of the budget. Oftentimes, Stafford says these items end up getting added into the project as the client became connected to the concept upon expressing it. Of course, that's not to say that you shouldn't deliver on those expectations.

"True value must be delivered," Stafford says. "Understand that it's not about over-pricing a project, it's about over-delivering on your promises and exceeding clients expectations."

Personalizing the design to the client's specific needs is also so important in helping them accept the cost of the project. Clients should be able to see the value that they're getting and for many of them it comes in the form of a customized plan.

"People appreciate the extra time and effort it requires to customize a plan to cater to their vision – which is the only important vision in the process," says Stafford. "Many projects we've built are significantly higher priced than the original budget allowed for because clients enjoy living areas with personalized touches tailored to their desires."

Stafford says he doesn't mind being known as "expensive but worth it."

"Just be ready to do all it takes to deliver superb projects and excellent attention to detail no matter how small," Stafford says. "People do notice."

Our [Like a Boss](#) series highlights some common business challenges landscape professionals face and how they conquer them.