

Off the Board - an editorial from ODG

(This is ODG's first editorial. In our day to day activities we have an opportunity to talk with everyone from homeowners to contractors to vendors to managers. This gives us a unique opportunity to pass along to you our observations and comments as to what we see, what is working and what bothers us in our industry. We hope you bear with us as one of us opens up. We welcome your comments, thoughts and criticisms)



John and I recently attended the nursery trade show (MANTS) in Baltimore. We stopped and talked with many nurseries, suppliers and other designers. It was great to hear optimism from everyone. Suppliers told us that early orders are up and that contractors were busier this year than last, at this time. We are also hearing the same thing from you. It seems that more homeowners are looking for designs and estimates to get projects installed this year.

I recently attended a woodworking show (his hobby) in Baltimore. All of the vendors there said they were having the best show they have had in two years. Why should we care about woodworkers? Because it is great for all of us. All the money spent at the show is "discretionary" income. This means there is a good portion of the consumers out there with money in their pocket and ready to spend.

Just because the consumer is ready to spend does not mean a return to the heydays of five years ago. They will still compare companies and "shop" prices even more. What they are really looking for is VALUE. This is why you have to make sure you set yourself up to stand out above the crowd.

Here is one suggestion. Along with landscape design, project management, expert witness and arboricultural consulting, **Outdoor Design Group also provides business coaching to companies in the green industry.**

One landscape contractor that we coached uses our landscape designs as a huge sales tool. Usually most people think of landscape design as just a way to put the client's wants and desires on paper. This company goes beyond that.

The contractor does not let any design go out the door that is not a scaled, computer generated, top notch design. Then uses it to show exactly what he will do for the customer, leaving nothing to "just guessing" and showing that everything on the site

has been taken into consideration. This gives him an edge over his competition, who are still doing hand sketches or conceptual computer drawings. **As a result, his closing rate has drastically improved, making 2010 a very good year for him.**

The Bottom line is to use all tools available to you, challenge your comfort zone and set yourself apart. This will result in more jobs, as well as more longevity and profitability for your business.

Dick

Outdoor Design Group

Offering a new kind of partnership in design and project management services to landscape contractors, general contractors and pool companies - eliminating the need and overhead of an "in house" design staff.



www.outdoordgroup.com

ODG at Spring Home Show!

Outdoor Design Group has reserved a booth at the Spring Maryland Home and Garden Show in Timonium.

Dates are March 5-6 and 11-13, 2011.
Stop by and say "Hi".

www.mdhomeandgarden.com

Design Tips

(things not to forget when performing a site analysis)

- Drainage
- Elevations
- Erosion control
- Irrigation systems
- Impact on neighboring property
- Existing utilities
- Permits required
- Building Restriction Limit lines
- Impact on existing trees
- Easements
- Conservation areas
- HOA restrictions
- Existing hardscapes
- Existing plants
- Existing light fixtures
- Existing architectural details
- Important views
- Homeowners lifestyle
- North orientation

Outdoor Design Group increases trade association memberships

Outdoor Design Group recently joined

We Can Help You!!!

Outdoor Design Group has been very busy over the past year with helping people, like you, who have to "fight" to get paid when the job is complete. As an Expert Witness, I have had the opportunity to help contractors get the money they deserve. ODG can aide by acting as an independent and objective third party and inspect the work in the field. We will write a report summarizing the fact that your workmanship is built to industry standard(s), etc. In return, we eliminate the need for you to take a client to court to get the money they owe you for a job well done. If we can help your company by keeping a dispute out of court, everybody WINS!!!!

John

[Link to my website](#)

many new trade associations. We are proud to announce our membership in these additional associations in our effort to stay on top of current trends, methods and industry standards.

- MD-DC-VA Landscape Contractors Association
- Association of Professional Landscape Designers
- American Society of Landscape Architects
- American Society of Consulting Arborists

Final Thoughts

Outdoor Design Group wants to thank you for an awesome 2010 and we're looking forward to a prosperous "2011". Thank you for your continued business partnership. We look forward to working with you soon!

John and Dick.

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