

# Like A Boss: Educating Clients About Water Conservation



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Water conservation is an important focus for [Gachina Landscape Management](#), headquartered in Menlo Park, California, but it hasn't necessarily been an easy sell. The company, which does both maintenance and construction work for commercial clients, has found that the slow return on investment for water conservation efforts have posed unique challenges. Because it can be difficult to get clients on board with the concept, ongoing education has proven to be valuable.

While water conservation efforts are important everywhere, the need is particularly evident in a state like California, where drought conditions are more prevalent.



Photo: Gachina Landscape Management

"Water is a precious resource," says Stacie Callaghan, marketing manager for the company. "Not only because of the drought, but because it needs to be around for future generations. People need to think of water use as conservation long term – not just in drought years."

But with this technology-driven society, Callaghan says people believe there is a solution for everything. She says they aren't as concerned about water as they should be as they don't truly grasp the fact that water can't just be *made*.



Photo: Gachina Landscape Management

"Plus, while water conservation programs and sustainable practices save money long term, people don't want to wait for long term benefits," she adds. "People want instant results. But most ROIs are realized in three to five

years. Today's generation wants results yesterday."

So, the company has fought through those challenges with education. They put together case studies that highlight some of their work. Most recently Gachina shared a "Water Conservation Success Story," which profiled Oak Creek Apartments, their client in Palo Alto. After implementing an extensive water conservation program, Gachina was able to save the client 4,995,000 gallons of water (16 percent) and over \$50,000 in the first 18 months.



Photo: Gachina Landscape Management

Callaghan says the water savings were accomplished by the installation of 28 new [WeatherTRAK Smart Controllers](#), removing tens of thousands of square feet of water-loving turf, converting old spray head zones to high efficiency in-line drip irrigation, and the installation of attractive low-water use, native plant material.

Although it hasn't been a simple feat, Callaghan says they can see the effort put into education paying off with more and more clients beginning to express interest in water conservation programs. It also helps that Gachina is well-educated on rebate opportunities and can help clients take advantage of savings that are out there. That was the case for the Oak Creek Apartment client. Callaghan says they assisted them in taking advantage of Santa Clara Valley Water District's rebate program, enabling Oak Creek to receive \$50,000 in funding toward the project.



The company received a merit award from the NALP for the project. Photo: Gachina Landscape Management

Ultimately, Callaghan says it is their goal to be a guide to clients and help them make the best choices.

"We assist them with rebate programs when applicable and we do our best to educate our clients in sustainable practices that benefit them and the environment," she says. "It is the wave of the future. We just need more people to hop on board."

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