

N.J. Snow Removal Company's 4 Keys To Commercial Success





Keys for Successful Snow Removal

There are four keys to running a successful snow removal operation according to David Ross, president of Snowscapes, a commercial snow removal company based in Hackensack, N.J.:

1.) Specialize in serving a specific type of customer. Focusing on one particular sector allows your team to fine tune their operations, limiting waste and maximizing profit.

2.) Dedicate yourself and your team to delivering the highest quality service through education, certifications, training and detailed operational plans.

3.) Utilize top quality materials and machinery. Initial cost may be greater, but the loss suffered from inferior products and equipment will prove to be far greater.

4.) Never rest on your laurels.



David Ross - President of Snowscapes

Snowscapes began 30 years ago as a lawn care company. Like many such enterprises, the company added snow removal services in the winter months, but soon began to focus only on snow removal. After providing these services to both commercial and municipal customers, Ross made the decision to focus solely on commercial accounts.

“Servicing ‘plow and go’ customers such as single-family homes, small strip malls or fast food chains was a losing proposition,” Ross says. Year after year they were looking for us to lower their costs. Job quality and lot safety did not appear to be the top priority.

Today, our target customers typically have intricate properties, often with delicate surfaces that need to be treated – sidewalks, loading bays, stairs and wheelchair ramps. And,

“Our clients’ expectations are high.”

Many of our contracts stipulate that no more than one inch of snow can accumulate at any time, while a few are as low as ½ inch.





Adapting to New Scenarios

Now that Snowscapes focuses solely on its snow removal service, much of the summer months are spent training drivers/applicators and doing dry runs. "Because our typical customer has more complex surfaces – not simply large, square parking lots – we believe training helps us do the best job possible in the winter months," Ross says. "High-traffic, high-liability areas are where the site's employees and visitors might suffer a fall. It's also where they might track deicing materials into buildings, damaging the flooring and carpeting."

Snowscapes personnel use agricultural tractors and utility vehicles equipped with rubber plow blades. Ross says that this equipment, such as Bobcat skid-steers, has longer lifespans than trucks and offers his personnel greater flexibility to clear a variety of surfaces.

Like many snow removal companies, Snowscapes has switched from granular deicing products to liquid deicers. Formerly, the most commonly used commercial deicers were granular products made from sodium, calcium or magnesium chloride.

Each of these materials is hydroscopic, meaning they draw moisture from the atmosphere. Such materials can cause irritation to skin and are damaging to vegetation and waterways. When tracked into a building they leave a white residue that can dull the finish of floors and fade the color of carpets (sodium chloride) or coat floors with an oily, slippery residue that damages wax and urethane finishes (calcium and magnesium chloride), posing a safety risk to employees and visitors. And, each of these chloride-based products has been shown, to differing degrees, to damage concrete.

Snowscapes serves more than 30 accounts in northern New Jersey including several commercial and residential real estate management companies such as Jones Lang LaSalle, Newmark Grubb Knight Frank and Integra Property Management.



Nate Clemmer - CEO of SynaTek Solutions (Left), David Ross - President of Snowscapes (Right)



The Advantages



The advantages of liquid deicers in general include the ease of application, reduced residue on carpeting and floors, improved eco-friendliness and cost efficiency.

“Applying a liquid deicer offers several advantages over using granular products,” says Ross. “Ease and speed of application combined with reduced labor, transport and loading costs make using liquids extremely attractive. Using granular products can be very labor intensive, which can slow the process down, greatly impacting the safety in high-traffic pedestrian areas. In many areas, such as stairs, labor has to carry heavy bags spreading material by hand. In larger areas and walkways, push spreaders may be utilized. But liquid applications are far more efficient. Liquid tanks fill very quickly, and today’s liquid application technologies include GPS and flow rate-controlled systems for very precise application rates.”

For narrow sidewalks, Snowscapes uses sidewalk specific machinery equipped with spray tanks. For large walks, tank sprayers are attached to utility vehicles, pickup trucks or agricultural tractors, which apply the liquid deicer from a spray nozzle extended from the side of the vehicle while driving parallel to the sidewalk.

As for the speed of melt, Ross says, “Most granular products take a minimum of five minutes to achieve an adequate melt, while some liquids take less than two minutes. Some liquids are more effective at lower temperatures than most granular deicers, too.

“When we switched to a liquid deicer, we chose one of the leading brands. We were pleased that it provided all

the advertised advantages of liquid deicers over granular products, and we felt that using a liquid enhanced our reputation. But, we’re always looking to improve our company’s processes. So, we kept the door open to finding another effective liquid deicer.”





How it Works

In 2016, Ross learned about Secure Winter Products' Entry, a deicing and anti-icing fluid based upon formic technology. Entry quickly and reliably removes thin layers of ice and prevents new snow and ice from accumulating.



In fact, Entry's speed of melt was

30 to 50 seconds faster

than the liquid the company was using previously. At a 50 percent concentration, the freezing point is reduced to approximately minus 63 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 53 degrees Celsius). Like other liquid deicers and unlike most granular deicers, Entry is readily biodegradable, does not

contain chlorides that can damage ecosystems and eliminates the sticky, slippery residue on floors and carpets that is common with granular products and some liquids. And Entry has a virtually neutral pH of 7.8, lower than other than other liquid products which can

cause damage to flooring and concrete surfaces. It is safer for pets, plants and metals and provides rapid and reliable results. Snowscapes used Entry during approximately 80 percent of the company's 2016-2017 winter events.

"The speed and efficacy of Entry along with low application labor costs make using Entry far more advantageous than applying a pellet or flake," Ross notes. We achieved greatly reduced application costs per 1,000 sq. ft. compared to when we applied solids only."



