

# PEOPLE POWER FUELS COMPANY GROWTH



## COMPANY PROFILE:

Precision Landscape  
Management  
Dallas, Texas

CEO:  
Bruce Birdsong, Landscape  
Industry Certified Manager

Founded: 1979

Employees: 250

Service Offering:  
Full-service commercial  
landscape management



It was 31 years ago when Dallas-based Precision Landscape Management landed its first commercial maintenance account. At the time, the company employed two people; now, it employs 250. Although providing commercial landscape management services still drives the company, reputation, word-of-mouth, and experience have created growth opportunities in other service areas. Commercial customers, including property owners and managers and HOAs, can call on Precision for landscape design and construction; irrigation installation, repair, and backflow services; lawn care; and arboriculture services.

Precision Landscape Management is the brainchild of CEO Bruce Birdsong, Landscape Industry Certified Manager, who started the company right out of high school. “We learned early on that commercial maintenance was the area in which we wanted to concentrate,” he relates. “Yes, we’ve branched off into other service areas, but 90 percent of this work originates from our 400 maintenance accounts. We have been truly blessed to hire some outstanding individuals and this, more than anything else, has been responsible for our growth.”

### Turning points

When asked to define a couple of turning points, Birdsong mentions debt, or lack thereof, as being pivotal, especially in the company’s formative years. “We grew as fast as we could afford and avoided creating debt,” he says. “Even today, we’re cautious about spending money. But at the same time, if a piece of equipment or software will help us become more efficient, then we will certainly make the investment.”

However, it’s people — department heads, crew leaders, and crew members — who make the company tick, the founder says emphatically. “Our employees are our strength, and they give us our competitive advantage. Throughout, we’ve always looked for the best people to help our company grow, and we treat everyone equally.”

Twenty years ago, Precision Landscape Management started a profit sharing program. It is available to all full-time employees, and part-time employees can participate as long as they log at least 500 hours a year. Health care, twice-a-year bonuses, heat bonuses, and shoe allowances are among other perks, as is the availability of college scholarships to all employees’ children. “A pat on the back and recognition for a job well-done mean just as much, if not more, for people as monetary rewards,” Birdsong notes.

In return, employees take ownership in the company. “They commit to being part of a team that works closely with clients to produce a top-quality product at a fair price. It works beautifully for us and our clients. We have employees who have been with us 25 years and clients who have been with us since the early 1980s.”

### Challenging times

Precision Landscape Management is in the third year of what Birdsong calls “a major slowdown in the Dallas real estate market.” The downturn, he relates, requires his staff to spend extra time working with commercial clients to help them with budget constraints. “We’re usually never the lowest bidder, but we do our best to give the customer the best

value. In Dallas, weather is always a challenge, too, particularly in the summer with even and odd days rationing, along with other restrictions.”

To help customers control costs and yet keep their properties looking nice, his company offers a water audit service and may suggest an upgrade to ET-based controllers. “Again, it comes down to trust and having a partnership relationship with customers,” says Birdsong, who also identifies price increases from major chemical and equipment suppliers as one of the ongoing challenges for everyone in the industry.

Still, the No. 1 industry challenge, he emphasizes, is that landscape contractors promise more than they can or will produce. “This lack of professionalism fills the marketplace with distrust. We’ve worked hard over the last 30 years to be professional, to deliver what we promise. Again, I believe it all begins with your people.”

Being a PLANET member also has helped with his business growth. Birdsong says he joined in the mid-1980s and, from the very beginning, looked forward to meeting other industry professionals and finding that



Over the years, reputation, word-of-mouth, and experience helped the company expand its service offerings.

one nugget of information that could change the way he did business. “Attending seminars and just talking with other members, we’ve learned how to be more efficient, increase our profitability, and protect our assets,” he relates. “Through our relationship with PLANET members, we forged partnerships with equipment and bidding software companies to help grow our business. Many of these relationships we still have to this day.”

From his early days with PLANET, Birdsong learned the value that newly introduced zero-turn mowers would bring to mowing crews. Each of his 32 maintenance crews also has a GPS unit, not to play “big brother,” Birdsong emphasizes, “but to help recover any stolen equipment. Oh, we monitor each crew for a week a couple times a year to make sure they’re being as efficient as they can be with routing. In terms of watching over their shoulder with GPS on a daily basis, that’s not for us. We trust our employees to do what they’re trained to do.”

Maintenance crews vary in size from two to five members, depending on the property. Precision Landscape Management has five in-house technicians to maintain its equipment and fleet of vehicles. This year, the company opened a second 11-acre location to supplement its headquarters facility.

“We’ve been operating by sustainable principles for several years,” Birdsong explains. “We send yard debris to a recycling facility, use recycling decks on our mowers where we can, and continue to use more organic-based, slow-release fertilizers. When it comes to sustaining our business, there’s no question what fuels growth and profitability. This company is not about me; it’s about our employees. It’s their dedication and effort that drives our success.”

Precision Landscape Management landed its first commercial account 31 years ago. Providing commercial landscape management services still drives the company’s service offerings.