



Title: Winding Down the Season

by Robert Boyle, IANY President



Robert "RB" Boyle

I hope everyone is having a productive season despite the pandemic. I have noticed that many homeowners have been improving their properties which thankfully benefits our green industry.

Since so many homeowners were staying and working at home, their desire to improve their properties and for fresh air increased. Home improvement

websites (HOUZZ.com and Porch.com) noted that during the pandemic, changes made to the house exterior were most common, with 61% of homeowners doing some work on their garden, patio or renovating the structure of the house. Also reported was that updating outdoor spaces was the top upgrade on the list of planned projects.

Along with that encouraging news, many of us had trouble keeping and finding qualified help when the need went up. The virus, which is still hanging over our heads, affected us in

other ways. We had trouble getting parts and supplies because of supply chain issues, manufacturing facilities shutdowns, labor shortages and delays in shipping.

There is a positive side to all of this. We have all had to think outside the box. We may have literally had to get "down and dirty," sharpen our technical and communication skills, focus on sales and think of new services and better ways to promote our companies.

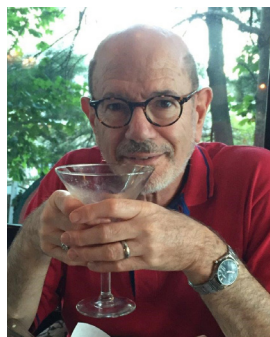
Just like we prepare our irrigation systems for winter, we can prepare our business for the upcoming season. Here are a few suggestions:

- Stay connected to your customers (past and present) with emails or newsletters.
- Review and improve your website.
- Focus on your team, it is a good time for training.
- Come up with ways to increase your company's efficiency
- Plan your company's future.

The future is bright and full of opportunity...

RB Boyle is owner of RB Irrigation and president of the Irrigation Association of New York.

Zusman Retires



With gratitude and regret, we announce the retirement of our newsletter publisher, Barry Zusman.

Barry had been a driving force behind the Irrigation Association of New York board for the last 17 years. He went beyond his role as publisher to help guide the board to get things done. He

helped put our thoughts into words and our words into action. He helped turn chaos into order. Who will we find to fix our grammatical errors?

Much of our success can be attributed to his efforts. We thank him for his wisdom, his perseverance and his diligence. We will be forever in his debt.

We are happy for our dear friend and wish all the best to Barry and his wife, Margo, as they start this new chapter of their lives.

Happy trails and cheers!





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IANY Golf Get Together

Thank you to those who came out to the IANY Golf Get Together on Wednesday, Oct. 14 at The Vineyards Golf Club. We enjoyed connecting with friends and industry members! A special thank you to SiteOne Landscape Supply for sending a foursome out to the event! We are planning another great outing for 2021 (COVID permitting). More information about the 2021 tournament is coming soon!



Planning underway for education events

by Mike Dwyer, CIC, Hot Water Aplenty



Mike Dwyer

Going into this winter the Irrigation Association of New York is working with the Suffolk County Water Authority to bring an educational event to irrigation contractors. The purpose is to open dialogue between contractors and the Water Authority since we are a major consumer of their product. We are starting to sketch out the topics and the training that will be presented. We

are hoping for a safe in-person event, and if necessary, we will pivot to an online event.

We are also planning to continue the education series with New York American Water or whoever takes over the franchise.

In early spring we are planning a hands-on drip course at Leeds Pond Preserve in Plandome, New York. Art Elmers from Netafim will be the instructor. They have classroom space that meets current social distancing requirements. During the hands-on portion we will install drip in three different ways (vegetable row, raised bed and shrub area). Please check our social media and website for updates and make sure that we have your current email address for communication. If you would like to update your contact information and email address, please send it to Nicole Preisner (nicolepreisner@irrigation.org).

Coming soon – Ask the Experts

The Irrigation Association of New York is excited to announce their Ask the Experts webinar series beginning January 2021. Every other month a 50-minute webinar will be released that answers your questions! The webinars will feature a panel of industry members to address different topics based on questions asked by members and those in the industry or industry hot topics.

What irrigation questions or topics do you want discussed? Submit your questions and topics by **Dec. 31** to Nicole Preisner (nicolepreisner@irrigation.org) to be considered for the January webinar. Stay tuned for more details!



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Grow revenues without growing employees

by Jeff Carowitz



Jeff Carowitz

A well-established contractor said to me recently, “My chances of hiring three or four more great employees to grow this season are slim. But I do think I can still grow my revenues *and* my bottom line.”

He’s right. One of the ways to grow both top line and bottom line is by adding upgrades on the projects you’re already selling.

If you’re an irrigation pro, you know the upgrades I’m referring to: self-adjusting Wi-Fi controllers, pressure-regulating heads, efficient nozzles, converting sprays to drip and more.

Upgrades can also mean growing sales with new add-ons: landscape lighting, decorative fountain or water features, outdoor audio systems, specialty paving materials, outdoor BBQs and kitchens, and patio lights. I’ll stop there only because there’s not enough space!



Why sell upgrades? With an accelerating economy, your buyers have more money to spend. Many times, they don’t know where to spend it. Your job is to make sure that your customer understands what options make the best sense.

Avoid overwhelming. Sure, you need to know all of the details about every possible upgrade you have available and where they all might be used on your customer’s project. But please leave the buffet at the office! Instead, pick just two or three options to offer and then give them the “full treatment.” The

full treatment means that you detail out the benefits the customer would receive, discuss the unique advantages of the upgrade(s), provide printed materials (photographs or brochures) and explain the investment required.



Get your team equipped and trained to sell. Most contractors fail at selling because they don’t have the right sales presentation materials at hand – and they don’t train their personnel to make the sale. Set prices for upgrades in advance. Prepare demonstration or sample kits. Design presentation brochures. Get your presentation into a form where it is nearly automatic. Train your team.

Customers want to be sold. Buyers are often uncertain of what they need, what’s appropriate and what others are buying. Be prepared to talk about what you are offering confidently. Introduce options with positive customer-oriented statements like “you’ll see an immediate difference in ____ if you upgrade this _____,” and then back up your statements with examples. Do not assume the buyer understands what seems obvious to you. Be energetic in your desire to educate. Point out add-ons that are “customary.” For example, “It’s customary to upgrade all of the sprinklers to pressure-regulating when changing one so they are all equally efficient.”

Selling upgrades is a wise use of time. If it takes a salesperson an extra 15 minutes to sell a \$250 upgrade that costs the company \$100, he’s just earned the equivalent of \$600/hour for the time invested. Selling upgrades typically offers the highest ROI of all contractor sales efforts.

Become the best contractor at selling upgrades. Start by identifying three to four options, then follow through with a marketing plan and training for your sales team. You’ll be surprised how much you can grow your results.

With over three decades of experience in our industry, Jeff Carowitz helps leading firms with strategic planning and marketing implementation. Connect with him at Jeff@StrategicForceMarketing.com.

Subscribe to *Irrigation & Green Industry* magazine

With more than 20 years of experience, *Irrigation & Green Industry* continues to be the leading magazine serving landscape, irrigation and maintenance contractors. As a benefit of the Irrigation Association of New York's partnership with the national Irrigation Association, IANY members and contacts are eligible for a free subscription of *Irrigation & Green Industry* magazine. To subscribe, visit www.igin.com/flex-323-Subscribe-to-IGIN.html.

Connect with us

We want to connect with you! We are trying to improve our email records for our members and grow our organization! Please send your most up-to-date email contact information with your first, last and company name in the body of the email to Nicole Preisner (nicolepreisner@irrigation.org).

Marketing your differences

Lorraine Hart, President of Ideal Consulting Services



Lorraine Hart

Your customers know you and your work. Prospects, however, may not because they have not yet worked with you. Every contractor is different, and those differences should be marketed and communicated to your prospective customers. One way to market your differences is through your project photos. This would be through use of your website, Facebook, Instagram and Houzz, all targeting your desired customer type.

Your marketing communication style and in-person communication needs to be able to make your prospects feel confident in your abilities. They also need to understand the ways in which you differ from your competition, so they choose you to go forward.

Your goal should be more than just for satisfactory performance. You should strive to improve. If you provide a high level of customer service, have a highly skilled team and focus on excellence, you always need to communicate that to your prospects.

When potential customers understand the value of your work and are confident that you will deliver the project the way they desire, the good news will spread. In a situation where your project price is higher than that of your competitors as long as you have communicated your differences, your prospects should be willing to pay more for value, quality and great customer service.

Remember, you are worth it.

We have website and social media marketing solutions to help build your brand, regularly engage with your clients and generate new leads.

For more information contact Ideal Consulting Services/ Websites by Ideal at 516.826.6725.



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Five website quick fixes

by Stacie Zinn Roberts

You need to fix your website. Sorry, but it's true. Websites are finicky things. They require constant care, yet you ignore your website at your own peril. It is estimated that 75% of customers judge a company based on its website, and that's before they ever talk to you. If your website is outdated, ugly or does not function properly, it could be costing you money. Here are five website fixes to perform now.

1. Be mobile friendly. Considering that studies show the majority of internet users surf the web on a mobile device, your website must be optimized to run on smartphones and tablets. This is called responsive design. Basically, your website "responds" to the size of the user's screen. If your website is only built to be viewed on a computer monitor, mobile users will have difficulty navigating your website. To test this, grab your cell phone and visit your website. Is the navigation (Home, About, Contact, etc.) really small across the top of your screen? If so, it's probably not responsive, which also means that it's likely time for a website redesign.

2. Fix broken links. Go through your website and click on all of the links, buttons or calls to action. Do they all work? If you click on a link and are directed to a page that says 404 Error or it goes to some other unintended page, it should be corrected. In addition, be sure all of your social media accounts are linked on your website using the appropriate icons (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.). Click on the icons and confirm that the links go to your account pages, not just to a Facebook login page, for example. To help keep on top of minor issues, it's a good idea to have a web-savvy staffer or your web developer perform monthly maintenance to fix links and other issues.

3. Get secure. About two years ago, Google Chrome (the top web browser used to surf the internet) implemented a policy that all websites have something called an SSL certificate or be flagged as "Not Secure." Without getting too technical, the SSL certificate indicates that your site has a secure connection. Go to your website and look in the upper left corner of the

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by Stacie Zinn Roberts

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URL bar where your address is. Does it say “http” or “https”? The desired address has the “https” to indicate a secure site. Do you see the words “Not Secure”? Then you don’t have an SSL certificate. Sites marked “Not Secure” serve as a warning to your customers and, frankly, makes your site look risky. Contact your website hosting company, which is the server where your site lives, commonly GoDaddy, BlueHost, HostGator, WP Engine or others. Some hosts include the SSL certificate for free or at a nominal cost. Your web developer can also do this for you and install the certificate.

4. Get up to date. Today’s modern websites generally have an edge-to-edge design with lots of photos and sparse text. If your website design has a box around it, not many photos and reads like a dictionary, it’s likely time to redesign your website. Outdated information, photos of former employees, blog posts or news items that haven’t been updated in years also indicate a neglected website, which casts a negative impression of your company.

5. Hyperlink your email address. If your email address is published on your website, you’re making yourself a prime target for spammers who can flood your inbox with unsavory offers and dangerous phishing emails that, when clicked, could damage your computer systems. Instead, create a contact form on your website that allows customers to send you a message. A dropdown on the form can direct emails to specific staffers. If you must have a list of emails on your site, hide them behind the word email that, when clicked, serves as a hyperlink to your email address.

I urge you to consider your website as your 24/7 salesperson on the internet who must deliver the latest information to potential customers. Take care of it. It’s that important.

Got a marketing question? I’d love to hear from you. Send me a note through my website’s contact form at: whatsyouravocado.com/contact.



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The Irrigation Association's Industry Insights webinar series comes to you



The Irrigation Association is excited to kick off its Industry Insights webinar series! The virtual series began in October and will run through April 2021. The Industry Insights for Landscape is a weekly webinar series featuring 60-minute sessions (presentation and Q&A).

Held every Tuesday, the 2020-2021 landscape webinar series invites knowledgeable industry experts to present information about the latest trends and research, a best practice or a how-to. Normally offered on-site during the Irrigation Show and Education Week, Industry Insights is where attendees go to learn about today's relevant topics.

Industry Insights for Landscape webinars include valuable information about today's cutting-edge technology and topics, including landscape irrigation and management, lighting,

business practices, navigating current economic challenges and more. If you are IA certified, most webinars offer CEUs.

The full schedule and webinar descriptions for the Industry Insights for Landscape are provided at www.irrigation.org/industryinsights. Webpages providing information about the landscape presenters are also included on the site. Anyone can register for a webinar by selecting it from the online schedule.

"With the cancellation of the in-person 2020 Irrigation Show and Education Week in San Antonio, our desire is to continue to provide some of the important elements offered during the show," said Deborah Hamlin, CAE, FASAE, IA CEO. "Through Industry Insights we are able to give those in our industry the opportunity to keep up with the latest topics and trends through a safe and cost-efficient way."

The Industry Insights for Landscape is sponsored by Ewing Irrigation and Landscape Supply. For more information about this and other programs offered during Education Week+, go to www.irrigationshow.org.

Upcoming membership renewals

2021 membership dues will be mailed and emailed soon. We hope you will continue to support the industry through IANY membership. As an IANY member, here are a few ways you benefit:

- **Get your issues addressed.** IANY interacts with private and government organizations and other associations to develop legislation and regulations to ensure availability, quality and accessibility of water supplies.
- **Expand your knowledge.** IANY conducts educational programs to encourage certification and continued education.
- **Get exclusive discounts** on all IANY events such as educational offerings and golf.
- **Find opportunities to grow your business and your network.** IANY serves as a catalyst and umbrella organization for outreach, communication and coordination among the diverse parties involved in irrigation.

We look forward to continue working with you in 2021 in highlighting the importance of irrigation to those both in and outside the industry.

Not an IANY member? Join today! Invest in the future of your business and the irrigation industry by becoming an IANY member. To learn more about membership and submit a membership application, visit iany.org/iany-membership/.

Would you like to contribute to the IANY newsletter?

Have content you would like to share?

Contact Nicole Preisner
(nicolepreisner@irrigation.org)
to be considered for future issues.

Looking to reach irrigation contractors in New York?

Advertise with us! Contact
David Lambert
(david@sprinklrte.com).

Issue dates are February, August and November.