

This presentation premiered at WaterSmart Innovations

watersmartinnovations.com





Educating Landscape Contractors on the Ground

Veronica Blette, EPA WaterSense





What is WaterSense?

- A partnership program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) with the goal of protecting the future of our nation's water supply by promoting and enhancing the market for water-efficient products and services.
- WaterSense labels professional certifying organizations for irrigation training programs covering:
 - Designers – who establish specifications and design drawings for irrigation projects.
 - Installation and maintenance professionals - who install, maintain and repair irrigation systems.
 - Auditors – who gather irrigation water-use data and test landscape irrigation systems.



Who influences landscape design decisions?

- Municipal planning commissions and developers who agree on the look and feel of communities
- Builders and their landscape contractors who agree on “packages” of landscape options homebuyers can select
- Homebuyers and their private landscapers



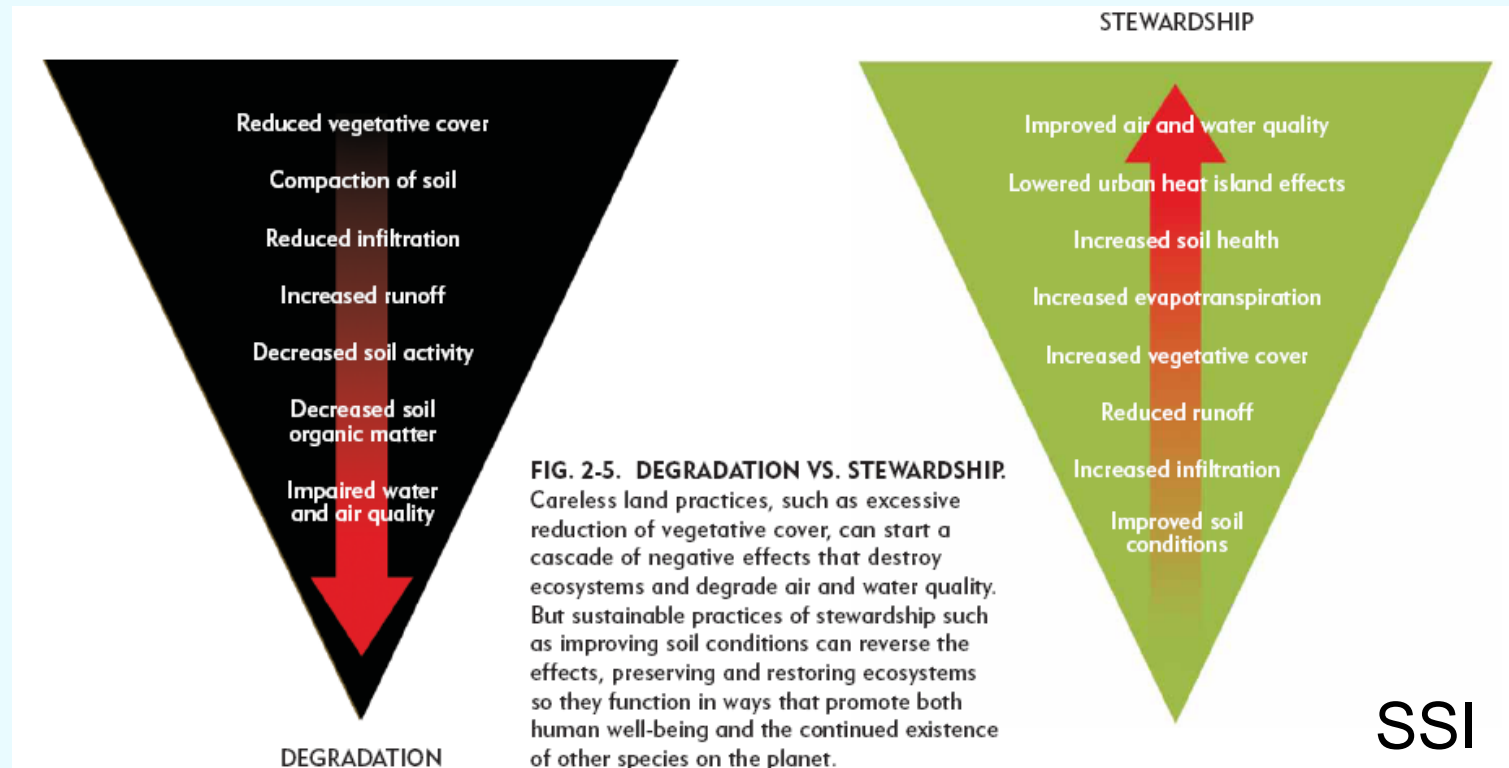
Who influences landscape O&M practices?

- Homeowners
- Homeowner associations
- Local governments or water utilities
- Commercial/Institutional facility managers
- Management of the landscaping company



Sound Practices are Essential

- Landscaping professionals are the stewards of our local community landscapes





Where can education happen?

- Within company – peer to peer or from consultants
- Training and certification programs – at local, state or national level
- Educational institutions – from high school to college
- Water utilities and local governments



Future Opportunities

- Movement towards more sustainable landscapes presents challenges and opportunities
- Professionals who are trained in sound practices will be better positioned to take advantage of changes ahead

Managing Wet Weather with Green Infrastructure

Green Jobs Training

A Catalog of Training Opportunities for Green Infrastructure Technologies


www.epa.gov/greeninfrastructure






Today's Panelists

- Rick Sabbag – Flycatcher Marketing
- Juan Carlos Garcia – Water Wise Consulting
- Summer Waters – Univ. of AZ Cooperative Extension
- Kathy Nguyen – Cobb County Water System



To feel good about yourself everytime you water the lawn, click here.



www.epa.gov/watersense

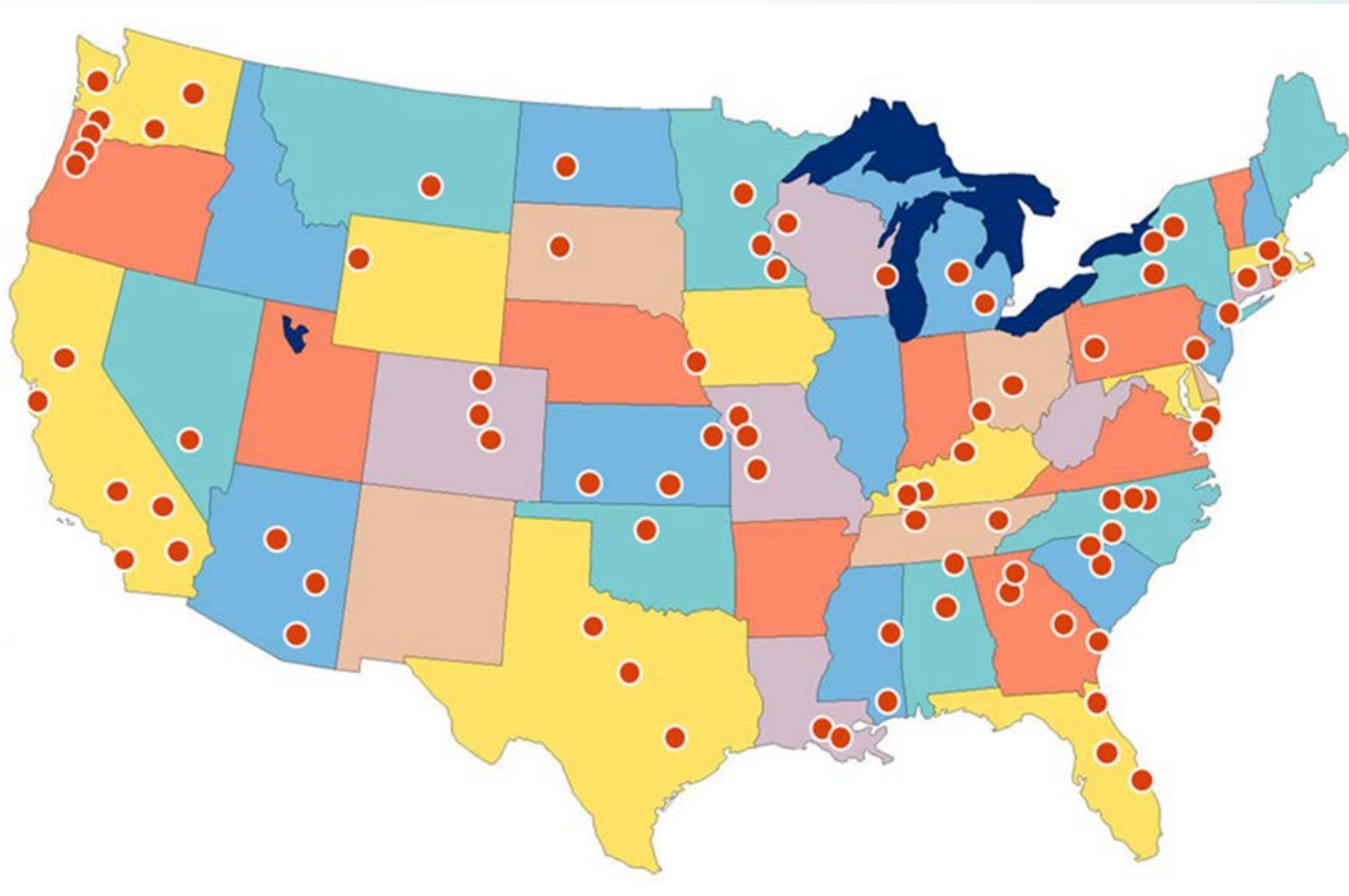
Veronica's contact info: blette.veronica@epa.gov



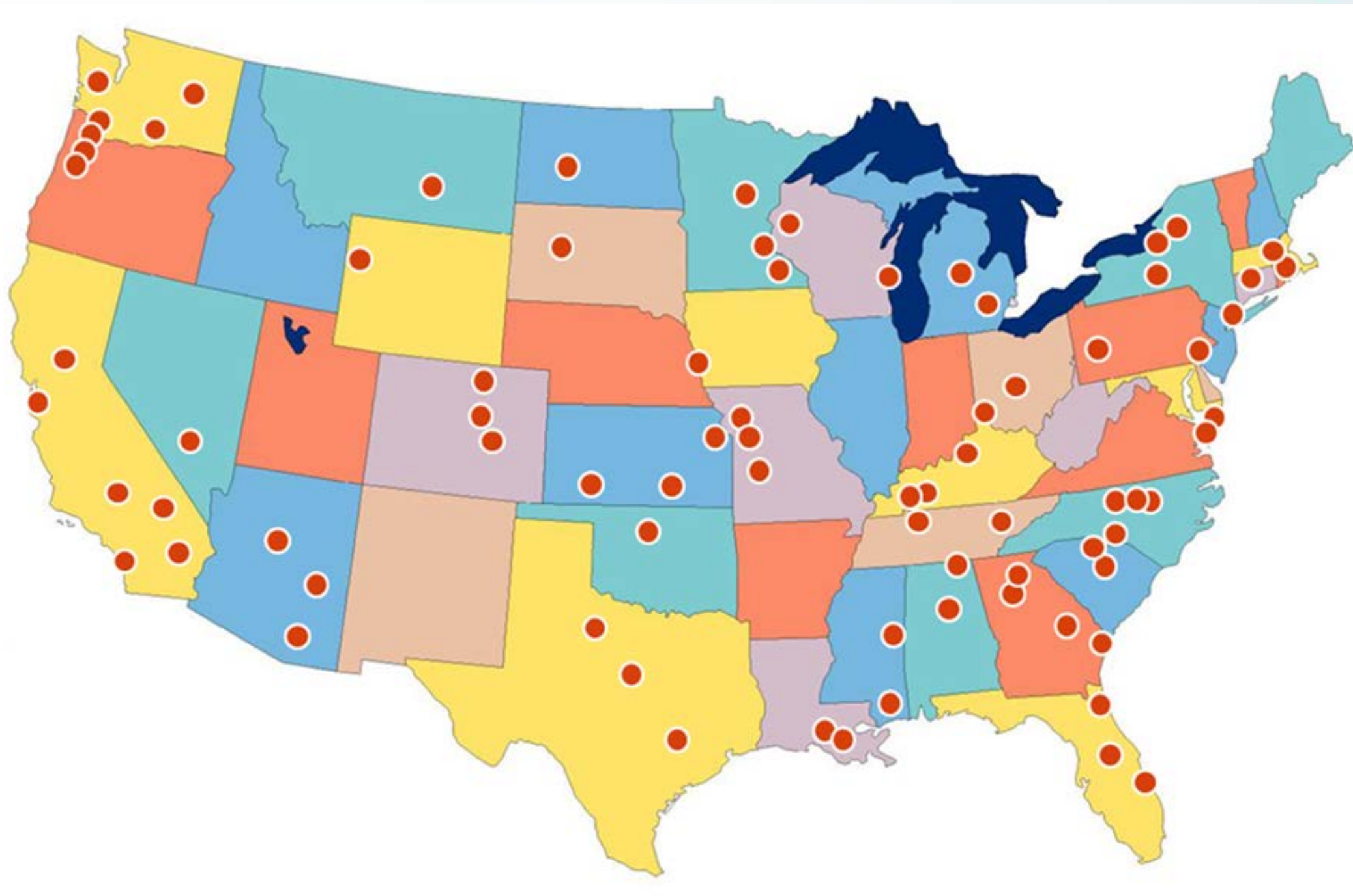


Landscape Contractors: The Key to Market Transformation

A Decade of Market Research



A Decade of Market Research



- Residential and commercial
- >50 focus groups
- >300 IDIs
- Numerous quantitative studies
 - Landscape contractors
 - Homeowners
 - Water purveyors
 - Manufacturers
 - Trade associations
 - Property managers
 - Facility managers
 - Distributors

Common Learnings

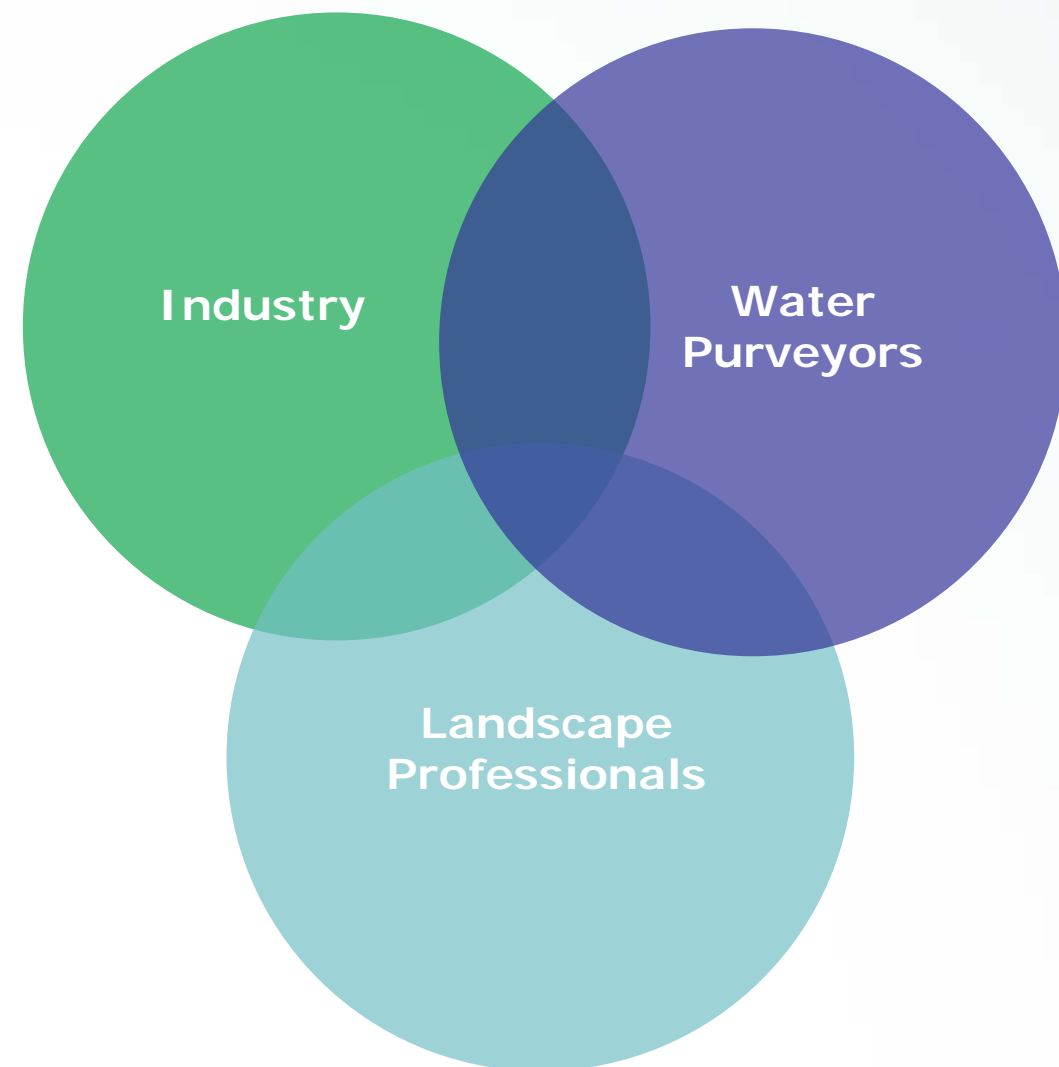
- Water conservation is important to most of your customers
- They “want to do the right thing”

but...

- Think they already are
- Have no idea how much water they use
- Are confident it is the right amount
- Often don't count outdoor irrigation as part of water use
- Place their trust in the landscape contractor

What Is Missing?

The “Win-Win-Win” Partnership



What is Holding Them Back?

Landscape Contractors sell on price not value

- This is what they know how to do
- They are resistant to change
- Their business is a constant struggle to survive
 - Drought
 - State and local water regulations
 - Economy – bad
 - Competition – tough
 - Margins – thin
 - Customer's mood – pessimistic

Landscape Contractors must learn to sell on value not price

Consultative Selling

A professional and structured sales process

- Casts the contractor as the customer's partner, not pest
- Values listening over "pitching"
- Fully understands the customer's needs
- Measures success not by the size of the sale - but by the improvement in helping customers meet their goals
- Builds loyal relationships and referrals

The Consultative Sales Process

Enables contractors to

- **Use “intelligent” questions** to open and sustain a conversation so he can fully understand the homeowner’s needs
- **Actively listen** to the customer (homeowner, property manager, HOA, facility manager)
- **Help buyers** discover and understand the reasons/causes that keep them from reaching their goals
- **Help create a vision** of a solution, based on value, as to how this will help them achieve their needs

Motivation: Does It Work?

Q. I found the consultative sales training I received to be valuable.

R. Average Score = 4.27 out of 5; Sum of Agree + Strongly Agree = 90%

Q. I feel more motivated and better prepared to sell water efficiency to my customers and prospects.

R. Average Score = 4.23 out of 5; Sum of Agree + Strongly Agree = 93%

Q. I plan to try to sell water efficiency to my customers and prospects.

R. Average Score = 4.37 out of 5; Sum of Agree + Strongly Agree = 93%

But it's only part - though an important part – of a successful water conservation market transformation.

Consultative Selling Works

Landscape Contractors

1. Want to learn how they can grow their businesses
2. Appreciate effort made to help them be more successful
3. Once shown a path to success, fully embrace the opportunity
4. Won't do it on their own without help
5. Is only part of the water conservation solution





Thank You

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Smartscape Training Program for Landscape Professionals in Arizona



Summer Waters
University of Arizona Cooperative Extension
Extension Agent, Water Resources
Maricopa County



Course Overview

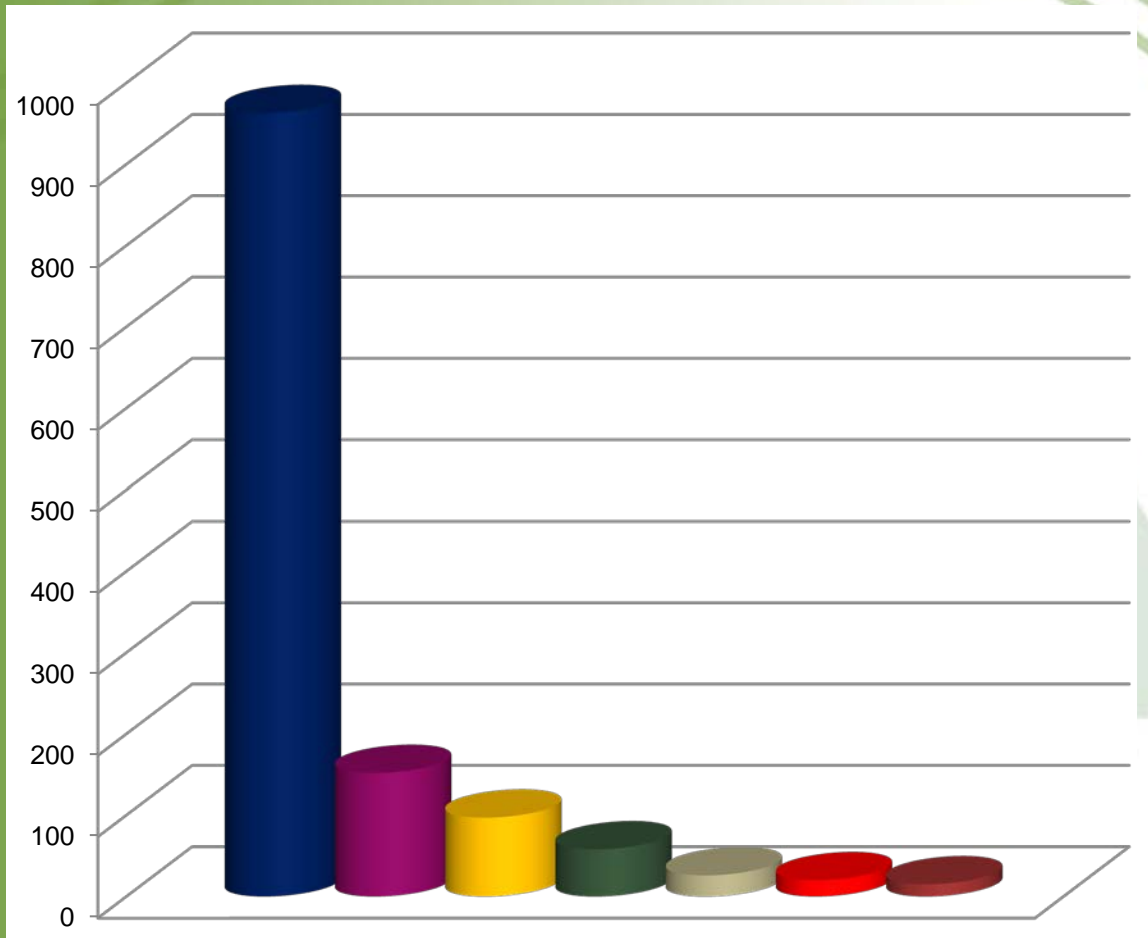


Smartscape 101

Design, Install, Maintain Desert-Adapted Landscapes

- 4 week training
- 2 days per week-afternoon/evening
- Take-home test
- Outdoor component and test review on last day
- Certificate of Completion once attendance requirements are met
- Class size around 60 people

Enrollment Since 1994



- Landscape Companies/Professionals
- City Parks and Recreation
- other
- Nursery Professionals
- Other government (flood control district, ADOT, etc.)
- HOAs
- City Water Conservation Staff

Evaluation Goals



Goals:

- Generate Business
- Provide Specialized Service

Landscape Professionals

Goals:

- Improve Lives and Communities
- Provide Research-based Education
- Increase Knowledge/ Change Harmful Behaviors

Cooperative Extension

Goals:

- Increase Water Efficiency
- Demonstrate actual savings

Water Provider

Program Evaluation



- Pre and Post Tests
- Evaluation forms completed by all students after each class of course
- Overall evaluation form completed at the end of the course session
- 6-month follow up survey online- sent via email to past graduates but response is anonymous
- Tracking water savings of graduates

Course Evaluation

- Likert Scale (1-5) used to gauge the students feelings about courses

Number	Meaning
1	Strongly disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neutral/ neither agree nor disagree
4	Agree
5	Strongly agree

- Students respond to a series of statements about quality of presentations, usefulness of course materials, relevance of topics covered
- One question for self evaluation/change in knowledge
- Comment section



Overall Course Evaluations



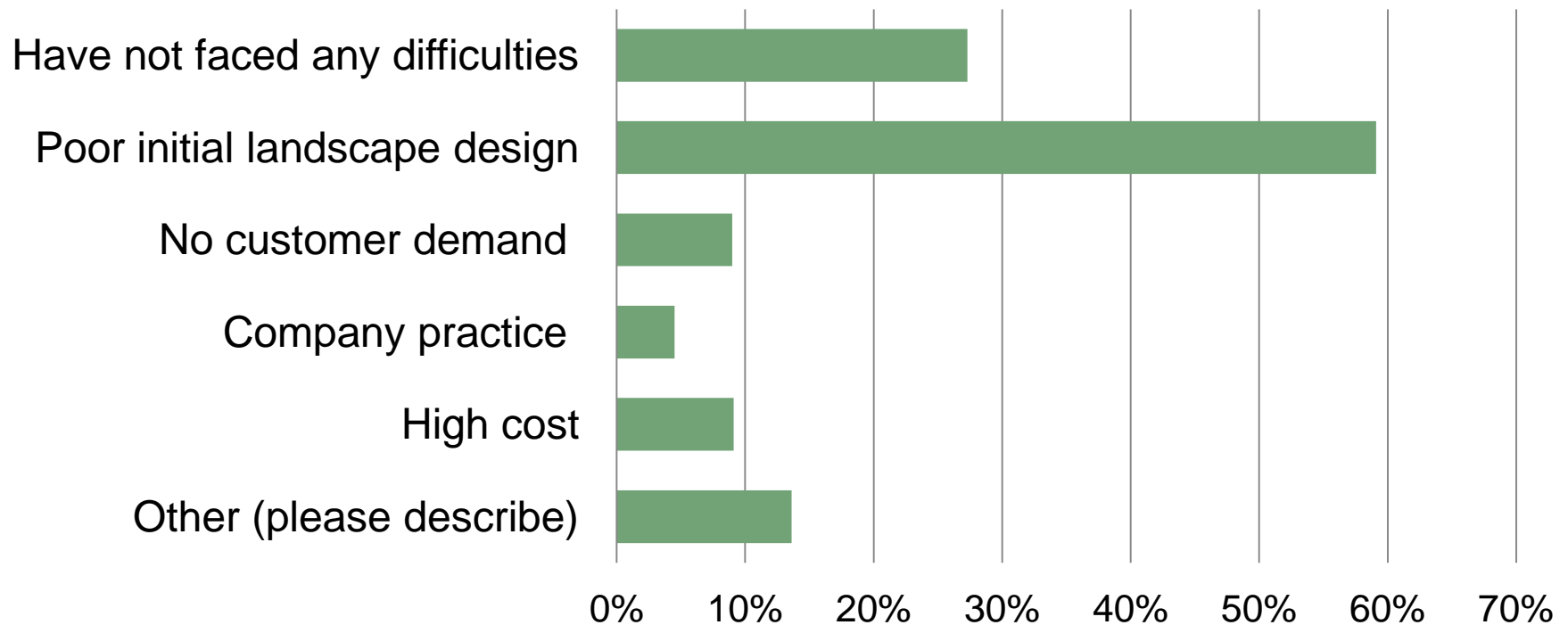
- My expectations for this class were met.
- On the whole, the quality of the presentations throughout the course was high.
- Overall, the speakers were knowledgeable and informative.
- The topics covered by Smartscape are useful in my line of work.
- Overall, the two-and-a-half hours provided for class was sufficient for the information presented.
- The test reflected the notebook and the speaker presentations throughout the course.
- I would be interested in learning more on the topics covered in Smartscape.
- My knowledge was increased by.... (scale given)

What Topic are Students Interested in Learning More About?

- Irrigation
- Trees
- Landscape business improvements and financial advice



If you have ever faced difficulties when trying to apply a technique recommended in Smartscape, why do you think you faced those difficulties?



Action!



- Advanced Smartscape Irrigation Module
- Additional one day seminars and hands-on workshops
- Focus on renovation and maintenance

Further Evaluation

- Continue follow-up surveys
- Continue pre and post tests
- Utilize automated audience response systems
- Track water savings implemented by one individual or company after taking course

