

CERTIFICATION UPDATE

CERTIFICATION: BEYOND THE LOW-HANGING FRUIT

Roscoe Klausing became a Landscape Industry Certified Manager in 2000, when he was 24 years old. Since then, the owner of the Klausing Group in Lexington, Kentucky, has seen 20 of his employees become Landscape Industry Certified Technicians.

"I believe in following best practices, and that requires adhering to standards and following protocol," said Klausing. "Studying for the exam is a great training tool and employees who pass it exhibit their understanding of industry standards."

Klausing believes certification is more valuable as a training tool than a marketing tool. He calls the latter "low-hanging fruit," and the main reason most companies embrace certification.

"Don't get me wrong, I market the fact that I have Landscape Industry Certified employees on staff," he emphasized. "But marketing isn't the certification driver for me; it's what training for the exam does for my employees and ultimately my company."

He points back to when he first became certified. "I started my company when I was 14 years old. I never went to college and received a formal education like many of my friends who became doctors, lawyers,



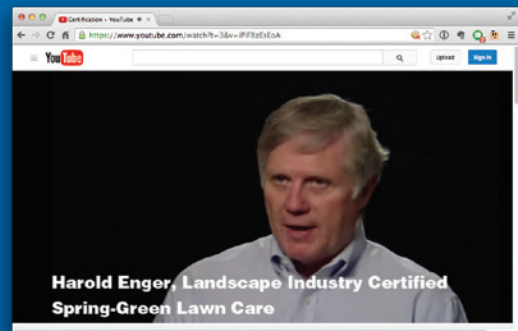
Roscoe Klausing (center) with his newest Landscape Industry Certified employees. Left to right: Dwight Hammons, Kyle Frueh, Russell Riddell, and Dallis Crowe. Not pictured is Luke Tedder.

and so forth. Preparing for the certification exam was a way for me to educate myself, and it paid off."

Having Landscape Industry Certified employees on staff brings immediate benefits, too. Klausing gives

CERTIFICATION VIDEO TESTIMONIALS

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landscape industry certified

this example. "Because we have a strong safety culture here, I live my life differently. I'm a safer driver than I used to be, and more aware of my surroundings at work and at home. When you believe in something you adhere to it."

He continued, "Employees who pass the certification test demonstrate a commitment to our industry and that commitment translates to their performance on the job."

Klausing's company provides transportation to and from neighboring Ohio so employees can take the exam and reimburses them for the exam cost once they pass. A compensation bump accompanies certification, and all account managers are required to be Landscape Industry Certified.

The owner recently sent eight employees to Ohio to take the test and five passed it. The other three will be taking the trip again this fall.

"There's definitely value in marketing certification," Klausing reemphasized. "But for us, more than anything else, certification has become part of our culture and an important tool in our training toolbox."



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