# GUIDE TO
# LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

**Know your numbers, estimate accurately and increase profits**
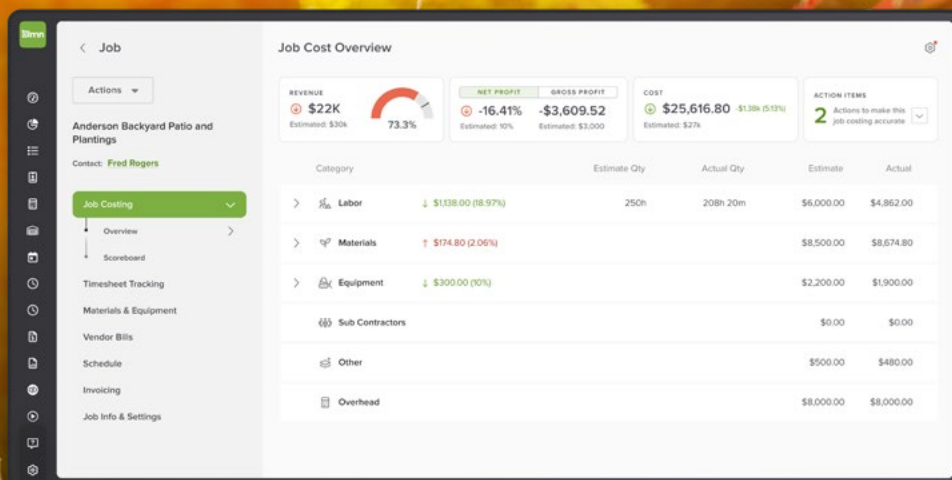
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS:

# Introduction

Building a landscape business can be difficult, especially with limited resources and manual processes. It's a challenge to manage all aspects of the business while juggling budgeting, estimating, job costing, invoicing, customer relationship management, and more.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, you're not alone. In a recent survey, 75% of landscapers reported a mid to high level of stress, which isn't surprising, especially when you consider recent challenges that have been added to their plates like hiring, rising costs and employee retention.

Fortunately, there are solutions like landscape management software that automate administrative tasks, create cost and time-saving efficiencies, and maximize profitability.

In this guide, you'll learn how landscape management software works, the challenges it solves and the benefits it provides. We'll also help you choose a solution that's right for your business and show you how to determine your return on investment.

# What is Landscape Management Software?

Landscape management software helps you manage your business from end to end— from budgeting and estimating all the way to invoicing and payments. The software streamlines processes to help you save time, better manage your team, maximize profit and eliminate financial waste.
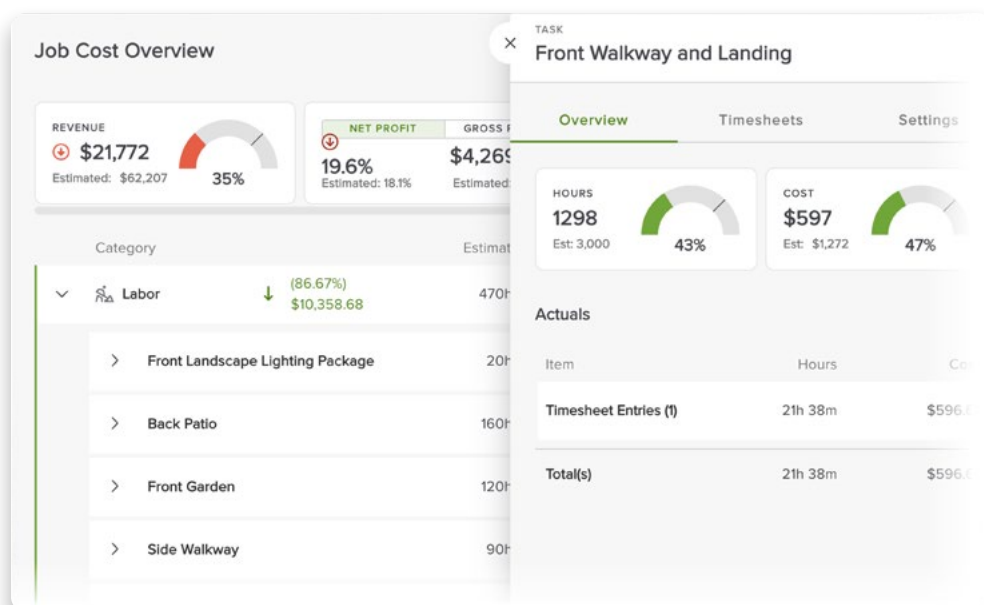


Most solutions include features that help landscape business owners manage:

- Budgeting and estimating
- Scheduling and time tracking
- Customer relationship management
- Job costing
- Invoicing and payments
- File and photo storage

As a comprehensive business management solution, the technology is designed to help landscaping businesses scale and grow.

*Landscape management software helps you manage your business from end to end— from budgeting and estimating all the way to invoicing and payments.*

# The Challenges Software Solves and Benefits It Provides

Landscape management software helps landscapers create better business plans that save time, increase productivity and drive efficiencies across key areas. Here's a closer look at what it can help you do:

## Build a Better Financial Plan

Landscape management software helps you gain visibility into all business-related costs, track expenses and increase accountability throughout the company. It can also help you build a budget and offers tools to help you forecast and achieve your annual revenue and profit margin goals.

## Estimate More Accurately

Estimating jobs can be time-consuming, especially when operating a landscape business at scale and pricing larger and more complex projects. Landscape management software can help with an estimating tool that creates repeatable sales processes, ensuring faster, more accurate estimates for prospective customers.

An estimating tool can significantly streamline your sales process and reduce time spent estimating by as much as 75% using templates and standard terms and conditions. Proficient estimating tools also allow the company owner to step away from a hands-on sales role within the business, as other team members can use the systems to accurately bid and price work.



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## Enhance Your Customer Experience

It's challenging to keep track of your customers, remember who you've responded to, locate their contact information, and know what's next on the to-do list— especially if you don't have a system to consolidate and track the information.

Landscape management software stores your customer information in a centralized location, providing visibility to everyone in the company. It can also enhance customer service by ensuring customer needs are met with organized customer to-do lists and a streamlined communication process.
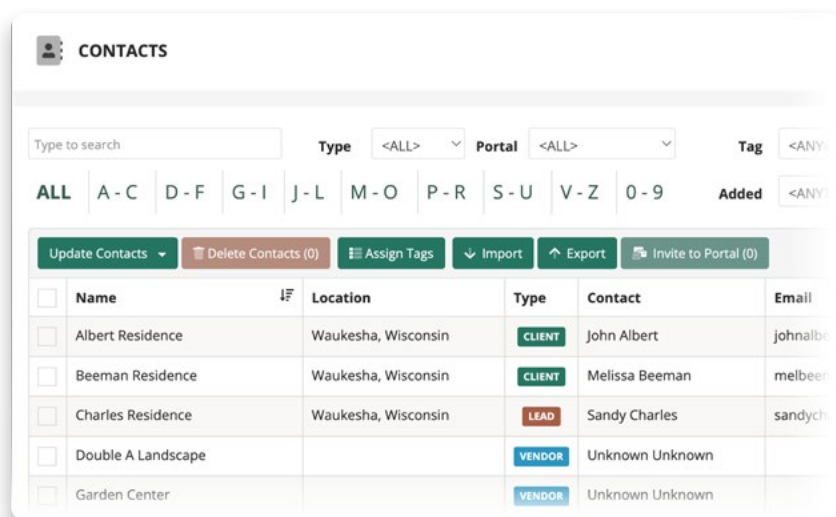


## Save Time and Create Efficiencies

Tired of rummaging through endless amounts of paper to do simple reporting? Landscape management software makes your job easier by instantly pulling job and payroll reports based on accurate timesheet data.

It'll also be easier to schedule and track time. Some platforms can accurately track time using GPS-stamped time and locations that show where a team member has clocked in and clocked out. You'll be able to export time records in seconds that easily import into most payroll platforms— saving you manual, administrative work.

## Measure Your Progress

You can't measure what you don't monitor. Software can help you track important stats and can help identify problems and improve processes long before they happen. Reporting within landscape management software can help you see:

- Sales To Date – Post company sales targets vs. actuals. You can even separate upsells into a category to inspire more significant results.

- Productivity Rates – What are your total sales dollars per payroll hour? Is it increasing or decreasing?

- Labor Ratio – What percent of sales are spent on labor costs? Using this number, you can implement a payroll system that pays employees based on a percentage of their production.

## Ensure Every Job is Profitable

Landscape management software helps ensure that every job is profitable. Job costing provides real-time visibility into profit across multiple jobs, so you can adjust pricing, training or processes as needed.

Job costing helps you clearly understand where your profit is coming from, so that you can improve estimate accuracy, eliminate financial waste, and make better business decisions about future jobs and services. Businesses also use job costing to better understand which people are performing, helping you build incentive programs that increase retention and highlight crews or crew members that require more training.

# How Landscape Management Software Benefits Different Users

Whether you're an owner-operator, administrator, in-field supervisor, or a landscaping apprentice, landscaping management software benefits the entire company. Let's go through some benefits for specific users.

## Owners

Landscape management software gives owners time back in their day, freeing time to grow and scale their businesses. It strengthens their business by increasing financial awareness, streamlining sales processes, creating better customer experiences, and improving cash flow. The software also enhances operations with better communication, schedules, job planning, and material and equipment management.

## Administrators

Landscape management software benefits administrators by centralizing the tools they need to do their job, addressing payroll, time tracking, material supply, invoicing, customer to-dos, and scheduling. It increases transparency to ensure everyone is on the same page, often making a difference between jobs going over or under budget.

## Field Supervisors/ Crew Leads

Some landscape management software solutions create an easy-to-use job plan based on estimated work, which is then pushed directly to a scheduling tool.

Better visibility and communication can empower a crew to think and act like an owner and take more accountability for each job. For example, they'll be able to see whether the job is on time and within budget versus estimated hours and actuals. This allows for resource management pivots and making adjustments on the fly whether it's hiring subcontracts, readjusting crews, or better managing materials deliveries.

## Landscape Technician

Team members are motivated to do great work and produce better results when they know their efforts directly impact the success of a job. Providing job site goals and metrics can make a difference in effort once crew members know their benchmark efficiency numbers to measure against.

# How To Find Software That Fits Your Landscape Business

## Consider Features That Meet Your Needs

Not all solutions are equal, and every landscaping company's needs are unique. To find the right software for you, start by looking at your immediate and long-term needs.

If you're trying to grow your business, make sure the software you choose includes features like budgeting, estimating, job and payroll reporting, and sales reports. Return on investment comes from automating and simplifying frequent administrative tasks to open up valuable working hours during the day.

Next, forecast what your business will need in the short and long-term. For instance, you may not need a scheduling system now, but could your business benefit from digital scheduling in the future? Maybe it's time to digitize your customer contacts list? Would you consider moving away from a rolodex or putting an end to cycling through the endless contacts list on your phone?

Looking ahead can give your business a roadmap to continual growth and allow you to slowly create efficiencies within your business. The minutes and hours you save the company truly add up, oftentimes covering the cost of implementing landscape management software.



### Here are some questions to consider when exploring software solutions.

1. Can the software solve the frustrations and problems that I'm faced with on a day-to-day and annual basis?

2. Is the software too complex for anyone else within my company to learn?

3. Does the software provider have adequate resources and training to help us learn to use the software and train other team members?

4. Is this software provider a good fit for my company five to ten years from now?

5. Do I need mobile capabilities, or is a desktop enough?

6. Is the software user-friendly and customizable if I have specific needs?

7. Is the software provider an expert in the landscaping industry?

# Return on Investment

### Will this reduce my costs?

Your software should pay for itself and then some. It will enhance your services, lead to more accurate and consistent pricing, enable vertical growth, reduce financial waste and streamline your operations team.
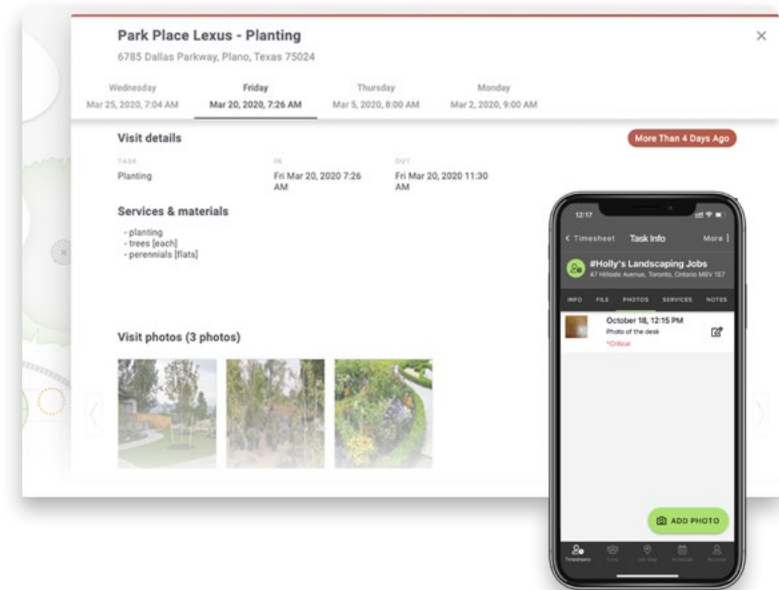
The right landscape management solution will also help your team get each job done quicker thanks to streamlined processes, better communication, and more organized job plans and materials. That time savings, multiplied by each crew, quickly leads to higher revenue for your company. Before you know it, you've recouped the cost of your software purchase and set your business up for success.

### Will this help improve my customers' experience and the quality of our work?

Your customers are everything. Your level of service will help retain customers and attract new ones. If you show and create value and deliver it through a more professional experience with more accurate estimates and clear communication, your customers will likely be ok with paying more. Transparency builds trust, and trust earns loyalty.
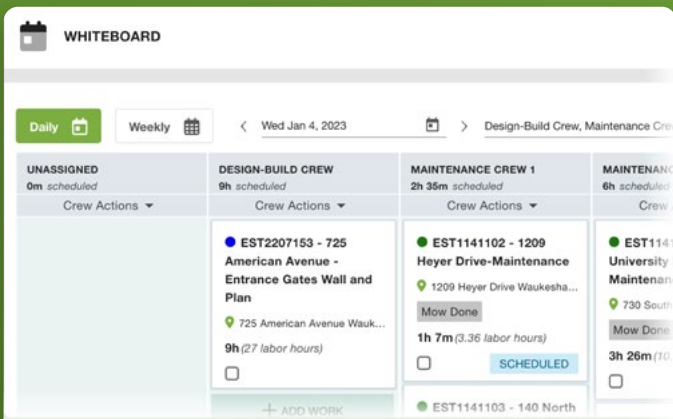
### Can software reduce my liability?

Some landscape management software provides time and GPS-stamped proof of work and allows you to submit site photos, job notes, and clock-in and out times. Difficult customers and liability claims can be avoided with strong usage of these features, saving your business time and money by helping you avoid replacement or repair costs, rework, or hours spent arguing over unsubstantiated claims.

# What's Next?

Now that you understand what landscape management software can do, how the right solution can benefit your organization, and know how to select and make a case for the right landscape software solution, you're ready to take the next step.

**Learn more** about Landscape Management Network and how we can help your firm drive efficiencies and profit and help eliminate the frustrations and challenges of owning and operating a landscape business.



**About LMN:** *Landscape Management Network, or LMN for short, is business management software designed to help landscaping contractors maximize profit with better planning.*
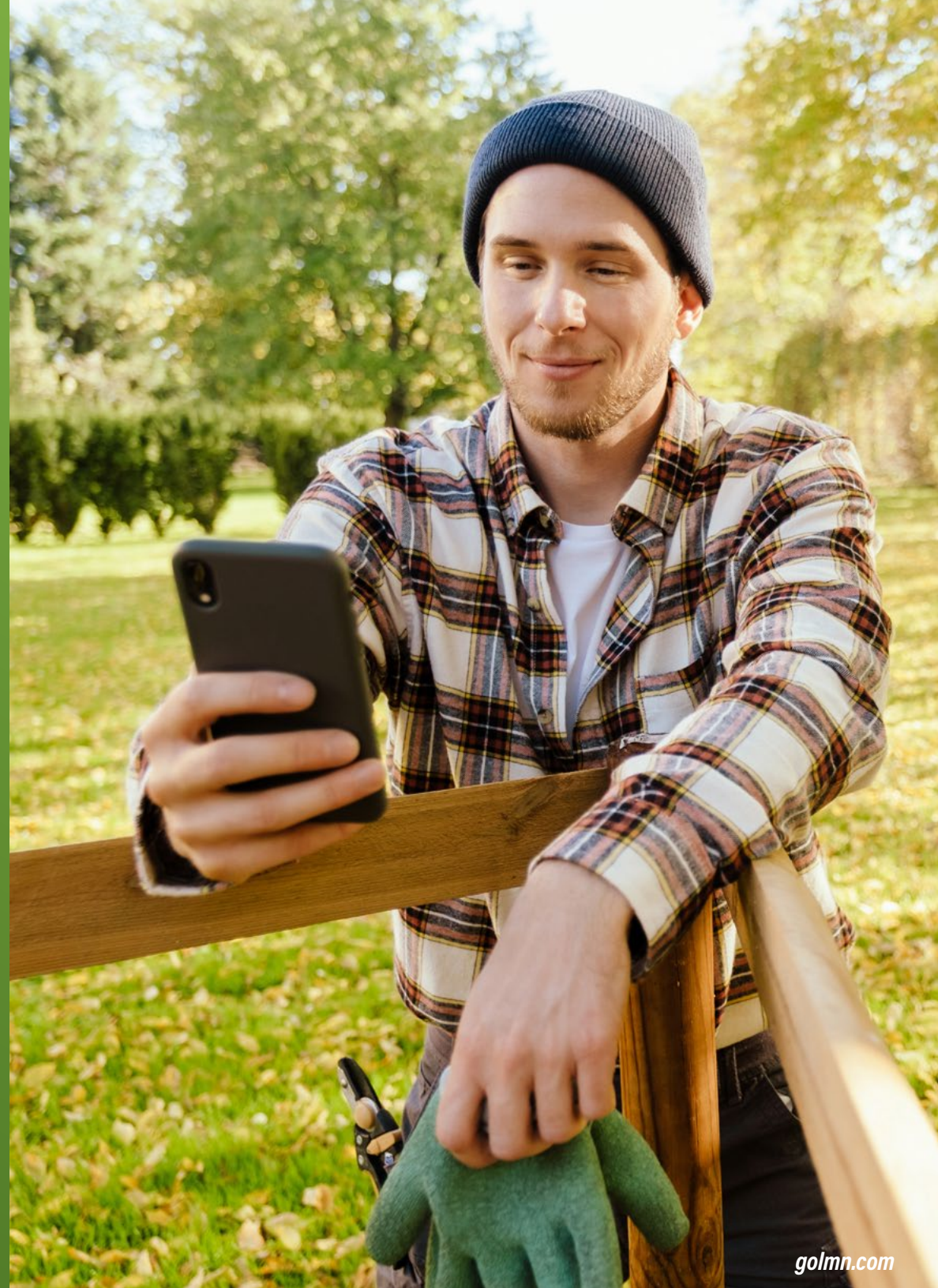
Founded in 2009, LMN helped customers create over $51 billion worth of estimates, capture 78 million individual clock-ins, and have managed more than 245,000 employees daily through the software.

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