

Elevating The Industry In The Public's Eye



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Perception is powerful and tough to change, believes John Munie, owner and founder of Focal Pointe Outdoor Solutions, St. Louis, Missouri. Unfortunately, much of the public perceives the services the green industry provides as not being on the same level or having as much value as the services of other trained professionals.

While the industry, in large part, has itself to blame for this, Munie and thousands of other company owners in the industry believe they can dramatically elevate the industry's reputation. But it has to happen one company at a time.

"Each business owner needs to understand and be convinced that we are service professionals, entrusted to reflect the tastes and quality standards of our clients and employees," says Munie, who founded his company in 1998 and has since grown it to about \$6 million in annual revenue.

The process of improving the industry's image in the eyes of the public starts by looking and acting professionally, he says, offering these suggestions:

- Look like a professional and wear apparel appropriate to your position within your company—dress as nice as is reasonably comfortable.
- Communicate effectively with co-workers, prospects and customers. Manners and respect for others never goes out of style.
- Return Photone calls and respond promptly to emails.
- Show up at clients' properties with [clean trucks](#) and equipment.
- Never fail to do what you say you're going to do.

If you work for Focal Pointe Outdoor Services, your tattoos are covered, your piercings are out of sight, you do not smoke, you maintain your hair above your collar, and your uniform shirt is tucked in with the second button from

the top buttoned. All of this is in addition to passing a drug test, background check and working responsibly in the company.

"I think people (customers and employees) are realizing that there is quality to this work," says Munie. "Why would we expect less of our staff than an advertising agency, a PR firm or an architecture firm?"

He says landscape professionals are no less valuable than other respected service providers in terms of relevance. "We just happen to be able to work outside, get plenty of exercise and beautify the world," he explains. "If every business owner believes that and lives that, then his or her staff will, too, which would change the industry."

[Read Hitting a Home Run in St. Louis about Focal Pointe Outdoor Solutions here.](#)

This article is from the 2015 Green Industry Guide. Read the rest of the digital edition [here](#). You can find products, brands, companies and dealers in the industry on the main homepage [here](#).