

# Protecting Your Corporate Appearance

## Factors to consider when developing a landscaping plan

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In today's emerging markets, corporate competition is intense. That can be seen in the design of newer, high-end buildings where architects have labored over every detail to captivate their clients' prospective customers and create a unique experience for all that enter.

With large grand entrances and extravagant lobbies designed to capture your interest from the time you walk in the door, the intent is to create an experience that visitors will not soon forget, while also providing a warm and welcoming work environment for the clients' team.

While the intentions are good, some fail to remember one important point. All their painstaking work can be thwarted by a poorly designed landscaping project. Let's face it: a great design can lose its impact because of an over-powering landscape. Or the building itself, if not properly accented, may simply jut out of the landscape like a sore thumb.

I know most owners of corporate real estate can drive by a well thought through landscape design on an adjacent property and say, "that's what I want my building to look like." What most owners fail to realize is that there are a lot of moving parts to that well thought through landscape design. Here are some of the factors you should take into consideration while you are in the planning stages.

### Seasonality

What will the building look like in the four seasons we have in Northeast Ohio. You don't want to have all sticks in the winter and or a conundrum of color in the summer that clashes with the architecture of the building.

### Texture

You walk a fine line when taking textures into account. If you fail to incorporate enough textures in the landscaping materials you choose, it will appear as though you have a quilt in front of your building and if you use too much variety of landscape materials you will start to lose the continuity that comes with well designed landscaping.

### Scale

As you begin the process of laying out the species you will choose for the new



**IMPRESSIVE INTRODUCTION** A company's corporate appearance begins at the curb and continues through the front door. Tasteful landscaping choices help to create a positive first impression.

project, many contractors will not take the macrobiotics of the plant into consideration. All landscaping looks fresh and clean when it is first installed, but broadcast out five years and many problems start to become apparent, whether it's because of over-crowding or lack of density when plants were originally laid out.

### Maintenance

This is a big one for most owners. They want the fine balance of a spectacular layout and breathtaking appearance coupled with a realistic expectation of the costs to maintain the project after installation. No owner wants to break the bank to keep his new investment looking like the day it was installed.

### Placement

Larger specimens should be placed to draw prospective customers into the

structure. If improperly placed at their installation trees can grow to obstruct vital parts of the building such as signage and or architectural details. As a designer, you do want to create some curiosity by concealing some of the details you want people to look for. Human nature always will get the best of people when they can not see everything they typically will come closer to capture the entire view of a staple fountain or sculpture strategically placed.

### Employee-friendly

In today's corporate world, retaining your core team is not only important but it is paramount to sustainability of your product or service. Most owners know they are only as good as their weakest link and employee retention is key. A good landscape design will take this into consideration. An intimate courtyard where team members can have a lunch can create a pleasant work environment for your team and become infectious when it comes to productivity.

With all this said, I believe it distills down to the experience and knowledge of your landscape designer/architect. Open communication between the owner and the development team can create a synergy which will pay off in dividends as the landscape matures.

Remember, your corporate appearance starts at the curb and continues through the front door and lobby. It doesn't matter how unique the structures may appear, your prospective customer or new team member has already drawn several conclusions before opening the door. Happy planting! **P**

Mark Mazzurco has 23 years of experience in the landscape design/installation industry. H&M Landscaping currently services Northeast Ohio with over 75 associates. Mazzurco can be reached at 440-564-1157. For more information, visit [www.hmlandscaping.com](http://www.hmlandscaping.com).