



New Jersey
Irrigation

NEWS

The Newsletter of the Irrigation Association of New Jersey

Vol. 18 No. 2 July 2016

President's Message

It is official! The Licensed Irrigation Contractor Examining Board (LICEB) has been transferred from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection to the NJ Department of Community Affairs effective June 1, 2016. LICEB has also been renamed in the transfer to the Board of Licensed Irrigation Contractors. This culminates years of effort by the IANJ Board of Trustees and our lobbyist MBI GluckShaw to get the legislation passed and signed by the Governor. Many meetings have been held since January 2016 between LICEB, DEP, DCA, and IANJ to insure a smooth transition. The staff of the DCA has been very receptive in ensuring this transfer will be as seamless as possible.

The Department of Community Affairs oversees the all of the Code Enforcement Officials in the State of New

Jersey. The DCA is informing the Code Enforcement Officials of the move and of the licensing and business permit requirements for irrigation contractors in the State of New

Every irrigation contractor doing irrigation work in New Jersey must have a DCA Licensed Irrigation Contractor Business Permit no matter what State the contractor is from.

Jersey. Contact information for the Board of Licensed Irrigation Contractors and the DCA can be found on the IANJ WEB Site under the Licensing/CEC Tab.

The requirements for earning CECs for license renewal have not changed. We are required to earn sixteen CECs during the two year renewal cycle. Eight of those CECs must be in Water Conservation.

Every irrigation contractor doing irrigation work in New Jersey must have a DCA Licensed Irrigation Contractor Business Permit no matter what State the contractor is from. I am reminding all of the IANJ members to make sure you get your business permit. The permit is free. The application takes about ten minutes to complete and can be submitted by email or FAX along with the first page of your liability insurance endorsement and the first page of your Workman's Compensation Insurance endorsement (if you are required to have Workman's Comp insurance). The Licensed Irrigation Contractor Business permit number must be on all of your vehicles, letterheads, business cards, contracts, advertising and WEB Sites. This requirement will be enforced by the DCA. The DCA will also be enforcing the non-licensed contractor penalties for any contractor doing irrigation work without the proper licensing credentials. Please get your Business Permits.

July is Smart Irrigation Month. We should all be encouraging our customers to upgrade to smart controllers, have rain sensors, use ET based add-ons to the smart con-

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New Jersey Irrigation NEWS

The Newsletter of the Irrigation Association of New Jersey

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President's Message

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trollers and use reasonable watering schedules. It seems that this is a no-brainer but I realize this is a hard sell to many of our clients. We must continually remind them of water conservation efforts to avoid water restrictions. NJ American Water is recommending odd/even watering schedules in Monmouth County to help avoid mandatory water restrictions. We should be adjusting heads to ensure water hits the landscapes, not the hardscapes, house or street. Schedules should be set based on sun, shade, slope and type of soil to avoid over watering and run off. Odd/even watering is a good idea for all systems to help conserve water.

You should have received the information for IANJ's Summer Tech series of classes being given August 9-12, 2016. There will be two locations, in the north, classes will be at Aquarius in Hawthorne, and in the south classes will be at SiteOne in Columbus. Please take advantage of these class offerings to earn your required CECs for license renewal. IANJ is offering new classes in design and technician training. Hope to see you there.

September is the IANJ/NJLCA golf outing which will be held at Jumping Brook Golf Course in Neptune. Sponsorships are still available for many categories. Golfers are also needed. Your support for this event is encouraged as the proceeds will be going to the IANJ Scholarship Fund. Thank you for your continuing membership and support. Here's to a profitable, safe, and healthy summer season.

2016 Industry Calendar

August 8-12
Summer Tech

September 13
IANJ/NJLCA Golf Outing

October 18-19
Study Course – CIC License Exam

December 7
IANJ Annual Meeting

Governor Christie Declared July Smart Irrigation Month

Governor Chris Christie has proclaimed July to be **Smart Irrigation Month** in New Jersey to draw attention to the importance of using water efficiently.

July is traditionally the month of peak demand for watering lawns, gardens and landscapes in North America. The Irrigation Association named July as Smart Irrigation Month to increase public awareness about simple practices and innovative technologies homeowners, businesses and property managers can use to:

- Save money on utility bills.
- Minimize or defer investments in infrastructure to store and carry water, typically paid for by property taxes or municipal bonds.
- Protect their community's water supply for generations to come.

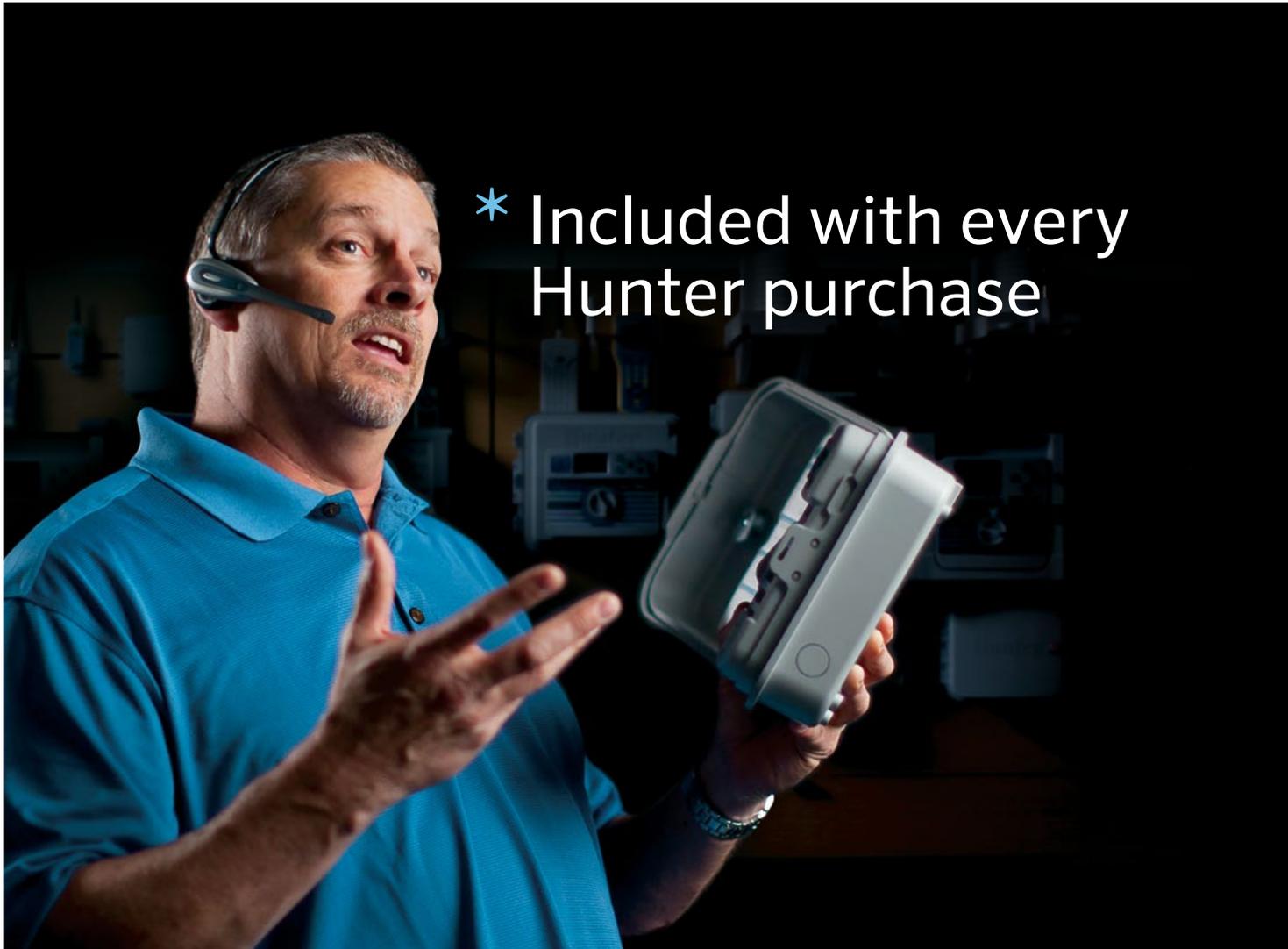
Homeowners typically overwater lawns and landscapes by up to 30 percent. By selecting and planting carefully, watering wisely, and maintaining and upgrading automated irrigation systems, consumers can save money, save water and see better results.

"We are especially proud and pleased that Governor Christie has designated July as Smart Irrigation Month in New Jersey as many of our irrigation contractors, suppliers, and manufacturers are seriously involved in helping local communities and consumers use water efficiently and effectively," said Roy Nau, President of the Irrigation Association of New Jersey.

Smart Irrigation Month is an initiative of the Irrigation Association of New Jersey and the national Irrigation Association, both non-profit industry organizations dedicated to promoting efficient irrigation. The IANJ has over 300 certified irriga-

tion contractor members throughout New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. To learn more about the IANJ visit www.ianj.com.





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5th Annual IANJ/NJCLA Golf Challenge

Tuesday, September 13th
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Neptune, NJ

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

The 4th Annual IANJ/NJCLA Golf Challenge will be held September 15th at a NEW location – Jumping Brook Country Club in Neptune (Exit 100 off the Garden State Parkway). Last year 120 golfers came out for the event and this newly refurbished course and clubhouse is welcoming us and we will be golfing in support of both the IANJ and NJLCA Scholarship Funds. More of that to come!

We're hoping more of our Central and South Jersey members will come out and play in this great event. We have many opportunities for SUPPLIERS AND MANUFACTURERS to be in front of the IANJ and NJLCA memberships (we're on target for a full field of 144!). It's first come, first served so don't miss out!



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VALUABLE EDUCATION IS WAITING AT SUMMER TECH 2016!

Summer Tech 2016...TWO Locations...More Options

Register today for Summer Tech 2016! There are classes at two locations in New Jersey - August 9th - August 12th - designed to help you and your staff earn valuable Continuing Education Credits (CECs) toward license renewal.

DO YOU HAVE YOUR REQUIRED CREDITS IN WATER CONSERVATION? Irrigation Contractor license renewals in NJ will now require sixteen (16) Continuing Education Credits for each renewal period; additionally eight (8) of these credits **MUST BE DESIGNATED** as Water Conservation. Classes with this designation are marked as such on the Course Descriptions List (link below).

Review the Summer Tech Schedule of Classes and Registration Form and register today for IANJ's version of "summer school"! Questions? Please call Pat at 973-850-3366 or visit www.ianj.com AND DOWNLOAD THE REGISTRATION INFORMATION.



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Employee Theft

By Mary Elizabeth Williams-Villano
Irrigation & Green Industry

Thefts range from one-person crimes to sophisticated hits carried out by criminal rings. Too often, they're inside jobs, perpetrated or abetted by current or former employees who know where you keep your stuff and how secure it is – isn't.

But a lot of employee theft isn't quite this dramatic, and because it isn't, it often goes undetected. However, like a slow leak in a life raft, it can eventually sink the business you've worked so hard to build.

Embezzlement

Around 2004, SunCo, an Omaha, Nebraska landscape and irrigation company, started experiencing a lot of growth. President Chris Andersen felt the need for a skilled office manager who could give him the sort of fiscal reporting he needed. He hired a woman who'd worked for several other green industry companies.

"Right away, she implemented some new accounting and scheduling software for us, and started handling all the back-office responsibilities. This allowed me to take a deep breath, and take my foot off the pedal as far as the office stuff went. I was able to concentrate on my vision and strategy for the company."

He admits that having the free time for big-picture stuff, or thinking that he did, was "intoxicating." But the hangover to come was anything but.

Looking through some canceled checks one day, Anderson spotted one made out to Wells Fargo Bank. "I yelled out, 'What do we have at Wells Fargo?' and she kind of dismissed it."

"She could have told me it was a third-party check, or a financing thing for a piece of equipment, and I probably would've blown it off. But for some reason, her answer just didn't feel right." So, he jotted "Wells Fargo" down on the whiteboard in his office as a reminder to himself to follow up. Logging into QuickBooks that weekend, he saw that this check had been deleted.

The more he dug, the more he kept finding checks made out to vendors he'd never heard of, as well as to credit card companies, gas stations, and the employee herself. She'd logged them into the ledger as payments to one of SunCo's bigger vendors. Altogether, his trusted whiz on an office manager had embezzled some \$30,000 over the course of four months.

As he tracked the dates of the fraudulent checks, he saw that she'd grown bolder as time went on. The previous Christmas Eve, she'd give herself an unauthorized \$2,000 bonus.



Though she was arrested and eventually paid all the money back, the experience was traumatic for Andersen. For a while, he was obsessed and angry. "If I hadn't written 'Wells Fargo' on that board and discovered this, she could have taken us down, bankrupted us."

But it did teach him some valuable lessons: number one, never give an employee a signature stamp. Realizing that he'd become "too loose" with his financials, he set about changing things.

"Now, we have a true controller who handles all the financial forecasting and account payable and receivable. A separate person balances the checkbook, and still another picks up the mail from the P.O. box." He adds, "You've got to be able to delegate, but there have to be checks and balances in place."

In addition, a consultant goes over his list of vendors every two or three years and makes sure he's getting the

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Employee Theft

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best deals possible from them. This also functions as an audit, as the consultant will ask. "Is this a real company you've doing business with here?"

Time, tools and gas

Bill Arman at Harvest Landscape Consulting says most employee pilferage isn't in the form of equipment or cash, but stolen time, often by means of fudged timecards, and even sleeping on the job.

"Employees will make a task last much longer than it's really supposed to," he said. "Or, people will be paid overtime for tasks that didn't require it."

Fuel theft is another very common way a dishonest worker can boost the octane of his paycheck. Tim Saunders, owner and CEO of Coastal Pacific Landscape Management, Inc., in San Diego, California, said he might never have known that two of his employees, a crew foreman and another man, were regularly stealing gasoline and small hand tools, if not for the conscience of one of the crew members.

He observed the thefts and reported them. While the other members of the crew didn't participate in the thefts, they kept mum. After reassuring the whistleblower that his report would be kept confidential, and moving him to another crew, Saunders began investigating.

"We started tracking this crew, noting how they'd leave the yard with three gas cans, but come back at the end of the day with two. Then, the next day, they'd leave with two, and come back with three."

His managers secretly tracked how many pieces of equipment the crew had at the end of each day and the next morning, to see if the numbers matched. They also went to jobsites and counted tools and supplies.

To prevent further gas theft, the fleet credit cards were locked down with much smaller minimums. Now, the crew couldn't purchase more fuel than they were going to be able to use in a week.

To curb the tool thefts, Saunders started having all field employees sign a form saying, "I am responsible for these tools. If they should disappear for some reason, I'll

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Employee Theft

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be required to purchase the replacements.” Bigger items, such as chainsaws, were put in locked storage that only managers had keys to, and had to be signed in and out.

Sunders said simply changing the minimums on the gas cards sent a message to the thieves that the company was on to them. “I also talked to the guys. Though no one outside of that meeting knew what was aird, they were still seen being talked to. Word got out that they were in trouble, so everyone started being on their best behavior.”

Though the two men were disciplined, they weren’t terminated. “The only evidence I had was one employee’s word against another’s. In our state, you really have to be careful. They could have made a claim that we terminated them without cause.”

Saunders started checking this particular crew’s work more closely, insisting on tighter quality control. Not liking the new structures, the pair that was doing the stealing eventually quit.

Sometimes you won’t discover a theft until a mystery bill crosses your desk. “Our CFO asked, ‘What job is this bill for? I need to attached it to a job name,’ said Neil Bales, vice president of Lawns of Dallas, Inc. “But it didn’t match any of the jobs we’d done.”

“We discovered that someone we’d let go seven months earlier had been going around to several of our vendors, dressed in our company’s uniform, which he’d kept, purchasing items for his own personal work. It amounted to a couple of thousand dollars’ worth of materials.” Though Bales reported this to Dallas police, they declined to investigate, calling it a ‘low-impact’ crime.

But when it’s your company it’s happening to, the impact is hardly “low.” “I’d wanted to set an example for our other employees, to say, ‘You may think you’re getting away with something, but it’s only a matter of time until you get caught,’” said Bales. “And we will prosecute.”

He added that, while \$2,000 in the grand scheme of things isn’t a big deal, it still hurts a company’s cash flow. We’re a midsized landscape company, not the biggest guy on the block by any means. I’d rather have spent that \$2,000 on marketing.”

Another company, Park West Landscape Management, serves a wide geographical area. In order to increase efficiency and cut ‘windshield time,’ it maintains several satellite yards that house many storage containers with chain-link fencing around them. These containers have been burglarized a few times.

“Because of the way these break-ins had been thought out, we think they had to have been done by people with a connection inside the company,” said president Dustin Kemmerer. “For example, in the most recent incident, they

knew just where to find the security cameras so they could cover them up. How’d they know where they were? Many of them were hidden.” In that theft, the company lost a significant amount of small equipment: blowers, chainsaws, and string and hedge trimmers.

Prevention

When I asked Arman what a contractor can do to prevent theft and embezzlement, he said, “It’s called, ‘Pay attention.’ You need a timely dashboard that measures and tracks the big things.”

It’s incredible how creative some crooked employees can be. One trick is to set up fake companies solely for the purpose of siphoning funds. The employee then approves payables to this ‘vendor,’ but the employer never receives any goods. The woman who embezzled from SunCo did that.

This also happened to one of Arman’s clients. Looking at the man’s profit-and-loss statement, Arman spotted \$60,000 unaccounted-for dollars.

“It jumped off the paper, this \$60,000. I asked, ‘What the heck is that for?’ He said, ‘I dunno.’ It turned out that his office person had been funneling cash to a phony account. When we confronted her, she confessed, and we had her arrested on the spot.”

He cited another example of a fraud that took place right under a contractor’s nose. “Landscape companies pile up lots of these plastic cans that plants come in. The ‘Can Man’ comes and collects them, and he’s supposed to give you a rebate check.”

“Well, one day, the Can Man comes in with a brand-new, fancy truck, and hands the keys to the branch manager. The company never saw those rebates, but the branch manager did, in the form of that vehicle.”

Disgruntlement can lead to stealing. Kemmerer said that he thinks when companies experience employee theft, poor morale is often at the root. He noted that instances of it declined significantly at Park West over the last fifteen years, as his company’s leadership and culture improved.

Saunders agrees. The two men that stole at his company were miffed about a raise they never got. It seems a manager had promised it to them, and it had been approved, but he forgot to file the paperwork. He then left the company, so the increase never went through.

“They felt like they were justified in stealing from us, because in a way, we owed them.” Why didn’t they come to the boss? “It’s a cultural thing,” he replied. “A field worker will talk to his foreman, but he won’t go over his head to anyone in management.”

New technology can make things tougher for thieves.

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Employee Theft

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Coastal Pacific will soon be going to a fuel pay system that uses cards with embedded chips, which will marry where the card's being used to where the truck is.

All of Park west's vehicles have GPS trackers. "I can do into our system, click on a link, and look at any of our 300 vehicles," said Kemmerer. "It'll tell me where it is now, give me a report on where it's been all day, and even show me all the starts, stops, hard turns or hard braking. It also alerts us to service needs and breakdowns, and has helped us recover vehicles that have been stolen."

GPS technology can also prevent time theft. There are systems available now where an employee checks in, via smartphone, at each jobsite as he arrives. His photo is transmitted, along with the precise time, and the GPS confirms exactly where he is at that moment. This virtually eliminates "buddy punching."

Richard I. Lehr, Esq., is general counsel for the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP, formerly PLANET). He advises doing a criminal background check (within the bounds of federal and state laws) on every new hire.

He also recommends asking your insurance company

about procedures to prevent embezzlement and/or detect it early on. Finally, he suggests requiring surety bonds for any employees with access to finances.

"If an employer believes an employee may have stolen, the employer doesn't need beyond-a-reasonable-doubt evidence to terminate that person or to notify law enforcement authorities."

You can find help in theft-proofing your operation (and other things) through NALP's "Trail-blazer" program, which is free to members. Questions are answered by veteran contractors over the phone or in person, at your place of business.

Company owners need to address employee theft. But Arman cautions against becoming paranoid. "Don't assume everyone who works for you is trying to steal you blind. It's a very small minority that screws it up for the majority."

He says the last thing you want to do is turn into "Mr. Police Guy," and create a negative atmosphere, as that makes the problem worse. People start thinking, "You already think I'm stealing from you, so why not?"

Don't become that guy, but do take steps to protect yourself from dishonest employees as much as possible.



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Carowitz on Marketing

By Jeff Carowitz
Irrigation & Green Industry

Whether your company is facing increased material costs, increased wage growth pressures or a flood of new demand, 2016 is the year you will need to adjust your pricing strategy.

Pricing often seems to be the ‘third rail’ that nobody wants to talk about. (Aren’t viral videos and social media more fun?) But in terms of your marketing strategy, price has the biggest impact on the bottom line. In my next series of columns, I’ll touch on some ways you can win the sale with higher prices.

Recently, in working with a sales team at a large wholesaler, I observed a series of repetitive mistakes in presenting pricing to existing clients. A lack of training and a loss of confidence in selling skills had led to an environment where quoted prices were too low to sustain the business. In addition, the sales team labeled every buyer as a ‘price shopper’ and solved every objection with offers of lower prices.

We began a process of training to change how they talked about price with clients.

We discussed:

Just say it. Words like ‘suggested,’ ‘list,’ ‘best,’ and ‘asking’ before the word ‘price’ often send the wrong signal. They signal that the price quoted is the starting point for further negotiation. It is better to present your price as a simple matter-of-fact: “the price is \$2,000,” or “Those are \$47 each.” You don’t add descriptive terms when you give someone your phone number (your ‘suggested’ phone number?!). Don’t add them when you give a price.

Avoid setting up objections and counter-offers. Skip wind-up statements like, “I know you’ve been our customer for many years...” “I want to earn your business on this project.” “Maybe we can work something out...” It may seem like you’re trying to acknowledge the customer’s importance, but these cushioning statements just give an easy opening to ask for a discount.

Never, ever, ever say: “Am I in the ballpark?” “What price do I need to be at?” “Would you be willing...” Graveling statements like this are the verbal equivalent of a kick-me sign.

Stop treating everyone like a price buyer. In the typical market, 30% of the buyers have price at the top of their mind. The other 70% are significantly more interested in delivery, timing convenience, stability, etc. Price shoppers are the minority, not the majority. Note: many value buyers will say they buy on price just to see if you’ll flinch and offer a discount.

Price by itself seldom gets customers to switch. Most changes in habits come from supplier service failures. Lack of reliability or quality in service delivery is the most frequent driver of supplier changes. A customer relies on a supplier for a long time, and then a change in policy or personnel causes a loss of predictability in the relationship. Service failures are powerful because they can result in wide-reaching inconvenience for the customer. Another group of customers switch because they feel disrespected, neglected or unappreciated. Those customers don’t move until they’re visited by a salesperson. If you want to win accounts, credibly present the value you can provide. That’s what buyers want – and it’s what keeps them coming back.



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**The IANJ would like to thank this month’s
advertisers for their continuous support through
their advertisements:**

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IANJ Movie Review

For this issue we will be reviewing a film entitled “Central Intelligence”

Title: Central Intelligence

Director: Rawson Marshall Thurber

Cast: Dwayne Johnson, Kevin Hart, Danielle Nicolet, Bobby Brown, Megan Park & Timothy John Smith

The film is a buddy action comedy in the vein of “The In-Laws” and “Midnight Run,” with a splash of 1930s movie slapstick. Kevin Hart plays Calvin Joyner, a deadpan worrywart who was voted “Most Likely to Succeed” in high school. He has a good job and a charming wife but still feels like a failure. Dwayne Johnson plays his old high school classmate, Robert Weiridicht, aka Bob Stone, a bullied fat kid who grew up to become a muscular CIA agent but still wears a fanny pack and can’t stop talking about “Sixteen Candles.” Bob is six-foot-four and built like an action figure, which comes in handy in scenes that require him to do battle with a nunchaku-wielding assassin on a motorbike, or pirouette through a battle zone tossing tiny explosives from his fanny pack like Bugs Bunny as Brünnhilde strewing flower petals in her wake.

Bob says he just wants to hang out with Calvin, the only guy in high school who was ever nice to him, on the eve of their 20th high school reunion. He’s secretly a renegade agent accused of killing his partner and committing treason, and he needs Calvin’s accounting expertise to thwart a terrorist plot and clear his name. But his adoration of Calvin is sincere. He loves Calvin the way little kids love superheroes. Worships him. Adores him.

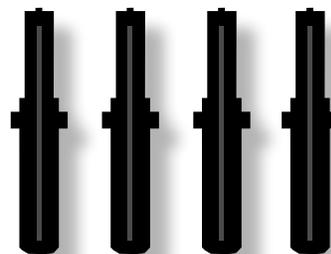
He tells Calvin he needs his help and asks if he’s out or in. Calvin says he’s not in. Bob says he’s in, that he was always in. Calvin wants to know why Bob asked him if he was in or out if he was always in regardless. Bob says it’s because he wanted to feel the pride and excitement of hearing Calvin tell him he’s in. “I’m not in,” Calvin says. He says this again and again, all through the movie: “I’m not in.” He screams it while Bob is pushing him in a mail cart through a hail of gunfire and telling him to relax, everything’s gonna be fine. This is their relationship.

And the best thing about this movie is that you *believe* in the relationship. Hart and Johnson are a classic comedy duo in the tradition of Abbott & Costello, Bob Hope & Bing Crosby and Gene Wilder & Richard Pryor. And they certainly have the silhouettes for it: when the two stand side-by-side, their height difference is so great that they become iconic: the genie and the man who summoned him.



“Central Intelligence” is written by Ike Barinholtz, David Stassen and Rawson Marshall Thurber, and directed by Thurber, who also did “We’re the Millers” and “Dodgeball,” two of the better recent examples of the smart dumb comedy. It may not be a deep and complex masterpiece that will spawn symposiums and appreciations, but it is a classic of a very particular sort. It’s the kind of movie that you watch on TV when you’re supposed to be doing more important things, or experiencing more important movies, even though you’ve already seen it ten times, because it’s still funny, and because you believe in the big man and the small man that he looks up to.

Central Intelligence gets 4 Rotors



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NON-CERTIFIED CONTRACTORS CAN BE REPORTED

In an effort to provide enforcement to the New Jersey Landscape Irrigation Contractors Certification Act, N.J.S.A. 45AA-1, the New Jersey Board of Landscape Irrigation Contractors has created a Contractor Certification Verification form. This form may be used by Certified Irrigation Contractors to give the Board the names of contractors they observe to be operating without the required certification. ALL FORMS MUST BE FILLED OUT COMPLETELY OR THEY WILL BE RETURNED. PLEASE MAIL TO THE ADDRESS BELOW.

New Jersey Board of Landscape Irrigation Contractors
Department of Community Affairs, Division of Codes and Standards
Licensing and Education Unit, P.O. Box 802
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0802

Members of the Board:

I have observed the below named contractor installing a landscape irrigation system. I request that the New Jersey Board of Landscape Irrigation Contractors verify that the contractor has obtained certification pursuant to Landscape Irrigation Contractor Certification Act, N.J.S.A. 45AA-1.

Date of Inquiry: _____

Name of Contractor Firm in Question: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Address at which contractor was observed installing a landscape irrigation system:

I request that, should the contractor in question not be certified, the Board notify the contractor that he/she will be in violation of the Landscape Irrigation Contractor Certification Act as of January 1, 1997. I trust that the Board will send such notice in a timely manner and understand that I will receive further correspondence from the Board stating that said notice was made. I further resolve to make only this one request for verification for the above named contractor in question.

Signed: _____

Name of Contractor Firm making inquiry: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

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