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In photo: Mike Crawford, owner of
Lawn Masters of Springfield in Missouri



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Post Covid

It seems like we can move on after Covid and begin to work on living into a brighter future. Consequently, this writing will not deal with politics and vaccines, or rehearsing what was done or not done, what worked or did not work during the last two years under the influence of Covid. Rather, I think we have all learned a great lesson from being "socially distanced" and kept away from each other as a part of the effort made to control the spread of the virus. After being locked away from each other, we have found out just how wonderful and needed it is to be present. While a few people choose to live as hermits, most of us know that we were created to be with other people, working together, living together, and recreating together. Life gets lonely very quickly when being by yourself (even in a crowd).

Our Covid experience taught us that modern communication technology does not fill the void of no contact. Phone calls, text messages, social media and zoom meetings simply do not fulfill or satisfy the need for face-to-face meetings. The main takeaway, therefore, is that in our relationships with people, we need to be deliberate and disciplined in having in-person meetings. There are people we need to see in person.

I always look to the Holy Bible for wisdom and living principles. On the subject of in-person meetings, Jesus answered the question, "Who is my neighbor?" in Luke 10:25-37 by telling the story of an injured man along the side of the road to Jericho. A couple of men avoided contact with the injured man by moving to the other side of the road as they went by, but one man stopped and took care of the injured man—this man was the "neighbor" and went in person to give the help needed. He fulfilled God's second greatest command to "love your neighbor as yourself." Even with some inconvenience, there are times when being face to face and in person are needed in our relationships. God created us to be together and to help each other.

As a manufacturing company, we have a large number of people we need to meet in person. There are suppliers, factory employees, distributors, dealers and end-customers. While we are not able to meet everyone in person, we use every occasion and planned visits to meet as many as possible. We use the company airplanes and the airlines to travel outbound for meetings with suppliers, distributors and dealers, and we love to open the factory for tours, "open house" events and training events. Note: Any of our readers are invited to the factory for an "in-person" tour during our normal working hours each day. We have noticed how much energy and accomplishment are the result of these in-person meetings in comparison to "at-distance" meetings, and so we will keep on meeting face to face.

Until we meet again....
Sincerely,
Bob Walker, Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Walker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.





Karen Baxter, at her countryside home in Hillsboro, Oregon, has been a Walker Mower user for 25 years.

Finished-look Fanatic in the Oregon Countryside

Karen Baxter and her late husband, Brent, had always been city folks.

But they were longing for a more relaxing change of pace, not to mention a nice place to raise their five children. So they bought a home in the countryside of Hillsboro, Oregon, roughly 30 years ago. Along with that new home came a big, beautiful yard and an even bigger pasture.

"We weren't ready for what was required to take care of that much

acreage," Karen recalls. Fortunately, the person they bought the property from left his old riding lawnmower behind. That did the trick for a little while.

"Before long we needed a new mower because I was spending so much time mowing, and the one we were left with was wearing out," Karen says, adding that she even had to make do with a push mower when that rider finally broke down. "My husband did

some research and learned about the Walker. We bought our first one about 25 years ago."

Karen says the cut quality was immediately obvious. She also liked how comfortable it was to ride on, which is why her husband set the mower up with a 20-gallon tow-behind sprayer to treat the pasture area for weeds.

"My first Walker sure was a handy



For her main lawn area, Karen uses the new Walker Model C with the GHS she bought a few years ago.

dandy," Karen says. "I used it all the time because it was so easy and such a time saver. That machine had more than 1,000 hours on it." As a matter of fact, one of Karen's children, son Jeff, says the machine actually had more like 5,000 hours on it. Then a couple of years ago, Karen noticed it wasn't cutting quite as evenly as she'd grown accustomed to. "It was time for a new mower, and there was nothing I liked better than my Walker because it was so maneuverable," Karen says.

New Mower, Same Genes

These days, Karen mows her pasture with a different manufacturer's mid-mount zero-turn mower. "That does just fine at going back and forth and

just blowing thick grass out the side," Karen points out. But for her main lawn area, Karen uses her new Walker Model C with the GHS, the mower that is patterned after the original Walker Mower she first developed an appreciation for 25 years ago.

"There is nothing like the Walker for maneuvering around all of my trees and flower beds, and for actually manicuring the lawn."

"There is nothing like the Walker for maneuvering around all of my trees and flower beds, and for actually manicuring the lawn," says Karen, who opted for a 48-inch deck and electronic fuel-injected (EFI) engine. She also uses the hitch provided on the Model C so she could tow her sprayer around, as well as a utility cart

she uses when cleaning up debris, pruning shrubs, and harvesting produce from her vegetable garden and fruit trees.

"I have always loved working in the yard," Karen says. "I guess it's just part

of my gene makeup. We used to have cows and horses, too. Now I have a half-dozen or so chickens."

Karen also has a "weed-blocking wall" she constructs out of the grass clippings her Walker Mower vacuums up. She dumps the clippings around the perimeter of her lawn to help



Karen and her late husband, Brent, quickly took to the country life. They used to have cows and horses. Today, Karen still has a few chickens.

prevent weeds from migrating over from the pasture.

"I do a lot of spraying out in the pasture, too, because whatever weeds you let grow there might end up in the lawn," Karen adds. Between the spraying and weed-blocking wall, Karen's lawn is looking pretty good, aside from one little nuisance.

"The worst problem here is that I'm virtually surrounded by grass seed, at least on two sides of me," Karen explains. "Those property owners are growing some kind of fescue grass, which I don't like. I have mainly ryegrass. The seed comes into my lawn because of the heavy rains we get. And when they're harvesting with the combines and everything is blowing into the air, that can be a problem, too. So when you look at my lawn, it looks OK. But if you get out in it and look really closely, you can see some of that fescue coming up. I just do my best to ignore it because there is just no fighting it."

Fanatical Lawn Care

Karen isn't one to ignore much when it comes to lawn care. She admits being a bit of a fanatic when it comes to the finer details. And when you're a lawn care perfectionist, outsourcing the work can be a tough pill to swallow.

Karen spends a lot of time working in her yard. Her daughter once grew concerned that she was working too hard and convinced Karen to hire a



Karen says working in the yard is part of her gene makeup. Along with mowing grass, she also enjoys spending time in her vegetable garden.

*"I have always loved working in the yard," Karen says.
"I guess it's just part of my gene makeup."*

landscaper. That didn't go so well.

"I remember watching these guys out my window," Karen relates. "I couldn't believe it. They were using push mowers and it took them about four hours. It didn't look good, either. Plus, it was going to cost me a pretty penny for them to spend so much time here. I told them as politely as I could, 'Thank you for your efforts, but I'm just going to do this myself.'"

Karen could see where her daughter was coming from. There is always a lot of work to be done, especially in

the spring and fall. There are always weeds and leaves to deal with, and always plenty of grass to mow.

"I especially like mowing because I can sit down," Karen says. "All the rest of the work in the yard is stand-up, hard work. To mow the lawn is my dessert after having to eat the broccoli for dinner. Then I can sit back and say to myself, 'Boy, that looks nice. I'm glad I got that done.'"

And more importantly, the work got done to Karen's high standards.



Karen likes how maneuverable her Model C is when mowing around flower beds.

See Karen's beautiful garden in this video on walkertalk.com



Meeting Needs & Mastering Lawns in Springfield, Missouri



Mike Crawford is owner of Lawn Masters of Springfield in Springfield, Missouri. Mike bought his first Walker Mower in 1991. Today he has three, all Model T's with 48-inch decks.

Some people were born to do one thing in life. For Mike Crawford, it was mentoring young people in search of their own purpose. As it turned out, mowing lawns was the perfect avenue to help carry out his mission.

Mike started Lawn Masters of Springfield in the late 1980s when the lawn service industry was still in its infancy. "I got going at just the right time when there were only a couple of other companies in this area," Mike recalls. He quickly established a reputation for being reliable and professional, a reputation that has allowed his company to flourish for the past 33 years. More importantly, Mike has been able to provide jobs to dozens of people who really needed them.

With an underlying desire to help lift other people up, Mike originally had his sights set on a career in social work.

"I grew into alcoholism and was a pretty wild teenager," Mike shares. "My life was basically falling apart when my girlfriend's parents introduced me to Christianity. My life changed completely, and I found a whole new direction."

That direction was to help other young people cope with the same types of challenges he had wrestled with. Mike moved from his hometown of Indianapolis to Springfield, Missouri, to attend Evangel University. While earning his degree in social work, he also got a job at a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center.

"I worked there for a year or two, but it was really tough and I wasn't making much money," Mike says. "But I still wanted to make an impact on people's lives. I had developed a bond with two young brothers I stayed in touch with after I'd left the rehab center. I also got involved in the youth ministry. Then I got this idea that I should start some kind of business to help some of these kids learn how to work."

From Shining Shoes to Striping Lawns

There is a saying, "That business was started on a shoestring budget." Well, Mike Crawford started his lawn maintenance business on not only a shoestring budget, but also a shoeshine stand.



"I don't know where it came from, but I got it in my head to start a shoeshine business," Mike says. After a string of good luck, the business started to shine.

"The business just blew up," Mike says, adding that it was back in the 1980s when everybody still wore dress shoes. The experience opened Mike's eyes to the potential of entrepreneurship. It also gave him an opportunity to continue his mission of mentoring.

"I started hiring young people to help me," Mike says. One of those employees was one of the brothers Mike had developed a bond with at the rehab center. The spiritual fulfillment of helping lift that boy up was far more rewarding than the

wads of cash that were filling Mike's pockets from polishing shoes.

The other thing that was becoming quite polished was Mike's gift for gab.

"I just love talking to people," Mike relates. "I guess that is the social worker in me. I love talking to people and finding out what their needs are. A couple of my regular customers started asking me if I ever thought about mowing lawns. I hadn't because I didn't even know that could be a business. This was in the late 1980s when there weren't any lawn maintenance companies around here, at least none that I'd heard of."

In any event, Mike Crawford had discovered another unmet need. One

of his shoeshine employees was a young man from the East Coast who actually had lawn care experience. So Mike decided to start a small mowing operation and gave that young man an opportunity to help run it.

Like the shoeshine business a couple of years earlier, Mike's mowing business quickly blew up. Within a year or so, he could no longer juggle both businesses. Mike Crawford was now in the mowing business full time.

Lawn Masters of Springfield continues to serve the same mix of customers today, primarily high-end residential properties with a few retirement communities and smaller commercial sites mixed in. And what about that young boy Mike had developed the bond with at the rehab center? His name is Vernon Wells. He traded in his shoeshine rag for a string trimmer and became an integral part of Lawn Masters of Springfield for the next 30-plus years.

The Right Motivation with the Right Tools

Mike Crawford started out mainly using push mowers. "I also had one of those old Snapper riding mowers like Forrest Gump used, but it wasn't any better," Mike says with a chuckle. As the new customer requests continued pouring in, it didn't take long for Mike to identify another need. Only this time, it was his need—the need to become more efficient.

"A wealthy person in town called me about mowing his property," Mike recalls. "So I went over to his house to look it over. When I pulled up, I

remember thinking, 'Wow, this has got to be at least seven acres, and all I have is a belt-drive walk-behind.' That is when I realized I needed something different in order to keep up."

A short time later, Mike was walking the aisles of a local farm show when he first laid eyes on the Walker Mower.

"I thought, 'This could really help me out,'" Mike recalls. "We live in an area with a lot of leaves and varied working conditions. I thought this Walker Mower could be something I'd use for just about everything all year long."

Mike bought his first Walker Mower in 1991. Within a few years he was up to three crews and three Walkers. From there he settled into a rhythm of replacing one mower every few years. "I think I've bought 12 or 13 Walkers over my career," Mike says. Today he has three Model T's, each with a 48-inch deck and between 500 and 1,200 hours. He uses his mowers to not only cut and catch grass, but also to clean up leaves and even shrub clippings. "There is nothing like it in terms of efficiency," he says.

The Lawn Mowing Mentor

For the most part, Lawn Masters of Springfield has remained a three-crew operation over the course of its 33 years in business. But the company has also gone through some changes. It expanded into fertilizing and chemical applications many years ago, services that Mike continues to personally deliver today. Mike has also experimented with different labor pools to help staff his crews.

In the company's early years, Mike leaned heavily on college students and church acquaintances for employees. Motivated by his social worker instincts, Mike then looked to inner city youth. Results were mixed, however, so he searched for a different approach.

"I started hiring people who were in-between jobs when the economy wasn't so great," Mike says. "Then when the job market picked back up, I started to look for a different labor pool. That's when I saw another unmet need in society. There were a lot of men in their 30s who, for whatever reasons, were struggling to get their lives on track. So I decided to create a mentoring program."

In addition to providing a job, Mike provided financial counseling and other guidance. Mike ran some ads on the careers website *Indeed* and was pleasantly surprised by the response.

"I always told these young men that lawn care can be a wonderful profession, but it can also be a great

care. "The plan is to sell Ryan one of my trucks, trailers and Walker Mowers so he can take over one of our routes," Mike says. "I will continue to mentor him in business and other areas as he branches out on his own."

As that plan unfolds, Mike is now looking to take a step back from the daily grind.

"When we were growing like crazy and running three crews plus myself, most days felt like I was working more for my employees than they were for me," Mike relates. "Now my goal is to hang onto enough accounts that I can work a few days a week mowing and treating lawns. That will allow me to devote more time to the mentoring I love to do."

"I always told these young men that lawn care can be a wonderful profession, but it can also be a great stepping stone. If they would come work with me for a year or two, it would prepare them to get another job if that's what they were looking to do."

stepping stone," Mike says. "If they would come work with me for a year or two, it would prepare them to get another job if that's what they were looking to do."

One employee Mike has been mentoring for the past several years, Ryan Escalante, discovered that he wanted to make a career out of lawn

Mentoring has always been at the heart of Mike Crawford's pursuit of entrepreneurship. It's why he started shining shoes and mowing lawns in the 1980s, so it's only logical that is how he wants to finish his very inspiring, somewhat unpredictable career.





Venice, Florida, was pounded by Hurricane Ian back in September, 2022. But within a few days, Scott Schwartz and his crew were out cleaning up properties and mulching through the blankets of leaves, twigs and muck left behind by the storm.

Mowing Ian's Aftermath

Florida contractor mulches his way through post-hurricane debris

Scott Schwartz Mowing Inc. was right in the path of Hurricane Ian's assault on Venice, Florida, last September. The slow-moving storm unleashed 130-mph wind gusts for seven hours and dumped over a foot of rain. As nerve-racking as the experience was, Scott Schwartz made the most of it.

"Our home is newer so it is hurricane-resistant," Scott says, "so we just rode things out. In a strange way, it was kind of nice to have an excuse to just sit around drinking coffee all day."

That is because Scott mows seven days a week. "I don't have a choice because there are only so many yards I can get through in a day," Scott says, adding that he and his three other mowing crews service around 320 properties.

Scott's day of rest came and went, though. Then it was time to start cleaning up the mess Hurricane Ian left. Fortunately, Scott's home didn't have much damage. Neither did his mother's. Scott Schwartz Mowing's shop was also spared, which is remarkable

considering how the business right next door had its doors ripped off.

Some of Scott's other neighbors and customers weren't so lucky. Many absorbed significant roof and water damage. The number of uprooted trees was way beyond counting. Water, mud, and debris were everywhere.

"It was really spooky the day after the storm," Scott relates. "We have a bunch of Florida Oaks that have these small, hard leaves. With all the rain and wind we got, those leaves were all



“We were mulching up stuff I don’t think the Walker Mower was ever designed to handle, but it did. The yards we were going into were just incredible with the amount of leaves, twigs and other debris. We chopped it all up like there was no tomorrow.”

down. Everything was covered in this black, sooty kind of film.”

“Once things started to dry out a little, we put our mowers to the test,” Scott continues. “We were mulching up stuff I don’t think the Walker Mower was ever designed to handle, but it did. The yards we were going into were just incredible with the amount of leaves, twigs and other debris. We chopped it all up like there was no tomorrow. We had to keep sharpening blades, but we also had to keep going.”

Within a few weeks, things were looking pretty well back to normal, aside from the piles of brush and debris staged in front yards out by the road. But lawns began perking back up, and Scott Schwartz Mowing kept right on mulching.

Freshly-Cut Grass is Better than Paint Fumes

Scott Schwartz used to own an automotive custom paint and body business. He enjoyed fabricating and doing body work, but loved the artistic side of the business even more. Some of his work was even featured in a prominent publication.

Scott got out of that business when he moved to Florida in 2004 to be near his mother. Eight years later, Scott and his wife, Regina, decided to build a new home in a gated community. Their son, Devon, was four years old.

Scott was working full-time for an exterior door company.

Once in their new home, Scott got a Lawn-Boy push mower so he could take care of the lawn. It wasn’t long before a few neighbors noticed what a nice job he was doing and asked Scott if he could mow their lawns, too. He enjoyed working in the yard, so he agreed.

Scott’s side mowing business soon grew to seven lawns with the opportunity to add several more. But he had a problem.

“Using my little push mower was absolutely killing me,” Scott relates.

He knew he needed better, more productive equipment in order to keep up. He also knew he had an opportunity to turn his side hustle into a full-time business. After talking things over with his wife, the couple decided a career mowing lawns in Florida was worth pursuing. So Scott went in pursuit of a more productive mower. He found it by accident.

“I used to make deliveries on Casey Key, an island with a lot of multi-million-dollar homes,” Scott says. “I saw all of these Walker Mowers on all of these properties. I figured the Walker Mower had to be something special.”



Scott Schwartz started his business with three yards and a 21-inch push mower 10 years ago. Now he has around 320 lawns, five employees and five Walker Mowers.

After checking out some machines firsthand at an area dealership, Scott bought his first Walker in 2014, a B18.

"It changed my whole mowing world big time," Scott says. "It's crazy how you can handle everything with the tips of your fingers. I can mow a quarter inch away from stuff all day long. It's just so precise. And the low center of gravity is a plus, too. I use the Big Tire Fork Kit on my mowers. I can handle some serious hills, get down in ditches, and really mow in some tough conditions like construction lots and pasture grass."

Once he got his first Walker back in 2014, Scott started accepting all of those additional requests for service that had been coming in. Soon his account list grew from seven to 70, and before long, it was up to 100.

To keep up with the growth and continue chasing more of it, Scott quit his job at the door company. "It was scary at first," Scott says. "But I had to do it so I could go to mowing full-time. My wife was totally behind me so I knew I could make it work. Still, going from a little \$200 push mower to a brand-new Walker Mower was sort of a

"I could have bought any riding mower that would have made me more productive. But I didn't want to settle for less. If I was going to do this, I was going to do it right."

tough sell at first. I could have bought any riding mower that would have made me more productive. But I didn't want to settle for less. If I was going to do this, I was going to do it right."

Scott says it took a little while to get some growth momentum going. But once he got up to around 100 lawns, growth picked up quickly because Scott Schwartz Mowing started to become a household name. That's when Scott started hiring employees and buying more Walkers. He purchased a B23i in 2017, another B23i in 2019, a B27i in

2020, and another B27i in 2021. He has four 42-inch mulching decks, a 48-inch and a 52-inch mulching deck, and a 56-inch side-discharge deck.

Scott has really taken a liking to the 52-inch mulching deck. As long as a property doesn't have a narrow gate he needs to get through, he has found the 52 to still be very nimble, but much more productive. "I can put my 52 anywhere my guys are putting their 42s, and it always saves me a lot of time," Scott points out.

One-person, One-Walker Crews

As pointed out earlier, Scott Schwartz mows seven days a week. He doesn't expect that much from his employees, though. They mow five days a week. But boy, do they mow! Each of Scott's four main Walkers is racking up 600 to 700 hours a year. His fifth mower, the original purchase, is kept as a backup.

Scott Schwartz Mowing runs four one-person mowing crews, one of which is Scott himself. Each mowing rig consists of a compact enclosed trailer, a Walker Mower and some handheld equipment. Each rig

services 15 to 20 lawns per day. Scott says he likes to keep his mowing rigs focused on mowing, edging and blowing. That's why he also has a separate two-person "cleanup crew" that handles shrub trimming, weeding, mulching and other detail-type work.

"We've found that one-person mowing rigs really help productivity," Scott says. "In certain circumstances that might require more manpower, it's easy to double-team a property if we have to. But for the most part,



Most of Scott Schwartz's properties are average-sized residential lawns that take 15-20 minutes to mow. He also has a handful of three-acre properties and a few commercial accounts.

we like having one person service a property on their own."

Scott also likes mixing up the routes once in a while. Yes, mowing the same properties over and over can help develop efficiencies. But mixing things up helps establish an extra degree of quality control and accountability because everyone is seeing each other's work.

That's not to say Scott Schwartz feels like he can't trust his employees. It's the exact opposite. He says he has the five best employees he could find, which makes running a fast-paced lawn maintenance business a lot easier.

On the day *Walker Talk* visited in early November, another storm watch was issued for the Venice, Florida area. Fortunately, Tropical Storm Nicole just ended up dumping a bunch of rain a couple of days later. "We were out mowing the very next day after the storm moved through," Scott says. This time around, thankfully, all the Scott Schwartz Mowing crews had to deal with was some soggy grass.

**See Scott's
handiwork in
this video on
walkertalk.com**



Wired to Mow in Michigan's Upper Peninsula

Brian Boucher is the quintessential entrepreneur. He first started mowing lawns at age 15. In 1997, at age 18, he started a company, Beaver's Landscaping.

"I've only had two 'real jobs' in my life," Brian says. "I worked at a gas station in high school and then at an electronics store installing those old bag cell phones. The owner of that store said he would have to fire me if I didn't start wearing a uniform. I was mowing lawns on the side at the time. So I told him, 'See ya' later,' and haven't had another job since."

Upon leaving that electronics store, Brian focused 100% on his mowing business. He didn't consider that a job because he absolutely loved it. He didn't have a Walker Mower at first, but heard about the machine from another contractor. Before long, Brian got a loan and purchased his first Walker.

"It was a GHS machine with the Hi-Dump," Brian recalls. "I used that mower for 15 years before deciding to sell my mowing business and focus on my other business."

Brian had purchased an electronics store of his own in 2001. He primarily sold car stereos and remote starters. The store quickly branched into cell phones as the market began to develop in the early 2000s. It was a rocky start.





Brian Boucher's Walker fleet (from left): two Model T's with 52-inch decks, a Model H with 62-inch rear-discharge deck, and an older machine set up with a fertilizer spreader.

"I bought my first wireless store 10 days before 9/11," Brian says. "I remember thinking to myself, 'What did I get myself into?'" But it all worked out and cell phones quickly became a staple of society. Brian's company, Team Wireless, began acquiring other stores one by one. He had to make a choice, and leaving the lawn maintenance industry seemed to be the right one.

But that didn't mean Brian was going to stop mowing grass as a whole ... not a chance.

"I needed something to mow my own yard with, so I bought a new Walker," Brian says. "Then when we bought our 1,500-acre property a few years ago, I needed a couple more Walkers. I could never go an entire week without mowing. It's nice to have options parked in the garage."

Gorgeous Grass is the Centerpiece of His Sanctuary

It's really somewhat ironic. Brian Boucher makes his living nowadays with a piece of technology that helps people stay connected. Yet, he seems to be happiest when simply enjoying nature in solitude.

"I spend about 25 hours a week sitting in the seat of a Walker Mower, alone,"

Brian says. "My stress relief is being out on the mower. There is nothing better than the smell of fresh-cut grass and straight lines. I really enjoy making those checkerboard stripes because they're pretty neat to see."

"My stress relief is being out on the mower. There is nothing better than the smell of fresh-cut grass and straight lines."

So how does this busy entrepreneur find the time to spend so many hours on his Walker Mower? The key is having good people working for him in his cell phone business.

"I've always been a believer in the idea of hiring people smarter than you," Brian says. "When you can do that, you don't have to be there. You just have to pay them well and treat them well."

This approach has given Brian the freedom to do what he really loves to do, which is taking care of his

sprawling property. "One month my truck didn't even have 500 miles on it," Brian relates. Furthermore, most of those miles were racked up on the private gravel roads crisscrossing his land. "I just never leave," Brian

continues. "My friends tell me, 'Brian, you have got to leave the compound.' But I don't need to leave because I have everything I want right here."

Using Walkers to Maintain 1,500 Acres

Of Brian's 1,500-acre outdoor sanctuary, 15 to 20 are turfgrass that needs to be mowed. The main lawn around the house is roughly five acres. The remaining turfgrass is scattered across the property around ponds, orchards and food plots for deer.

You've probably heard of a farmer's tan. Brian Boucher wears his "Walker tan" with pride. He spends so much time in the sun with his left hand wrapped around a Walker steering lever that the top half of his fingers stay milky white all summer.





Brian Boucher fertilizes twice a month and mows every three days to maintain a lush, clean, dark green lawn.

The five acres around the house are maintained the most meticulously. Brian mows them every three days to a height of four inches. He uses one of his two Model Ts with a 52-inch deck and GHS system to throw down some pretty sweet stripes. For the other 10 to 15 acres that need to be mowed, Brian uses his Model H with a 62-inch rear-discharge deck.

Brian's fourth Walker Mower is set up as a dedicated spreader. It's an older machine so Brian isn't as concerned about fertilizer residue causing corrosion on the deck. Brian uses this unit to spread a standard nitrogen fertilizer on the five-acre lawn every single month during the growing season. Each application is followed by an application of Milorganite a couple of weeks later, which adds another dosing of nitrogen along with some iron.

"I've really gotten into using Milorganite," Brian tells. "It has made a huge difference. It doesn't really make the lawn grow thicker, but does help it get to this dark green color that looks fantastic."

Constructing Paradise

Brian's property was actually a farm before he bought it several years ago. It looked nothing like it does today.

Brian had half of his five-acre lawn hydroseeded. The other half was sodded, requiring roughly 15 semi-loads carrying 300 pallets each. Along with fertilizing, a 200-head sprinkler system has helped the lawn take on a life of its own.

"If I don't mow every three days, I'm in trouble," Brian relates. "It is so thick and green. You can see footprints when people walk on it. I love it."

In addition to his own outdoor sanctuary, Brian mows and maintains

two of his local cell phone stores' lawns. "Employees can't understand why in the world the owner of the company would be doing the groundskeeping," Brian says. But to him, it makes perfect sense. This wireless business mogul is simply wired to mow.

See Brian's story by watching this video.



Brian Boucher on his Model T25i.



Walker Talk Editorial

What Drives a Walker User?

The personal stories of hundreds of Walker users have been told on the pages of *Walker Talk* over the past 30 years. While each user offered their own take on why the Walker Mower has become important to them, we have heard a lot of recurring themes.

About one year ago, Walker Mowers embarked on an extensive research study of Walker users across the globe. Survey invitations were distributed via email and postcard. We asked many of the same questions we pose to the wonderful people whose stories we share in *Walker Talk*. The response was overwhelming, with 916 Walker users taking the time to complete the survey. The individual responses themselves are quite fascinating, helping paint an even clearer picture of what really drives a Walker user.

Mowing for All Ages and Ambitions

Roughly two-thirds of Walker users are age 35 to 64. However, another 11% are under the age of 35, and an

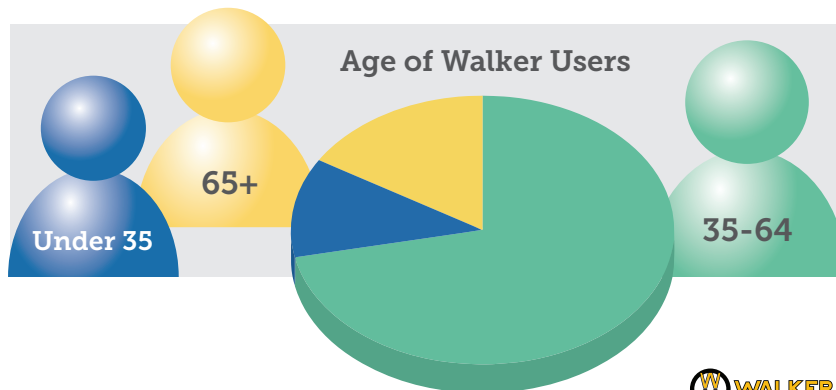
even larger group (15%) are at least 65. That shows how the Walker's ease of use and comfortability can allow some people to continue mowing well into their later years.

It doesn't matter if they mow for a living or simply for the enjoyment, either. Walker users are evenly split between commercial users and everyday homeowners.

Professionals who use the Walker Mower vary from smaller operations to larger ones generating seven-figure revenue. But make no mistake, the majority (68%) of Walker commercial users are smaller operations with annual sales of less than \$500,000. In fact, half employ no more than two people.

Professionals who mow with a Walker have a nice mix of residential and commercial clients. Nearly three-quarters have at least 25 residential customers. Roughly 20% actually have more than 100. On the commercial property side, 37% of Walker users have up to nine clients, and another 23% have 10-24. Roughly 27% of Walker contractors service at least 25 different commercial clients.

Most homeowners (78%) use their Walker to mow 1/4 to three acres of grass. Most of the time, it is their own lawns. However, nearly 20% of homeowners also use their Walker to mow a friend's or neighbor's property. So even some of the "everyday Joes" feel like pros when they're on their Walker Mower.

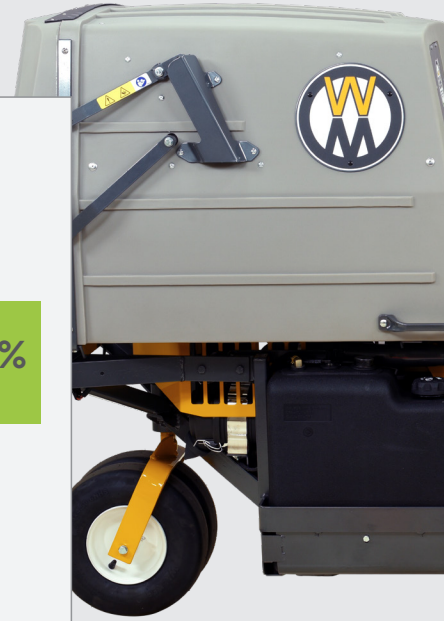
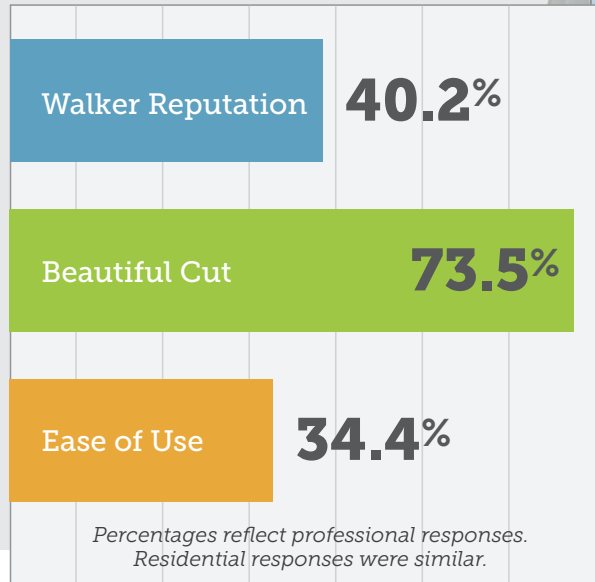


92% of Professionals



and 84%
of Homeowners
shop for equipment at
a local Walker dealership

Top Reasons Customers Buy a Walker



It all starts at a Walker Dealer

The heart of the Walker brand is its independent dealer network. Walker users couldn't agree more, as the overwhelming majority typically shop at a local Walker Dealer. In fact, shopping at a local dealer is even slightly more common for professionals (92%) than homeowners (84%). Regardless, the consultative role dealers play is valuable to anyone purchasing a high-end machine like the Walker Mower.

Walker users also value the opportunity to see, touch and experience the equipment they are thinking about buying, which is one reason why they like shopping at dealerships. Walker users are also influenced by recommendations from friends and colleagues.

When making their final purchasing decision, however, Walker users rely heavily on input from the dealer. An in-person demonstration is also influential. But above all else, Walker users are most

influenced by their own past experience with a product. Perhaps that is why Walker is so blessed to have had so many loyal customers over the years.

Why a Walker?

There are several reasons why both homeowners and professionals choose a Walker Mower.

A beautiful cut is by far the most common. Users also point to the Walker's reputation, past experience with the mower, and the mower's ease of operation.

Homeowners specifically say their desire for manicured grass is what drew them to the Walker. Homeowners also like the mower's ability to mow and trim around obstacles such as flower beds, trees, shrubs and fence lines. Quite a few homeowners also have hills they need to mow. The Walker is designed to excel on hills and slopes, particularly the non-grass-catching machines like the Model B.

It's also interesting to note which Walker Mower features are the most

appreciated by users. Roughly 80% of homeowners point to the tilt-up deck, 75% like the fact that the deck is front-mounted, and roughly 60% praise the ease of operation, visibility, precision steering and grass-handling ability.

On the professional side, 75% of users say the Walker's grass-handling capability is the most impressive feature. Nearly as many (70%) like the tilt-up deck, followed by 60% that like the front-mounted deck. A little more than half say they like the visibility, ease of operation and precise steering.

Some Walker users point to other features in which they have found a lot of value. For instance, one professional user in Florida bought the Big Tire Kit so he can cut grass to five inches high. Other users like having the ability to vacuum up leaves, as well as dump those leaves (or grass) without having to get off of the mower.

All of the features and qualities of the Walker Mower speak to several "problems" to which users seek "solutions". Of course, some problems are more common than others.

Top Features

84%

of Homeowners and 70% of Professionals indicate the tilt-up deck as a favorite Walker feature

Other Top Features:

Front-mount Deck

Precision Steering

Grass Handling System



Roughly 30% of Walker users say the mower helps them save time, which nobody seems to have enough of these days. The same number of users say the Walker Mower provides a way to mow and handle grass effectively. Roughly 15% say the Walker helps them get rid of leaves, mulch and debris, and another 15% say the Walker helps maintain healthy turfgrass that looks great.

Some users mentioned some more specific challenges that their Walker helps address:

- Mowing on hills
- Minimizing scalping
- Getting into tight areas and through gates
- Maneuvering around obstacles
- Accessing under the deck
- Ability to use attachments

Speaking of attachments, Walker's dethatcher attachment really stands out as its most popular. In fact, 44% of commercial users and 21% of homeowners own a dethatcher.

At the end of the day, Walker Manufacturing continues to believe that the Walker user drives everything. The challenges users face drive the solutions Walker engineers strive to provide. It is a never-ending pursuit of perfection that Walker Manufacturing, together with its distributors, dealers and end-users, will continue pursuing together.

The Dethatcher is the #1 Most Popular Walker Attachment

44% of Commercial Users and 21% of Homeowners Own One



What Do Walker Users Do When They Aren't Mowing Grass?

This probably doesn't come as a surprise, but most Walker users still like spending their time outdoors. In fact, 64% of homeowners and 65% of commercial users say their favorite hobbies involve being outdoors.

So what exactly do Walker users like to do for fun?

When it comes to homeowners:

- 42% enjoy gardening
- 41% like hunting and fishing
- 40% like traveling
- 29% like exercising
- 23% enjoy motorsports
- 23% like golfing

For commercial users:

- At least 41% of them like to take a break from mowing lawns by traveling
- 39% of them have a preferred hobby of hunting or fishing
- 28% like to exercise
- Motorsports and golf are popular with 24% of them
- There are also some lawn mowing pros who can't seem to get enough of working in the yard. Roughly one-third like to spend their free time gardening.



Walker Product Updates and Company News

Dozer Blade for Model R (A44)

A 48" dozer blade attachment has been developed for the Model R, similar in design to the A32 blade used on other models, including a manual raise and lower mechanism and blade angle adjustment. In addition, there is a new feature of blade articulation allowing +/-5 degrees of lateral movement of the blade to better follow ground contour. The blade is a useful tool for snow removal or light utility work moving dirt, mulch or other debris. Note: An 80-lb Tail Weight Kit (P/N 1647-10) is required to be installed on the MR tractor to counterweight when lifting the blade.



Articulation Added to H11/H16 Dozer Blades

A newly designed articulation joint has been added to the H11 and H16 Dozer Blade mount allowing +/-5 degrees of lateral movement of the blade to better follow ground contour. It also adjusts the blade surface contact for any variation in drive tire diameter. Earlier blade mounts may be upgraded with the articulation feature using Kit P/N 6626-12.

Mulch Baffle Redesigned for Improved Performance

The removable "quick change" mulch baffle for the DS42-R deck has been redesigned for improved cut quality and more even clipping distribution. The new design fits on earlier decks. Order Kit P/N 1629-19.



Quieter Engine Muffler for Model R

Starting with Serial Number 22-178455, the Model R has a new larger muffler that reduces the operating noise level. The new muffler will fit on earlier units. Ask your Walker dealer to help with this upgrade by referring to Advisory Bulletin # 22295.

More Powerful Headlights Available

Optional headlight kits and the A17 operator cab are using a more powerful (1700 lumens), more durable LED light assembly (P/N 7989-5). See Advisory Bulletin #22286 for information on changing to the new light on earlier units.



Recall Bulletin Issued

Recall Bulletin #22287A, issued March 2022, affecting Model MC19i, S/N 21-172243 thru 22-174218 and Model MT27i, S/N 21-172059 thru 22-174689, inspect three (3) fuel line clamps for improper installation and fix as needed for complete closure of the clamp(s). Compliance with this bulletin is strongly recommended due to the safety hazard of a fuel leak and potential of a fire. All owners of affected units are encouraged to contact their local Walker dealer to comply with the bulletin free of charge.

Top Ten Walker Dealers Recognized

The top ten dealers for 2022 are recognized by the number of new-machine registered sales made from September 1, 2021 through August 31, 2022:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Power Equipment Plus, Inc., East Hampton, NY USA | 6 Chad Little, Brunswick, ME USA |
| 2 Master Mower, Marietta, GA USA | 7 Cutting Edge Sales & Service, Milford, IA USA |
| 3 Price Small Engine, Inc., Opelika, AL USA | 8 R G Power, Fresno, CA USA |
| 4 Aubin Equipment, East Dennis, MA USA | 9 Stephen Roy Power Equipment, North Smithfield, RI USA |
| 5 Smith's Lawnmower Sales & Service, Inc., Caldwell, ID USA | 10 MAC Equipment, Loveland, CO USA |

Investment To Increase Factory Capacity

During 2022 several new machine tools have been added, and material handling has been upgraded to increase factory output and efficiency:

- Bystronic automatic bend cell for unmanned press brake bending of small, high-volume parts
- Horizontal bending machine for bending wheel forks and rear bumper frames
- Sunrise CNC ironworker consolidating cutting, notching and punching into a single machine operation
- Installed four-ton material handling crane to unload stacks of sheet metal from flat bed trucks and place into laser cutting storage
- Changed metal fabrication and machining floor plan to facilitate better material flow, floor space utilization and crane utilization



Material handling crane used to unload stacks of sheet metal from flat bed trucks and place into laser cutting storage.



Factory Day A Success

By all accounts, the Factory Day on September 23rd was a great success. A little over 1,000 attended. While most of the attendees were local or Colorado-based, there were some who traveled distances, for example, from NJ, PA, IN, WA. Highlights were the self-guided factory tour (the factory was in full operation and several of our suppliers had displays along the tour route), lunch, test driving Walker Mowers in the demonstration area, and the obstacle course competition. Over 200 operators ran the obstacle course to try to qualify for the finals. Kyle McKenna from Fort Collins won the competition and the \$1000 prize plus bragging rights.

Walker Named Gold Level Manufacturer

For the seventh year in a row, Walker Manufacturing was recognized as a Gold Level Manufacturer by the Equipment Dealer Association (EDA) 2022 survey of over 2500 dealers in the US and Canada. Walker came in third overall and averaged 5.68 (out of 7) on 11 categories such as product quality, parts availability, warranty procedures, and marketing and advertising support. Walker received the highest score among 25 power equipment manufacturers in six of the 11 categories.

"We continue to be honored by our dealers' feedback through the EDA survey results, and we are always striving to improve the manufacturer-dealership relationship," states Walker President, Ryan Walker.





Living a Walker Life...



From Whitianga, New Zealand. Congratulations to Niven and Marissa McLachlan. Niven is the owner of Victory Lawn Care. Thanks for including Walker in your wedding!

Congratulations to Derrick and Allison Lightford of Dallas, Georgia on their wedding on August 27, 2022. Thanks for including Walker on your special day!



Mr. Lionel Boucherie of Izegem, Belgium is 90 years old and still going strong on his Walker Mower, as he mows the grass around his home and his son's home, and the grounds of their family business. Lionel's son, Bart Jr., describes his father as a brilliant engineer who is fascinated with the Walker Mower.

