

Innovation + Technology Guide

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7 things to consider when adding new technology

Integrating a new piece of technology can mean a major change in your operation. Learn how to prepare and make the most of your new addition by CHRISTINA HERRICK | LM EDITOR

If you're adding a new piece of technology—be it a robotic mower, new software or even battery-powered equipment—you should think about where you want your business to be in the next five years, says Todd Reinhart, co-owner of Reinhart Landscaping & Snow, a primarily commercial design/build, maintenance and snow and ice removal service provider in Bloomington, IL.

While some operators may want to keep the status quo, others might look to innovations to help improve efficiencies. Here are some things to keep in mind to effectively integrate a new piece of technology.



watch. How do you do all those things without a system to keep all that data in? It's impossible."

Reinhart says his operation hopes to slash labor costs by 80 to 90 percent with the 20 robotic mowers the company has already deployed. He says understanding these costs and savings helps his team to accurately bid on projects where crews will deploy robotic mowers.

"We can charge the same as what it costs the client now—because our labor and fuel are the things we can control a bit of right now," he says. "Equipment costs I can control, because if I buy it today, I know what those costs are for the next three years."

ASSESS YOUR CLIENTS
Jed Haseyman, vice president of global innovation with Doosan Infracore, says the first step a company considering adding autonomous mowers should take is to assess its clients and properties to see what makes sense for automation.

"So, there are a lot of tasks that we're going to need humans for, that we're going to need precision for," he says. "There are other aspects of the job that would be well suited for automation. It's picking the job that can be successful that is the key. Pick the task or the job that can more easily accept this newer technology."

START SMALL
Haseyman says it's important to think of autonomous technology and manual mowers as "both hands."

"I don't think it's a jump all the way in," he says. "We're going to use operators and manual mowers or manual equipment for a very long time. However, there are applications for these autonomous ones. Maybe it's one or two pieces of equipment to start with."

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INNOVATION + TECHNOLOGY GUIDE

Don't get left behind by technology

Robotic and artificial intelligence (AI) assistance further into everyday life. They compare cautionary sci-fi tales, like HAL 9000 ("What are you doing, Dave?") in Arthur C. Clarke's 2001: A Space Odyssey. However, this technology can reduce costs (logically labor-related), increase revenue, streamline operations, maximize profit and provide a more meaningful and consistent customer experience.

As robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) assistance further into everyday life, they compare cautionary sci-fi tales, like HAL 9000 ("What are you doing, Dave?") in Arthur C. Clarke's 2001: A Space Odyssey. However, this technology can reduce costs (logically labor-related), increase revenue, streamline operations, maximize profit and provide a more meaningful and consistent customer experience.

GREAT POTENTIAL
Among commercial service-based industries, nearly a quarter (24 percent) incorporated AI into their processes, with 89 percent of those businesses experiencing performance improvements, according to a 2023 study of more than 1,000 commercial service contractors around the U.S. conducted on behalf of ServiceTitan by Thier Analytics. The research also found that early adopters see positive results with service bookings (46 percent), invoicing (38 percent), dispatching (32 percent) and customer experience (27 percent).

Contractors need not look too far as numerous AI programs are readily available now—for free or for a modest fee—and hold great potential for small business owners. Take, for example:

- AI chatbots for your website that interact with customers and offer solutions to their problems in real time. In addition to recommending services to clients, the bots track and report on customers' areas of interest as they navigate your website.

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PERSONAL AI ASSISTANTS that manage customer outreach, book meetings and target prospects who are most likely to use your commercial service.

DATA-DRIVEN COPYWRITING TOOLS that create effective content for ads, email campaigns and social media posts. As a bonus, AI gives users feedback on what content or campaign work best with customers.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE VS. AUTONOMOUS SOLUTIONS
It's important to remember that AI and robotics are not synonymous terms and that while robots may utilize AI, not all AI are robots. And, the landscape industry historically has been a slow adopter of new technologies.

"There is this mentality that we've done things this way our whole life, and we've been successful at it, so why change?" says Michael Mayberry, customer success lead at Scy Robotics.

AI AND SOFTWARE
Specific to the green industry, one of the most logical points to begin to find AI integration is landscape design software. The advantages could be revolutionary for contractors.

"AI is the new buzzword out there, and it seems it is where design technology is heading," says Eric Gilbey, product marketing manager for landscape industries at Vectorworks. "I suspect it will start with automated design processes and eventually become part of the overall design workflow."

The creative process is unique to the human component of a landscape concept shared between designers

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY

Print Exposure

BOSS Software
with Mike Cossins
President and founder

What problem does your innovation solve for its users?
Have you found yourself so busy that you run through the estimating process? It can be embarrassing going back to your client for additional project costs or it can cost you money if you must wait the error. Start the project on the right foot with a comprehensive landscape estimate in minutes with the BOSS Software Assemblies tool.

How does your innovation improve the speed, efficiency or agility of its users?
As landscape businesses grow, there is a need for flexible, adaptable business management software. The BOSS Software Assemblies feature helps companies grow by unlocking valuable catalog and project specific information and reducing friction in real time when it comes to job costing. It provides the tools that contractors need to make better informed decisions during the estimating process, while being easy to use and easy to implement. The Assemblies feature also speeds up the estimating process, significantly allowing contractors to submit bids and earn new business more quickly.

BOSS Software is recognized for its adaptability and ability to be tailored to meet the ever-expanding needs of landscape companies. It stands alone when it comes to delivering return-on-investment and unmatched levels of client service and support.

The Assemblies tool is one highlight of the BOSS Software release for landscape contractors and new renewal professionals. Other highlights include:

- New production dashboard
- New business intelligence (BI) dashboards
- Seamless integration
- Job cost overtime
- New print table report for PSE/audit
- Add tabs to job screen for tickets, invoices, materials
- Mobile link to property location and directions
- POC - Update item cost from receipt or receipt history
- BOSS Screenshot updates

BOSS

Your profile will include three questions about your company's innovation or technology:

- » What innovation are you featuring?
- » What problem does your innovation solve for its users?
- » How does your innovation improve the speed, efficiency, agility of its users?

Your profile will consist of:

- » Answers to the questions above by a company spokesperson
- » Headshot of company spokesperson
- » Company logo, photos, contact information, website and social platforms

Aspire Software
with Gage Roberts
Sales Director

What problem does your innovation solve for its users?
Aspire's innovative management platform addresses several key challenges for its users in the landscape industry.

How does Aspire help teams work together?
Collaboration is another area where Aspire excels. We provide tools and features that facilitate collaboration among team members, including shared calendars, task management systems, document sharing, real-time communication channels and project management capabilities. By enhancing collaboration, our platform promotes teamwork, transparency, and efficiency within the organization, ultimately leading to improved business operations.

How can Aspire help my business grow?
As your business grows, scalability becomes a critical factor. Our scalable platform, you can adapt to changing needs and seize growth opportunities without major disruptions or the need to invest in new systems.

Indicators (KPIs) and metrics. This data-driven approach empowers informed decision-making, helps identify trends and opportunities, and supports strategic planning.

Finally, regulatory compliance is a paramount concern for many businesses. Aspire incorporates features that ensure adherence to industry regulations and standards. We prioritize data security measures, audit trails, privacy controls, and reporting capabilities to help businesses maintain compliance and minimize associated risks.

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Bill Roddy
Group Publisher

broddy@northcoastmedia.net
440-463-7754



Craig MacGregor
Associate Publisher

cmacgregor@northcoastmedia.net
216-526-5600



Dan Hannan
Eastern Regional Sales Manager

dhannan@northcoastmedia.net
216-316-0285



Jake Goodman
Western Regional Sales Manager

jgoodman@northcoastmedia.net
216-533-6942



Nader Hassen
Account Executive

nhassen@northcoastmedia.net
216-363-7932



Chloe Scoular
Account Manager

cscoular@northcoastmedia.net
440-342-6011

