

# Covering Ground™

LANDSCAPING SOLUTIONS • COURTESY OF COUNTY MATERIALS CORPORATION

## New Products, New Possibilities

The United States' landscape and construction markets are constantly evolving. Today's customers are savvy; they are seeking a higher level of service, diverse offerings, and more sophisticated products.

Recently, County Materials completed construction of our new production facility in Janesville, WI, enabling us to offer enhanced production capabilities and even more product selection. It employs state-of-the-art manufacturing technologies to produce products with superior quality and high-end, sought-after aesthetics not readily available elsewhere in North America.

County Materials is uniquely positioned to be your single resource for a larger selection of cutting-edge landscape and veneer products that are appealing to your customers. Our products are relevant for today's market demands, and we are developing innovative products to meet increasing customer demands for the future. Together, we can set your company apart from the competition and help you capture this growing market share.

We recently introduced a full line of new hardscape products with stunning colors and unique textures, available for delivery immediately for the 2013 season.

Click [here](#) to download our National Landscape Product Catalog and view the products on our website.

For enhanced versatility, County Materials offers many of our hardscape product series in thin veneers for use in striking masonry, tilt up or precast applications. Be sure to keep checking back throughout the season, as we unveil stunning and sophisticated new hardscape and veneer products in the coming months.

We place a high value on maintaining industry leadership in product research and development to create landscape and construction product offerings that will exceed your expectations. For more information on our new product offerings, contact our Customer Service Department at (800) 242-7733.

NEW  
PRODUCT  
SERIES



*Tranquility Pavers offer unique surface textures and rich color blends in five different sizes.*



*Lifestyle Pavers are manufactured in two different size modules, including larger sized Grand Lifestyle Pavers (shown above). Both can be installed as stand-alone series, or they can be combined for one-of-a-kind applications. Each style is available in five different sizes for a random, natural appearance.*

## Advantages to Partnering with County Materials

County Materials is committed to providing our customers with personalized customer service and an unsurpassed depth of industry knowledge. By providing you with enhanced value, we can help your business continue to grow.

As you gear up for the 2013 season, please keep in mind the following advantages we offer to you as a valued customer:

- **Exceptional product quality:** Our new line of hardscape materials offers rich color blends, stunning surface textures, higher surface density, superior absorption resistance, and enhanced abrasion resistance you'll be hard pressed to find anywhere else.
- **Product availability:** With the high volume production capabilities of our new plant in Janesville, WI, our products are readily available so your projects stay on schedule.
- **New product colors and shapes:** Set yourselves apart from the competition by using our diverse products in one-of-a-kind custom projects, with appealing and sought after aesthetics.
- **Superior packaging:** We use state of the art packaging technology and solutions to protect paver surfaces during transportation and handling to ensure product arrives undamaged at your job site or yard.
- **Fast turnover:** Our new colors and textures are intriguing to the market, minimizing the potential for slow-moving items.
- **Simplify your operation:** County Materials is your single resource for a diverse line of landscape and veneer products, helping to streamline your accounting, simplify your logistics and save you shipping.
- **Specialized education and training:** We offer convenient and informative courses and workshops, including ICPI and SRW installation certification courses that build long lasting relationships and build value for your company.
- **Product compatibility:** Our landscape and masonry veneer product lines and colors are manufactured to complement each other, enhancing future project additions and renovations.
- **Faster installation:** Many of our products are manufactured with machine-laid mold patterns to speed installation. We also offer paver and slab handling equipment to save time on the job and offer a safer working environment for your crew.



## Education and Training Opportunities for Landscape Professionals

During the first quarter of 2013, County Materials held free seminars for landscape industry professionals including architects, designers and contractors who are seeking timely training and product information to give them a competitive edge in the market.

This year's Landscape Academies featured presentations on County Materials' new landscape product series and provided an opportunity for participants to talk directly with manufacturer's representatives and network with other landscape professionals to learn about best practices for installation, cleaning and sealing, as well as advances in the industry.

We thank each of the attendees who participated in the events. Continue to check our website: (<http://www.countymaterials.com/education-test/item/landscape-seminars>) for more information about landscape education and training opportunities offered throughout the year.

County Materials also offers the National Concrete Masonry Association's Retaining Wall Installer program. Our on-staff certified trainers will conduct the basic SRW Installation course, followed by a certification exam for interested landscape professionals. Contact us at (800) 289-2569 to inquire about more information.

## Landscaping Tips

### Paver and Slab Installation Procedures and Best Practices

#### *The quick and easy way to install random size and large module pavers*

Interlocking concrete pavers are one of the most sustainable paving products on the planet. Because of its popularity, the market has asked for larger, more innovative sizes and textures. County Materials is proud to offer a number of larger-sized interlocking paver styles to meet this demand in 2013, including our largest sized pavers at 24" x 24" x 2-3/4" (70 mm) thick.

With that larger module size comes increased weight and an increased aspect ratio. While at first glance these qualities may seem intimidating, with the proper handling equipment and best practices, a landscape crew can quickly and easily install random size and large module interlocking pavers efficiently. *(continued on page 4)*

## Ten Tips for Acing Your Next Landscaping Customer Presentation

You know the value of first impressions. After all, your craftsmanship is often the first thing people comment on. But did you ever stop to think about the first impression you leave on a new customer, when they are looking to hire you to design or install a landscape? The impression they get of you during this first interview can make or break your budding business relationship. These ten tips can help you establish yourself as a consummate professional.

**1. Focus on relationships.** The landscaping business is not a high-pressure industry. The hard sell will only scare your customer off. Instead, be yourself and work on building your client's trust. Your honesty and sincerity will make them feel at ease, so you're working towards a common goal. That way, even if it turns out that their needs are better met elsewhere, they'll remember you as a trustworthy individual – and may even send additional business your way.

**2. Maintain a professional appearance.** Clean, neat, business casual attire (or a clean shirt or jacket featuring your company logo) will signal to your customer that you are a professional that they can trust to work on their property. A professional appearance also will make them expect to pay professional rates. Proper attention to the details of your appearance signals your ability and willingness to attend to details on the job.

**3. Be prepared.** New customers may not have an accurate idea of what you are capable of. Your presentation needs to prove you can meet their needs. Don't assume anything – instead, gather as much information about your clients beforehand as you can. You can ask them questions over the phone or email, or have them fill out a questionnaire before your meeting. Put together a presentation that is custom tailored to their situation. Include photos of past projects that are similar to what you think your client wants. (Be sure to include examples of successful projects you've completed that required innovation on your part.)

**4. Build value.** Have you ever heard the saying: "There's plenty of room at the top?" Our industry attracts plenty of people who think that they need to use low quality product to sell their work at bottom dollar. But being competitive doesn't necessarily mean lowering your value. Think about the clients you've enjoyed working with the most in the past. Chances are, they're the ones who were willing to spend a little extra for excellent workmanship and quality product. Educate new clients throughout your presentation on how working with you will result in better value in the long run. Value building through client education sets you apart from the crowd and establishes you as the kind of professional that top-quality clients seek out.

**5. Practice active listening.** Ask probing questions to find out as much as you can about your customer's needs and tastes. First, find out how they envision using this installation, what their maintenance needs are likely to be, and their aesthetic preferences, as well as whether they foresee a need for future expansion. Gathering as much information as possible at this stage will make you aware of

where their values lie. This will make it much easier to come up with recommendations they'll approve of.

**6. Establish a budget.** It's very important that your customer feels comfortable about the project's cost and value. Know your pricing and be upfront if you think the client wants more than is feasible. Ask questions to determine their most pressing needs first, and come up with a plan that will provide them with the most bang for their buck. Don't forget to include the cost of possible maintenance. But if they can't afford their dream installation right away, don't sell yourself short by convincing them to settle for less. Work with your client to create a plan for adding on in phases over a period of years. They'll appreciate your concern, and you'll benefit from the ongoing work.

**7. Bring your laptop.** Having your laptop computer with you will put all your resources at your fingertips and set you apart as a true professional. Make sure your resources are up to date and that you know where to find them on your computer. These may include presentations, cost calculating software, and suppliers' websites so you can quickly and easily present material options or look up technical specs if necessary. Keep a paper notepad and a few brochures with you just in case. Either way, your client will be impressed with your foresight.

**8. Include social proof.** Be sure to include references and testimonials from satisfied customers, or pictures of installations. Sharing testimonials and references is a powerful way to help your new client feel at ease about working with you. There are many ways to do this: you can build a testimonial page on your website, put together a video of happy customers, or print a booklet of case studies of successful projects.

**9. Don't leave your customer empty handed.** Before you say goodbye to your prospect, make sure you hand them prepared information. A nice-looking folder with your business card is inexpensive and effective. Include basic information about your company, some high-quality visual images of your best work, and your list of references and testimonials. You can also include brochures from suppliers, if you've discussed particular materials for the project.

**10. Evaluate the client.** Picking the right client has as much effect on your profits as choosing quality hardscape materials. If you're not excited about the job, or if it's too ambitious for you to handle or too small to be profitable, both you and your client will be better off if you refer them to someone else. Trust your gut, too – some clients are just better left alone, politely thank them and explain that you feel their needs will be better met elsewhere. Of course, if you are excited about the job, be sure to keep in touch with your customer.

(continued from page 2)

### **Paver Handling Equipment**

Proper equipment is essential to handle large module pavers. County Materials offers options in paver handling equipment that range from a simple one-person pair of manual mechanical hinged tongues, to single-person or two-person pneumatic handling equipment available with multiple heads for handling random sizes and larger slabs.

Physically handling and laying large pavers with gloved hands or walking on the setting sand could be detrimental to the prepared base. However, with the use of appropriate handling equipment, a crew of two men can quickly set more square footage of larger module pavers in less time.

Handling tools provide versatility to rotate the pavers as needed to enable a perfect fit. Sometimes it is necessary to walk on the paver surfaces during construction. If units should happen to move, they are easily adjusted back into place with the same tools.

### **Finishing off sand-set applications: sanding and compacting**

Typically, running a vibratory plate compactor over large slab pavers, such as the 24"x 24"x 2-3/4"(70 mm) Elements Paving Stone, is outside the recommended ICPI aspect ratio. However, because of County Materials' advanced manufacturing technologies with our new paver series, a compactor with an abrasion plate can be utilized with all of our random and larger module pavers.

By using the right handling equipment and following recommended installation techniques, County Materials' largest pavers can be quickly and easily sand set (including compaction) within minutes by a two-person crew.

A video of the demonstration described in this article is available for viewing online at our [Landscaping Technical Resources Page](#).

For more information about our available pneumatic paver handling equipment, contact our Customer Service Department at (800) 242-7733.



*The use of paver installation equipment, such as a one-person (shown above) or two-person pneumatic handling unit, makes it easy to maneuver random size pavers and larger slabs, and install more square footage in less time.*

### **CENTRAL DIVISION**

**Antigo, WI** (715) 623-3775  
**Hazelhurst, WI** (715) 356-9429  
**Marathon, WI** (715) 848-1365  
**Merrill, WI** (715) 848-1365  
**Stevens Point, WI** (715) 341-0991  
**Tomahawk, WI** (715) 453-3616  
**Wausau, WI** (715) 842-2288  
**Weston, WI** (715) 359-7731  
**Wis. Rapids, WI** (715) 423-7339

### **EASTERN DIVISION**

**Appleton, WI** (920) 734-7733  
**Green Bay, WI** (920) 497-2416  
**Sheboygan, WI** (920) 565-2261

### **WESTERN DIVISION**

**Eau Claire, WI** (715) 834-7701  
**La Crosse, WI** (608) 781-3615  
**Rice Lake, WI** (715) 234-8145  
**Roberts, WI** (800) 207-9962

### **SOUTHERN DIVISION**

**Champaign, IL** (217) 352-4181  
**Madison, WI (West)** (608) 845-8636  
**Madison, WI (East)** (608) 244-1381  
**Waukesha, WI** (262) 896-0755  
**Oak Creek, WI** (414) 764-8700



PROUD TO BE AMERICAN BASED & AMERICAN MADE.

[www.countymaterials.com](http://www.countymaterials.com)



Covering Ground is published by County Materials Corporation for the exclusive use and benefit of its customers. Covering Ground is not for public distribution. The County Materials names, logos, and trademarks in this publication are the property of County Materials Corporation. All other names, logos, and trademarks are property of their respective owners. These materials may not be reproduced in any form without written permission from County Materials Corporation. Due to the nature of concrete and variables in photography and printing, colors shown may vary from actual hues. Refer to product samples for final color selection. Printed in USA. Address all correspondence to: County Materials Corporation, 205 North Street, P.O. Box 100, Marathon, WI 54448-0100.