

# Landscape Management

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## LAWNCAREPRO

LM'S OPERATOR OF THE MONTH » BY RON HALL



For more than 30 years, Spring-Green has been beautifying America's neighborhood lawns and landscapes — and **Ted Hofer**, who soon will take over the reins as CEO of his family's business, says he is proud to stand behind his company's work. "We take our commitment to our community seriously," he says. "That includes offering the highest-quality service performed in an environmentally responsible manner by trained, licensed technicians."

**Ted, you were two years old when your father acquired and began operating Spring-Green's third franchise in 1977. What are your earliest memories of the lawn care business?** "My earliest memories probably deal more with the business than specifically lawn care. The commitment by my dad and mom from the beginning was amazing. I was able to see firsthand the life investment it takes for a start-up business to succeed. Working nights and weekends was the norm. It's amazing to think about the life lessons that were learned at such a young age."

**Tell us about your formal education, and how that prepared you to own and operate a UPS franchise location and, now, to lead Spring-Green Lawn Care.** "I have a degree in finance from the University of Illinois. My degree has really helped me at Spring-Green as I drive initiatives to improve the independent unit economics. Since I've been here, we've become committed to focusing our support on the

bottom-line performance of our franchise owners.

"My time as a UPS Store franchisee showed me the importance of finding the right balance between financial planning and operational execution — the strongest plan in the world isn't worth much if it's not executed properly. My financial background will be very important as I begin my new role at Spring-Green, but I've found through my time in various companies that regardless of the size of the business, its success will come down to how well the organization executes its plan."

**Was there a defining moment or incident that convinced you that returning to the lawn care industry was the right path to take for you?** "As a franchisee in another system, I felt my experience would add to the Spring-Green Support Center staff. But it was

Spring-Green's recommitment to growth through its independently owned franchises that was very attractive to me. I also really looked forward to getting back into lawn care and the opportunity to be part of a scalable business that gives franchise owners the chance to enjoy the benefits of being part of the lawn care industry: the flexibility of schedule, the high customer retention rates and high profit margins."

**Describe your management style as the leader of Spring-Green, and what the company's franchisees can expect from you.** "During my dad's last few years as CEO, he set a clear course for Spring-Green's long-term vision. I plan to continue down that path, focusing on maintaining and further building a world-class franchising organization. At Spring-Green, my style has been to empower

### TECH CHANGE

**COMPANY:** Spring-Green Lawn Care, headquartered in Plainfield, IL

**FOUNDED:** 1977

**TITLE:** Vice President; On July 1, will become CEO

**NUMBER OF LOCATIONS:** More than 75 franchisees who operate 120 territories in 26 states; there are also five company-owned locations

**SERVICES OFFERED:** Lawn fertilization, weed control, tree/lawn care and more.

**HOBBIES:** Golf, watching movies and sports (he's an Indianapolis Colts season ticketholder). "I have been driving with my dad from Indy to Chicago for Colts games for 19 years."

**FAMILY:** Single, living in Chicago. Dad (Tom), Mom (Sue), sister (Laurie), brother-in-law (Mark) and two nieces (Emily and Mia) all live in Naperville, IL.

**WEBSITE:** Spring-Green.com

our employees. We have an incredibly knowledgeable staff composed of both industry veterans and outside thinkers. In addition to this, our franchise owners can expect the continuation of my dad's open-door policy."

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