

ILCA Selects— Lurvey Landscape Supply for 2013 Distinguished Service Award

by Patrice Peltier

Providing exceptional customer service, valuing long-term relationships and doing the right thing for the industry and the environment aren't just words on Lurvey Landscape Supply's website. They're words to live by, and they're the reason ILCA is honoring Lurvey Landscape Supply & Garden Center with the Distinguished Service Award.

"As a customer, I'm very impressed with Lurvey, and I'm equally impressed with their involvement in ILCA," says Jeff True of Hursthouse, Inc.

True worked with Lurvey on Hardscape Illinois in 2013. "As the Premier Sponsor, they stepped up with no questions asked, and that was tremendous," True notes. Although the company's financial sponsorship was extremely important, True said the participation of two Lurvey team members — Marc Caifano and Daniel Wood — was equally helpful.

"They played a big part in putting the program together and in presenting," True said. "Putting on a program for the first time is always hard, but we filled the room, and Lurvey's involvement was instrumental in that success."

In fact, True notes that the Hardscape Illinois experience was typical of Lurvey's participation in ILCA. "They don't just write a check and hope people buy from them," True says. "Their people serve on committees. They're building relationships with contractors, other suppliers and ILCA staff. They're invested."

"Lurvey also benefits ILCA by the way they take care of the association's



Dwayne Ulrichs: the "voice" of Lurvey Landscape Supply.

members," True adds. Hursthouse, Inc. is a Lurvey Landscape Supply customer. "If you can't find something you like at Lurvey, it probably doesn't exist," True says of the wide range of products available. "But, it's not just the products that we like; it's the way they take care of us and our clients," he adds.

Lurvey's Dwayne Ulrichs says the company is always looking for ways to improve its service. In fact, this spring Lurvey will open a new location in Arlington Heights at Highway 53 and Palatine Road. To be called Lurvey Express, the two-acre facility will fill daily needs such as sod, bulk and paver orders in a stream-lined manner, which hopefully will also help customers be served more quickly at the company's other locations, too, he says.

"The customer service is fantastic," says Greg Semmer of Kinsella Landscape, Inc. "If you ask them for

something they don't have, they will search all over the earth trying to find it for you, and they usually do."

Semmer also appreciates how well informed the Lurvey team is. "Their staff is very knowledgeable and experienced. They're very willing to teach you. If you have a question, they don't tell you where to go to find the answer, they will find the answer for you," he says.

Because of its emphasis on building long-term relationships with both customers and suppliers, when hiring employees Lurvey actually puts more emphasis on personality than on expertise, according to Ulrichs. "We provide a lot of training to develop expertise, but we hire based on personality, because we focus on relationships over everything else," he explains.

Lurvey also builds both expertise and relationships by having its 22 full-time customer service team members also act as purchasers in one of the company's 16 major product lines. That promotes daily interaction with customers and allows the purchasers to provide suppliers with feedback. "It also means everybody has a direct relationship with vendors so they don't have to go through layers to get answers," Ulrichs says.

Tyler Thompson of Bent Oak Landscaping & Design, Inc. thinks that approach pays off. "Lurvey is a one-stop source for materials from top to bottom, and their expertise in every area is non-stop," Thompson says. "The people on the phones and at the counter have a thorough knowledge of what's going on. I've never called there and not gotten an



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answer to my question. It's refreshing."

In 2013 Thompson received an invitation from Lurvey to a presentation about a new initiative, Come Alive Outside. This national campaign encourages landscape professionals to help people appreciate the importance of connecting with the natural world.

Thompson says Lurvey's participation in this effort "speaks volumes about where the company is heading. It's not like they're out for themselves," he says. "They're out to help everybody."

Ulrichs points to the company's new LEED Gold facility in Des Plaines, its support of various industry organizations as well as the new Come Alive Outside initiative as evidence of a new focus that extends beyond the bottom line. "This isn't about Lurvey's little world anymore," he says. "It's about something bigger."

It is certainly still about taking care of customers, though, and Lurvey's clients know it. "I can tell that Lurvey takes pride in serving me, and that's pretty cool," Thompson says.

True agrees, saying, "I know they're helping a lot of companies out there do a better job." 



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