

Franchise Owner Profile



Name: Jason Vahle

Location: St. Charles, MO

Spring-Green's buying power and processes show green industry vet quickest path to success.

A One-Stop Shop

Right out of college, Jason Vahle worked for a TruGreen Lawn Care branch as an operations manager. "So early on when I started my own company, I knew I would never have the buying power that a larger corporate structure has or the networking capabilities."

That was in 2005 when he launched Green Thumb Lawn Care 'n' Landscape in St. Charles, Missouri, offering a wide range of services, from hardscape to maintenance. "For 10 years we've been growing steadily," Vahle said. "But a couple of years ago, I started looking into franchises."

Spring-Green may not have been top-of-mind for Vahle when he began his search, but the more he learned, the more he liked. "I didn't know that much about Spring-Green, didn't really know who they were. Then I got a call from Nancy Babyar. And that's when the pace picked up.

"The impression I got from the start was that nothing about Spring-Green was loosely strung together," Vahle continued. "I mean every phone call was scheduled, the process was very organized from start to finish. I liked that. Spring-Green had as many questions about my business as I did about the franchise opportunity."

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One of the first things that impressed Vahle was Spring-Green's technology platform, which offers a highly personalized experience supported by the national call center, and their industry-leading direct mail programs, which influence over 70 percent of all new customer activity.

Vahle also liked Spring-Green's structure of support for their franchise owners. "The backbone of their networking — from the call center to the marketing infrastructure, to the digital triggers and the support staff they have in place — was all impressive," Vahle said. "To attain that myself, on my own, would take 30 years. I don't want to wait 30 years. It became clear to me very quickly that Spring-Green would get me from point A to point B a lot faster."

The speed in which his Spring-Green business and existing lawn care operation began complementing one another also was very gratifying to Vahle. "The transition's been nice," he said. "The cohesion between the two seems pretty decent as I am able to cross-train my employees. So, some of them have Green Thumb uniforms in their lockers, while the next locker has their Spring-Green uniforms."





The Spring-Green effect creates efficiencies to benefit both companies

While the two companies occupy the same warehouse and share cross-trained office staff, Vahle emphasized they operate independently, even using separate phone systems. But there are efficiencies that show up immediately, and in many ways dramatically, on the bottom line, especially for a smaller organization like Vahle's.

"As a small company," he said, "we'd have to be a \$20-million-company to get the sort of buying power that Spring-Green affords us. I mean the pricing structure they have for lawn care products gave me savings in the first year that more than covered the royalties that I pay. I will actually make a profit just off the material cost."

And that's before adding Spring-Green's marketing power to the list of efficiencies that affect both companies.

"They helped me construct a comprehensive business plan that focused on both my top line revenue growth and my bottom line profitability. Spring-Green understands the need for maintaining stable and healthy margins, while managing your material costs and direct labor."

"My lawn care and landscape business should be up about seven percent this year," Vahle said. "I'm certainly happy with the results so far. Obviously, like most people, I always want more, but we got more than 200 new customers this year. I'll take that." He added, "People ask 'How big do you want to get?' I say I'll know that when I'm big enough."



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That larger plate of offerings, from mosquito control to tree and shrub repair, is what makes a Spring-Green franchise attractive to green industry owners interested in diversifying their businesses as a hedge against fluctuations in the economy, while benefiting from recurring revenue. "I feel like my Spring-Green business is more stable month to month than Green Thumb."

For those reasons Vahle said he would recommend adding Spring-Green to anyone. "So long as they aren't in Missouri," he laughed.



About Spring-Green

Founded in 1977, Plainfield, Illinois-based Spring-Green Lawn Care has been delivering lawn and tree care services nationwide for over 38 years. Its service is centered on the beautification of residential and commercial customers in middle-class and affluent neighborhoods and communities. Spring-Green is an attractive opportunity for entrepreneurs and existing green industry business owners who want to align themselves with a business model that has proven economic resilience, healthy profit margins, industry leading business and marketing intelligence, recurring revenue and retirement and succession planning.

For more information, please visit www.springgreenfranchise.com, www.growmygreenindustrybusiness.com or call 1-800-777-8608.