

Client Relations: Proof of Service



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Q. PATRIOT SERVICES: *How many of you guys have to use some sort of follow-up with customers – besides the freshly mowed yard – to prove you were there? It doesn't happen often, but once in a while I get an accusation. Usually they wait until they get an invoice to squawk about it. First time I let it slide and they go on the list. They get an email with a return receipt and a text message. I would like to go with a blanket approach this season and use it for everyone. I might resort to a single picture from a different angle each time. I know some would say drop the customer, but I hate to lose the equity investment as much as I hate to give a free service. Doing this on every stop would be time consuming (264 weekly stops at this time). My pool customers have never been a problem as the technician dates and initials a card inside the timer box.*

A: MowDayton: GPS tracker in the truck. I've had a couple of customers who said we weren't there. All I have to do is pull the GPS report and show it to them and they back down. There are many, many benefits to having a GPS tracker in my trucks. They aren't just for keeping an eye on the crews.

TX Easymoney: Some scheduling software has pre- and post-service notifications. I use it especially when we plant, so folks can't say they didn't know they needed to water. It works well to get folks ready prior to mowing, so they can have the gate open and stuff picked up. I send the post-service notifications with the time and date stamp in an email.

joemama: GPS on the mowers or the phones. Looks awesome when a customer says "you did not cut my lawn that day" and you send them the picture of the lawn with the trails back and forth across their lawn with a date and time. Also, it helps you know exactly how long a property takes to cut. Biggest problem I see here, and it is one I am dealing with and our company is trying to change, is monthly billing. I do not understand why I started mowing lawns and charging for what I did at the end of the month. This was the stupidest thing I ever did as a business owner. Cash flow is king and without it you

cannot afford to operate. As an industry, I wish all of us would stop this practice. This year we are raising our rates 3.5 percent on every lawn to cover the merchant fees and charging credit cards the night before we service the lawn. This will make sure we get paid or no service.

Scagtastic: GPS in all trucks. I also stress the importance of taking before and after pictures, not necessarily something to do on all jobs. The pictures are also good for websites and Facebook.

larryinalabama: I have lake homes people don't live in and I bill at the end of the month. If the service is in the middle of the month, they don't get mowed again until early the next month, so sometimes they get the bill and the grass is high. So I write the dates of service on the bill.