



## LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

### Going the Extra Mile

by Cheryl Higley

Jeff Allen, owner of Allen Landscaping in Santa Rosa, CA, understands that East Coast mentality; but it won't fly in the Valley, where laid-back flexibility rules the day.

"I've run into those types of situations, but I don't play. I'm a local, and we operate much more in the California lifestyle," he says. His clients are accustomed to that attitude and even embrace it.



For example, one of Allen's clients was going into semi-retirement and wanted to work with the crews one day a week. "For fun we sent her an Allen Landscaping shirt and hat and said if she wanted to work with the crew she had to wear it. And she did," Allen recalls.

For high-end clients, time is money, and both say making an efficient use of their clients' time is essential to creating long term relationships. "There is a tremendous amount of nurturing and trust that goes into this. And it takes a long time to develop that type of relationships," Chiarella says.

Allen agrees: "People's time is valuable, and getting time from them to educate them and show them what we're doing is critical. Communication is a big part of the relationship. We let them know our thoughts, but we understand the ultimate choice is theirs. We're in this for the long haul, and we make that clear."

Handling high-end clients takes a special knack, but both agree one constant that transcends locations and checkbooks is strict attention to outstanding customer service.

**ULTIMATE SERVICES AND ALLEN LANDSCAPING SERVICE HIGH-END CLIENTS ON OPPOSITE COASTS. THEY PROVIDE A STUDY IN CONTRASTS WITH A COMMON GOAL-A SUPERIOR CUSTOMER SERVICE.**

"Our motto is 'We Service the Client, Period.'" Regardless if your customer is paying you \$500 or \$50,000, you have to carry the same mentality when it comes to customer service," Chiarella says. "The numbers are different, but the quality and service we deliver is the same. Now matter how difficult the clients are, service them with a smile and don't take anything personally. In the end, it's worth the effort."