



DeVries Landscape Management

Growing in the Same Direction

December 2010

Founded by Hank DeVries in 1965, DeVries Landscape Management is a landscape services business located in Jenison, Michigan. Bill Pringle, the company's current owner, purchased the business in 2009. The past year has been an active one of strategic planning to help build sales and a stronger presence in a crowded marketplace.

DeVries is a full-service landscape business offering a variety of services to their customers including: lawn care, Weed Man® weed-free lawn services, Christmas Decor® holiday lighting services, snowplowing, hydroseeding, window cleaning, and pressure washing. The company has built a strong reputation among existing customers – both commercial and residential.

Since undergoing new leadership, Pringle decided to begin with a survey of his current employees to determine any issues caused by the change. With the help of the MI-SBTDC's Growth Group, all DeVries employees participated in completing a Strategic Needs Assessment, a ninety question survey to gather the employee perceptions regarding the company. From the Strategic Needs Assessment, the company decided to focus their efforts initially on three areas: complete a strategic marketing plan beginning with Christmas Décor and snow plowing, carry out a financial fitness review and undergo Strategic Actioning in order to determine their goals for the next three years.

Through this assessment, DeVries identified several challenges in their future including increasing their sales, gaining new accounts with many potential customers price shopping, controlling and monitoring one-time expenses and cross-selling to existing customers across all their product lines. Customer databases tend to only capture information within one product line making cross-selling to existing customers difficult. They are reviewing new options for their Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

Despite these challenges, DeVries is poised for growth and is developing a detailed marketing implementation plan for each product line. Going beyond traditional bill-insert mailings to secure repeat customers, the company has broadened its PR/Publicity efforts, targeted new prospects using local print media, expanded door hanger and door knocking campaigns, and is developing their electronic media tools. Another integral part of the plan is to develop ways to demonstrate customer appreciation.



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According to Bill Pringle, “The MI-SBTDC has proved to be an invaluable resource to us. As a small business with limited resources, the MI-SBTDC affords us access to large business class services which would be outside the scope of our budget. The Growth Group has done an outstanding job in helping us better define our strategy, develop tactics and keep us focused on our objectives. In the few short months we have been working with them, we have seen significant improvements in our business. I am very optimistic that with the continued assistance of MI-SBTDC, we will meet our goal of doubling the business in five years.”

DeVries Landscape will be a company to watch as their strategic marketing plans are implemented and their new customers receive the benefit of their quality products and excellent customer service.



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