



“Great companies are not only measured by what they have accomplished, but by how much more they are willing to accomplish by finding A Better Way. . .”

You are receiving this letter because you have accomplished many great things in your company. At some time in the last 20 years, you have been associated with JP Horizons and that has allowed me to observe and appreciate the effort you and several hundred other companies just like yours have put forth to achieve those accomplishments. In my observations, I know you have several characteristics that qualify you to be part of A BETTER WAY as we continue into the future.

1. As an owner or leader, you are smart. You may not always feel that way, but you are, and it has brought you through the toughest of times to where you are now.
2. You desire ways to help your team become smarter, and you have committed a tremendous amount of time and energy to accomplish this. It has paid off in the successful team that now surrounds you.
3. Through the years you have made connections in the industry with your peers that have caused you to reflect on how you conduct every aspect of your business, and you have had the same positive effect on your peers.
4. As an early adopter, if there is a new idea that can give you an edge, you want it. Your passion for innovation has kept you in front of your competitors and influenced the industry in your market and across the country.
5. You are never satisfied. This unstoppable urge to continue getting better and better has at times left your family and company wondering, “When is enough ever going to be enough?” Yet your pursuit of perfection has also inspired them in some way to reflect the same attitude in their own thoughts and actions.

I did not begin what I know is going to be an eye-opening letter with these observations to pump you up because the sixth point could have read, “Your entrepreneurial spirit is what matters most, and it makes you go places where other people aren’t willing to go.” The observations are listed because I want to build the A Better Way Community with this type of owner or leader, and I have described you.

Imagine the value you will receive from joining a community with these Green Industry leaders:

Mike Rorie, Go iLawn
Jim McCutcheon, HighGrove Partners
Michael Hatcher, MHA
Frank Mariani, Mariani Landscape

Tom Heaviland, Heaviland Enterprises
Bob Maffei, Maffei Landscape
Tom Tolkacz, Swingle Tree
Michael Currin, Greenscapes

The owners listed above have already committed to participating in A Better Way. By sending you this email, I know you have much to contribute, and I want you to begin benefitting from this community now!

A DOSE OF REALITY

If I were to say that the past 18-24 months have not been challenging and at times flat-out frightening, then it would be evidence that my head has been stuck in the sand (or some of you might describe it as being stuck somewhere else). Here's what I've witnessed over the past months:

- The downturn has caused every owner still standing to review all they do. You're reassessing the number of employees to — in some cases — the number of paperclips in the office storage room, if you still have a storage room. Everything is no longer as it was but as it is.
- We realized that for too long we found ourselves in an era of order taking, overstaffing, lacking in fiscal management and generally getting soft. (WOW, I miss those days; don't you?)
- We can cliché ourselves to death about how adversity has made us stronger, we have weeded out the competition and we have to get back to working on our business not in it, which by the way is the most misguided management principle to ever be printed between the covers of a book or uttered by a cliché-inspired consultant, but I will save the explanation for that for another time.
- You know there have always been challenges in terms of running the business, and you find yourself asking: "Why do the frustrations and challenges today seem so much more intense and at times devastating as we put forth the effort that would have had us thriving in other times but today has us merely surviving?"
- The real fact is: right now it is not fun to be in business. It is less fun to be floundering to the point where we all are wondering if it is worth the effort.

As you read the list of today's pressing challenges, did you find yourself nodding your head in agreement? There is something missing in many organizations today, even the great ones — or at least less prevalent. That something is a commitment to creating and maintaining a learning culture: the type of culture that was present when everything seemed to be running smoothly and flourishing. *This reduced commitment to a learning culture is not entirely your fault.*

I know there are some of you who may need to get to the bottom line, so thanks for reading to this point. If you're wanting an executive summary, jump to the last page to be reminded of the value of this community and how to move forward.

A BETTER WAY TO LEARN

If you've decided to stay and continue reading, let's get back to this lack of learning culture. No one is to blame for this; it is simply a sign of the times brought about because companies are no longer budgeting for a learning culture; they are questioning the value of training employees today who may not be there tomorrow, and they have committed to cutting back on expenses that don't generate revenue. It is a sign of the times accentuated by fewer people attending association annual events, workshops or trade shows because, "there is not time or money to do so, and besides I have heard all of these speakers before." It is that last phrase that has us excited about A BETTER WAY COMMUNITY's approach to education in the past year and what it will continue to provide in the future. With our expertise in creating innovative and successful learning experiences, we have discovered what has really come out of the last 20 years for JP HORIZONS — and more notably the last 12 to 18 months — is that we identified *A Better Way to Learn*.

A BETTER WAY provides learning opportunities through a radically innovative approach blending personal touch and technology to make each experience relevant and cost-effective. Based on what member companies accomplished in the past year, there is no more affordable approach to educating a company and developing a learning culture than belonging to A BETTER WAY COMMUNITY. In this letter you will discover in detail how this elite community of companies forms a mega-peer group that opens up a world of experience and sharing for all involved.

You will learn about events like FACE TO FACE TO THE FUTURE that will accomplish the exchange of ideas to impact the industry like never before. You will read about our second A BETTER WAY ANNUAL EVENT. It will be in DOWNTOWN CHICAGO and focused on COME ALIVE OUTSIDE — how we move beyond sustainability to help create markets that desire the advantages of outdoor living spaces. If you are already a member of A BETTER WAY COMMUNITY, you will be reminded of how 50 weeks of continuous education through Monday afternoon webinars and a website provide an accessible archive of game-changing insights that early adopters crave. I will tell you about all of this and more after we take a few minutes to understand this innovative and radically different approach that has been around since . . . well since SOCRATES.

We Have Been Fooled Since Kindergarten

After walking into an owner's office, I often see scores of books, stacks of binders from the last educational event and piles of other sources of information. As papers just sit there gathering dust, the owners talk about seeking more information to add more to the stack they've already attained. They say, "If I can just get this new book in front of my foremen, then we will get it right." The habitual cycle continues. This cycle isn't a total waste, but I have found that notes stuffed in binders and books on a shelf aren't the most efficient or effective ways to learn or to grow people and businesses. As you read through the seven steps of A Better Way to Learn below, think about how this approach will grow you as a leader and transform your company's culture.

"Never mistake knowledge for wisdom. One helps you make a living; the other helps you make a life." – Sandra Carey

THE 7 STEPS OF A BETTER WAY TO LEARN

- 1. ASK A QUESTION** – Begin with a question that focuses attention to a specific need. A solid Focus Question is the best approach to lead to the next step in the process. Consider this example, “What are the simplest steps we can take to create a demand for our design and construction talents in 2011 that can be expanded upon in the years ahead to develop a sustainable profit center for our company?”
- 2. GATHER INFORMATION** – Next consider the best and most credible source of information you have discovered that can address this question. It may be that one source lies in the knowledge of your own team. There is an incredible brain trust being created in A Better Way Community that is willing to share information and offer new ideas and innovative strategies that every member can pull from. In the past year, we have discussed green roofs, children’s gardens and playgrounds, permeable pavers, storm water solutions, smart houses, tilapia tanks and other concepts where the information applied to the focus question above can place a company as the innovative leader in its market.
- 3. ENGAGE IN DEBATE** – We should question everything about the information and draw in those whose opinions and insights will help in this and ultimately be impacted by the outcome of the debate. By hearing how others are opening new markets and analyzing ideas that may or may not work for your company, your team through the involvement in A BETTER WAY will find the insights that bring about the next step of knowledge.
- 4. GAIN KNOWLEDGE** – A willingness to gain a deeper understanding of this information brings us to the point of being knowledgeable. We have found gaining the knowledge in the way described here in the first 4 steps brings about a confidence to move forward. **When we hear that others have tried and succeeded, it adds credibility to the knowledge and a willingness to implement our own ideas.**
- 5. CREATE A PLAN** – At JP HORIZONS we call it a BETTER RESULTS CAMPAIGN, and it consist of a written focused result and the dynamic actions needed to accomplish it along with a who and a when to make the plan real and accountable. Think about the power of having a simple 5- or 6-step plan that will allow you to understand not only what you are setting out to accomplish but the path you will take to accomplish it.
- 6. TAKE ACTION AND GET RESULTS** – A clear plan will always help us move beyond complacency to achieve results, and the people or network we surround ourselves with can inspire us to take action. By using the resources available to A Better Way Community, and through the A Better Way to Learn methodology, you may have developed the plan for reconnecting with all your past construction clients to add a GREEN UPGRADE to an existing landscape or an outdoor living room specific to their needs.
- 7. ACQUIRE WISDOM** – Evaluate what we have learned to acquire wisdom. The results we obtain, regardless of the outcome or the degree of success, become our source for wisdom. What we learn from that outcome and choose to apply will always be a reflection of our commitment to finding A BETTER WAY.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT TO YOU **AS AN OWNER AND LEADER**

From my experience over the past several years, this 7-step process just makes sense. I compare it to placing the right mass of perennials or correct bull nose coping around a pool making sense to the Landscape Architect, and this attention to detail and knowledge of good design produces an award-winning final project. With that in mind, the same skill and attention to detail in creating learning opportunities will produce the best and most effective individuals and companies. Just as you have observed less than spectacular landscapes, I have observed poor educational opportunities being recycled and presented today. The focus on the 7 steps described above lays the foundation for the members of A BETTER WAY COMMUNITY to thrive from the wisdom gained and influence the rest of the industry to serve the clients who will ultimately benefit the most.

THE COMMUNITY - A MEGA-PEER GROUP

A Better Way Community generates wisdom through the members who actively learn together. A Better Way members gather in different venues to ask questions, gain information and debate topics to feed their desire to get better. This community becomes a resource for owners and top leaders who can, at times, feel isolated. A Better Way brings people from all layers of Green Industry companies together with others in similar positions to discuss problems and seek growth. These peers connect at an annual event and regional Face-to-Face events. Members acquire wisdom by joining discussions on A Better Way's hotline, participating in weekly webinars, supporting their A Better Way training specialist, bonding with Smart Companies, accessing solutions on the website and reading solutions in white papers. As you continue to read this letter, you will learn about each opportunity in detail.

FACE TO FACE TO THE FUTURE

We are talking with the leading Horticulture schools in the nation to create **Face-to-Face-to-the-Future** events in five universities across the country. Face-to-Face events always have been successful because of the principles supporting A Better Way Community. We're bringing smart people together to share best practices, create new ideas and take action around those ideas. The 2011 Face-to-Face-to-the-Future events will take that success to the next level. By engaging the enthusiasm and energy of students, we will apply the knowledge of the Smart Companies and what their organizations are working on to engage the members of A BETTER WAY COMMUNITY.

The results from this gathering will be incredible. Imagine an event that allows us to establish the current state of the industry with students, vendors, professors and contractors. Then, the entire group will focus on the ideas that will grow your business, impact the students, influence the vendors and put the community on the cutting edge of and prepared for a successful future in the industry. Your membership in A Better Way puts you at the front of the line to participate in these events scheduled through out the year.

"Wisdom is when we can make a choice based on something that has happened to us in the past. . . . through all of these life experiences we gain knowledge, and when you use knowledge, it becomes wisdom." – from Leaving a Legacy

A BETTER WAY'S COMMUNITY HOTLINE

A BETTER WAY COMMUNITY'S HOTLINE, a new addition in 2011, will take your question, send it to the community to gather information, put the information back out for debate and send the responses to you and everyone who participated. This can happen in a matter of minutes or hours, depending on if you are looking for feedback on mowing patterns or a solution on a sales and marketing problem you may have. Ongoing relationships with other members provide you with the information to power your business and the support to strengthen your leadership and personal life. The value A Better Way Community offers goes beyond giving you information. The community provides you with the inspiration to take action, holds you accountable and helps you generate results that when shared provide wisdom across the entire group.

WHITE PAPERS

The white papers provide you with an innovative idea and a business plan you can apply to your company. One of our past reports asked the question: How can you switch your crews to a four-day workweek and add to your bottom line? A Better Way's white paper gave the specific details of how one company made the change and the plan that other businesses can follow to be successful with a four-day workweek. Your membership in A Better Way will give you access to four white paper reports. The first report will be issued in January, and the plan provided to you will be: "Come Alive Outside: The Sellable Solutions for Outdoor Spaces."

THE WEBSITE

The website [<http://abetterwaycommunity.com>] will be organized in a way that is tangible and easy to use for you to get the resources you need to solve specific challenges in your business. For instance, if you are looking to increase the efficiency of your crews, you will just click on a page that offers you the best webinars, newsletters, videos and tips on how to inspire your crews to be more productive. This site will quickly give you more than information. It offers a direction and plan for you and your team to adopt.

WEEKLY WEBINARS

If you are coming back for your second year of A BETTER WAY, you know the impact of the 45 MONDAY AFTERNOON WEBINARS held in 2010. We know they are successful, because attendance continues to grow and when the crowd arrives at 3 p.m. from around the world, 99% of them are still listening at the close of the webinar an hour later. These innovative webinars give you insights into emerging best practices (like Employee Stock Ownership Programs and strategies for creating new markets with permeable pavers) and provide help with everyday issues (such as ways to energize your sales approach and solutions to get your crews out of the gate earlier).

I believe the team at JP HORIZONS has set the standard for what a webinar should be. We bring energetic and experienced guests to you each week to help you grow your business. The webinars are live and unrehearsed, allowing for controversy and debate as information is transformed into knowledge. Each week the webinars are downloaded from our website and used in training sessions or meetings as learning resources.

YOU WILL KNOW WHY THEY ARE CALLED SMART COMPANIES

The Smart Companies, group of vendors that go far beyond sponsoring a program, help to define the direction by serving as tremendous resource. These industry-leading organizations join the community to connect with members and provide you with education and support. Smart Companies are innovators who join A Better Way with the primary focus of helping you build your business. They facilitate discussions at Face to Face events, lead webinars and provide insight in white papers. Our Smart Companies will continue to build relationships with you, educate you on the newest developments in the industry and hope to make a connection with you that inspires you to invest in their products. The JP Horizons team is continuously impressed by the professionalism and willingness to support the industry exhibited by these Smart Companies.



HOW ARE CHOICES MADE?

Choices are made to avoid pain or move toward pleasure. Choices are made when the underlying WHY is understood and aligns with the person receiving the message. As I reflect on that and consider the choices you might make, I think about the pain we might move you away from: the frustration with lack of growth in your business, the frustration of not growing your people, the frustration of missing opportunities that new and emerging markets may give you and a host of others that you can think of. What pleasure can we move you toward? The comfort of belonging to what is going to be the most incredible group of peers to be assembled in the industry, which will give you the opportunity to share insights that lead to action, knowledge and wisdom. The pleasure of providing cost-effective and relevant education to all levels of your organization and offering a tool that will just continue to help your company focus on finding A Better Way. If the evidence is not yet clear, the next two features of A Better Way will help you choose to join and be a part of the community. In the next two pages, you're going to read about Come Alive Outside, the community's movement that leverages A Better Way to Learn to entice people to come outdoors. You will also learn how your decision to come aboard puts your leaders in the yearlong leadership program that helps you become involved in the components of A Better Way.

COME ALIVE OUTSIDE

We're losing the battle for children's outside entertainment experiences, resulting in adults who don't spend time and money out of their air-conditioned homes. In writing this letter, I struggled with how to efficiently capture the essence of Come Alive Outside. As I've done so many times in the past, I looked internally to the JP Horizons team and asked for their thoughts on coming alive outside. The following is from Linda Coors, our director of the Working Smarter Training Challenge, who captured the emotional essence on what it means to come alive outside. Take a moment and read her essay:

Why is it important to come alive outside? Reach back into your memories and what stands out to you? I learned to enjoy hard work from my dad because he made it a game. Getting wood for the winter was fun because carrying it to the wood pile was a competition to see who could carry the most and get back with another pile the fastest. Then we'd get to have a huge brushfire when night came, and we'd gather around to eat hot dogs and watch the fire reach to the sky. How about finding a grapevine to swing out over the creek? Did you ever have a favorite tree? Mine was a weeping willow in the backyard and it belonged to me, so Mom wasn't allowed to cut a switch from it to use on me. I'd climb up there and sit for hours just thinking. I used to wonder if my knees would always have scabs on them or if there was a possibility of healing. "No one's ever skinned their knees playing the Wii." What about the feeling of picking the first mess of beans and digging new potatoes from the garden and having them with fresh tomatoes, green onions and peppers all because you had the privilege of putting seed into the ground and nurturing it to produce? Think of the poetry that would never have been written if not for being able to look at a blue sky or a thunderstorm or walk through the woods on a crisp autumn day with leavings crunching on your feet or by a flower garden in spring with blooms all around you? What would it be like to never roll down a hill and come up covered in freshly cut grass? What can compare to the learning experiences of nature? Take a child on a walk and you will be amazed to see things through his eyes and you'll remember why we truly do come alive outside.

These experiences are lost in many families today. Come Alive Outside is a movement afoot in A Better Way Community to entice people outdoors. I believe nobody wins unless somebody goes outside, and I know for the Green Industry to survive and thrive in coming years we must share the value of outdoor living with children and their parents, with property managers and their tenants and every other place that outdoor living can make a difference. A Better Way is moving forward as a community to promote the value and enjoyment of outdoor living. Imagine what will happen in 2011 and beyond if we leverage A Better Way to Learn and through the green industry motivate communities to turn off their instruments of technology and turn on a passion for the outdoors. We can create change today and promote a much stronger future for tomorrow.

A BETTER WAY ANNUAL EVENT

With Come Alive Outside as the focus of A Better Way's 2011 annual event, we will explore what outdoor living can do for the growth and future of the Green Industry. Our summer event will be in Downtown Chicago, where content experts will speak on innovations such as selling and installing green roofs, the revenue streams generated by natural playgrounds and how to communicate the message of how your clients benefit from sustainability. This event will engage the creativity of the best minds in the industry and inspire leaders to take action to drive the theme "COME ALIVE OUTSIDE." In the spirit of FAMILY and ENJOYING the outdoors, we will schedule the event in July or August for you to have a fantastic vacation for your family as well.

The most important reason why you will want to make this decision now . . . GROWING YOUR LEADERS.

Imagine having an in-house learning specialist who becomes your internal catalyst to A Better Way. This emerging leader, your A Better Way Learning Specialist, makes sure you get the most out of your membership by staying actively involved with all of the key elements of A Better Way to Learn that have been introduced in this letter and most importantly receives monthly coaching from Bob Coulter of JP Horizons that will help all of your leaders become more effective through A Better Way. Our experience here at JP Horizons with the Working Smarter Training Challenge showed us if we take the responsibility out of the owner's hands and put it in the hands of an emerging leader, several things happen:

- Your company benefits more from the membership.
- Your team members don't miss out on educational opportunities that will help them.
- As an owner, you stay focused on the big picture and aren't burdened with the details.
- Your company's emerging leader is immersed in a leadership program of their own as they learn how to bring these concepts and ideas in a productive and creative way.

THE LEARNING SPECIALISTS JAM

**December 15, 2010
John Deer Training Center
Cary, North Carolina**

This event will provide your learning specialist with foundation followed by the support they need to be effective in driving a learning culture in your organization through A Better Way. Bob Coulter will host this day where the agenda will include how to use everything in A Better Way from the website to webinars to the community hotline. With the help of Kristen Coulter, our Director of Communications in A Better Way, they will leave not only excited but well versed with everything A Better Way has to offer. But it doesn't stop there. Along with the other specialists, they will meet at this Jam and through the facilitation of Bob Coulter's monthly coaching events, we will keep these emerging leaders on track achieving the goals you want to achieve through A Better Way in your organization. Bob has facilitated programs like this in the past, and many of the leaders who have participated in these programs are now making tremendous contributions to their companies today. The response from the great group of company owners listed earlier in this letter suggests that this offering alone is worth the investment, and leadership development will be the determining factor of a company's future success.

**This is why you need to commit to support A Better Way now.
The first 50 companies will be able to send a leader to the Learning Specialists Jam.**

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." - John Quincy Adams

The Executive Recap for Those Bottom Liners Who Naturally Jump to the Back of the Document First!

If you are one of these bottom liners, great. Then you will enjoy the comparison of numbers below. In the column on the left is what it would cost for you to participate in these types of events through sources other than supporting A Better Way Community. The column on the right reflects that each of the key elements are included in your support of A BETTER WAY.

A Better Way Key Elements	Old Way	A Better Way
1. The Membership into a Mega-Peer Group of selected companies	\$750	Included
2. Two passes to the Come Alive Outside event in Chicago	\$1,800	Included
3. Four passes you may use at any of the Face-to-Face-to-the-Future events	\$1,600	Included
4. Access for your entire company to the Weekly Webinars	\$2,500	Included
5. Access for all of the archived webinars from 2010	\$2,500	Included
6. A website that goes beyond just information	N/C	Included
7. The four industry-specific White Papers with incredible insights	\$200	Included
8. Connection with the SMART COMPANIES	N/C	Included
9. The yearlong leadership training for your LEARNING SPECIALIST	\$1,000	Included
10. The LEARNING SPECIALIST JAM in Cary, NC, on December 15, 2010	\$600	Included
TOTAL OLD WAY	\$10,950	
SUPPORTING A BETTER WAY		\$1,400

We hope it is a decision you can make without hesitation because of the value A Better Way can provide you as an owner and your team members. Let us know by replying to the email we sent. We will reserve your membership and open a spot for your emerging leader to attend the LEARNING SPECIALIST JAM December 15.

Why and how can we do this at a fraction of the cost? It is because we have to join together to share the message to "Come Alive Outside." We must do this to continue to help bring A Better Way to Learn into the culture of companies in the Green Industry. It's essential to us at JP Horizons and to all those who want to join us in our quest to ENERGIZE A ZILLION PEOPLE and I believe it's the right thing to do.

If you have read this entire letter, then I know you are the leader we want to stay connected with. Thank you for your continued support of JP HORIZONS and A BETTER WAY!

*GO GET 'EM,
Jim*