

Noah Olson – Brothers Lawncare

Background:

In 2011, a man pulled up next to me up to me while I was working in my grandma's yard and asked if I was landscaping for a business. I told him I was and soon after that I began to pick up more and more clients. I then started finding out how difficult running a business can be. In more recent years, I have added many new services and have tapped into commercial accounts, as well as maintaining the same services and quality that got me started.

Overview:

As a lawn care service, I offer all the traditional services you would expect, mowing, weed-whipping, yard waste removal, etc. I also offer bagging, mulching, striping, seeding, fertilizing, and landscaping, along with many other services upon request. This winter I started with some preliminary snow removal services. Recently we got our first big snow of the season bringing with it nine inches of snow and ice. I'm happy to report that we had all of our clients cleared out by 10:00 AM and everyone I contacted was pleased with the service they received.

At the beginning of the year, I had purchased a larger vacuum unit. This allowed us to more quickly do spring clean-ups and vacuum leaves more efficiently. One of the first times I used it, a customer had asked us to get rid of an area that he had dumped leaves onto for the last seven years. Using the new vacuum, we were able to get right down to the dirt and get rid of all the debris, something the old unit would have never handled. This has helped increase spring and fall operations tremendously. Also new this year, I implemented Quickbooks Small Business. This program has been a major improvement to my day-to-day operations. I can now easily track expenses, miles, and create invoices quickly, efficiently, and portably. I don't know how I operated without it.

I gear my business toward the aging population of my community, offering multiple payment plans, ALWAYS available customer service, and a satisfaction guarantee, that every yard I go to I leave looking better than when I came. I also try to take every opportunity to talk with my clients to assess their needs as well as to get to know them on a personal level. This not only helps them get to know me and my business better, but also as a service they can call for everyday tasks. A service that is friendlier, less intimidating, and always returns your calls, because they have a genuine interest in their customers.

Personal Qualities:

I would best describe myself as a hardworking, motivated, people person, that isn't afraid to reach out and help anyone who might need it. I pride myself on how active Brothers Lawncare is in the community, whether sponsoring a team at the SFD Golf Tournament, volunteering at SHS blood drives, or donating our services to the local cemetery. I am always looking to help a worthy cause and get our name out in the community.

Something that I noticed was especially important this year was being able to roll with the punches, and adapt to the unexpected. I had a client that was in need of some repair to and

landscaping around a retaining wall. I had to rent a piece equipment and line up some extra hands to get the project done on time. However, a day before we were scheduled to do the project, the client canceled, and I was tasked with diplomatically handling the ripples that ensued. On another occasion this fall, I was on a leaf removal when a belt broke on the vacuum when we were about 15 minutes into the job. The problem was that we were nearly 45 minutes away from a new belt. I ended up having to reschedule and come all the way back out to the job-site the following week. We ended up taking a loss on the job monetarily, but I now carry replacement belts and parts on both trucks.

Patience has been an especially large part of my business. I've learned it takes a lot of money to make any. Even the best investment or most calculated risk has the potential to go awry, but with time, every client comes around and yes eventually payback comes.

One thing I am particularly proud of is finding my niche in the community. Spooner is about 2600 strong and therefore there are very few opportunities for young people to find work. Pair that with my getting to know clients on a personal basis and the fact that there aren't a lot of 16 year olds getting up and to work before 5:00 am, and it explains my 100% retention rate among repeat clients. In addition, I'm a bit of a perfectionist, if something isn't quite right, I go back and make it right. If there is something a customer wants that I do not offer, I pursue either adding that service to my arsenal or I find and subcontract a company that does offer the service they are looking for. This ensures my clients don't contact another service provider and send me packing.

The Future:

Starting this May, I plan to start building a new shop. Last year I got a site prepped and slab poured. This will finally move operations out of grandma's garage and into someplace I can store all my equipment year round. Additionally, I hope to add an employee and expand my clientele base. The area I service also looks to increase in size as we begin contracting more and more lake homes. As always I'm looking for ways Brothers Lawncare can help out the community, specifically offering a scholarship to SHS entrepreneurs & community leaders. Long term, I'd like to see this grow into both a larger "brand" and I have some ideas for products that I believe would greatly help the efficiency of other lawn care companies