

## Franchise Profile

### Spring Into Franchise Success

Former airman finds fertile fields as a franchise owner with Spring-Green Lawn Care.

by Warren Duffie

Do you love working on your lawn? Does the sight of a pristine blanket of emerald grass make your heart flutter? Why not consider making your passion a career?

That's what Lenny Geibel did: "I've always competed with my neighbors on who has the best lawn. I just love seeing everything in order and looking nice. I love giving my customers the same sense of satisfaction."

Geibel, 35, is a franchisee with Spring-Green Lawn Care, which provides a host of lawn services — including fertilization,



Captain Lenny Geibel  
U.S. Air Force (1989-1993)

weed control, tree and shrub care, and pest control. No mowing or landscaping is involved.

An Air Force veteran, Geibel is based in Lawrenceville, Ga., and serves the northern side of Atlanta. He's been in business since January, but has already made an impressive splash. Geibel has signed up more than 200 customers and earned more than \$50,000 in revenue — one of the greatest new franchise beginnings in Spring-Green's history.



#### On the Job

The former senior airman is a one-man show (though he's currently training his brother to help work the business). Geibel's day starts at 8 a.m., when he reviews his assignments and loads his white truck with fertilizer, chemicals, pumps, tanks, fresh water, tools, and safety equipment.

He then hits the road to fulfill his project orders. At 6:30 p.m., he returns home, showers, and has dinner before responding

to customer inquiries and calling potential clients. From 8:30 p.m. to 11 p.m., he does paperwork and tends to bills and invoices.

"My phenomenal growth has made my days very long," Geibel says, "but that's a wonderful problem to have. Thank goodness the military taught me attention to detail and perfectionism, which allow me to handle my business growth."

### The Geibel File

Highest Rank Held:  
Senior Airman (E-4)

Experience:  
Spent four years on active duty in the Air Force as a ground maintenance technician.

Education:  
Associate's Degree in Psychology, Georgia Perimeter College, Atlanta, Ga.

#### Chronological Résumé

2007 - Present  
Franchisee, Spring-Green Lawn Care, Lawrenceville, Ga.

2004 - 2007  
Various electronics jobs, Lawrenceville, Ga.

1993 - 2004  
Various telecommunications jobs, Lawrenceville, Ga.

1989 - 1993  
U.S. Air Force  
Served at Yokota Air Force Base in Japan and Altus Air Force Base in Oklahoma.

#### The Daily Grind

0800 - 0900  
Review day's assignments and load truck.

0900 - 1800  
Complete customer orders.

1830 - 2030  
Return home, shower, eat dinner, respond to customer inquiries, and solicit new business.

2030 - 2300  
Do paperwork and tend to bills and invoices.

### Making Green in the Lawn Care Industry

America is a busy nation. Armed with laptops, e-mail, cell phones, and Blackberries, we're bombarded with an endless stream of information; sometimes we seem to be enslaved by our jobs. By the time the weekend arrives, the last thing we want to do is yard work. Consequently, last year nearly 25 million U.S. households spent around \$29 billion on professional landscaping and lawn and tree care.

Why not tap into this profitable landscape by launching your own franchise with Spring-Green? Founded in 1977, the Illinois-based company offers a business you can work part- or full-time, has low overhead and strong revenue-generating potential, and offers extensive classroom, online, and field training programs.

The cost of starting a business (including the franchise fee) is between \$84,436

and \$92,776. Veterans are eligible for a discount — Geibel says he received a mark-down of 50 percent — and Spring-Green offers a military assistance program (check out [www.spring-green.com](http://www.spring-green.com))

If you qualify to open a franchise, you can attend a "Discovery Day" at Spring-Green's corporate office, where you can meet with company executives and other franchisees. If you decide to sign on, you'll attend a week-long training at the company headquarters — where you'll learn marketing, business development, technical aspects of lawn and tree care, equipment operation, and how to run Spring-Green's business software. When you return home, you'll be visited by a support representative who will help get your franchise off of the ground.

#### The Transition

After four years in the Air Force, Geibel left in 1993 to pursue a college degree. The former ground radio maintenance technician spent the next decade working for several telecommunications companies, including Bell South.

"My job was climbing poles and making sure the lines worked okay," Geibel says. "It was similar to what I did in the Air Force — scaling towers and such."

However, in 2002 he suffered an accident that put him out of commission for two years. When he fully recovered in 2004, climbing poles was no longer an option, so he worked in a variety of electronics jobs.

"It was around that time that I really thought it would be nice to go into business for myself," he says. "I wanted to franchise

because I knew the chances of success were much greater."

After more than a year of research, he decided on Spring-Green: "I was very impressed with the people and how they run the company. Spring-Green is a very solid organization that offers a great opportunity to veterans."



#### Geibel's Franchise Advice

**Prepare to work harder than ever before.** "Remember those long hours in the military? It's the same when you own a business. But you're directly rewarded financially for your hard work."

**Research your options.** "Make sure the franchise fits your personality. Also make sure it's a business you'll love, because you'll be working it hard."

#### Quick Stats

Company: Spring-Green Lawn Care  
Phone: 800-777-8608  
Established: Spring-Green was founded in Naperville, Ill., in 1977  
Franchise Web site: [www.springgreenfranchise.com](http://www.springgreenfranchise.com)  
# of outlets: more than 100  
Franchise contact: James Young, president of Spring-Green Lawn Care.  
E-Mail: [jyoung@spring-green.com](mailto:jyoung@spring-green.com)  
Start-up costs: Typical startup costs range from a low of \$84,436 to a high of \$92,776, which includes the initial franchise fee, \$25,000 marketing investment for the first year, supplies and equipment.  
Fact: Through Spring-Green's Military Assistance Program (M.A.P.), a grant program designed to help military veterans interested in owning a Spring-Green Lawn Care franchise, the company will apply up to \$15,000 of the initial franchise fee toward the start-up expense.

#### Did you know?

Americans spend around \$29 billion each year on professional landscaping and lawn and tree care.

Military veterans are eligible for a discount on the franchise fee. Geibel says he received 50 percent off of his fee.

Spring-Green's CEO, Tom Hofer, is a former Navy pilot.