

Franchise Owner Profile

Name: Keith Ives, Evergreen Exteriors, and Spring-Green Franchise Owner

Location: Clinton Township, Mich.

In-House Support

Joining the Spring-Green franchise allowed Keith Ives to exceed his marketing goals.

Keith Ives's career choice was a fairly simple one. While in high school, he loved mowing lawns for his neighbors during the summers.

"I knew at an early age this was the line of work I would work in," Ives said. "I thoroughly enjoy creating beautiful lawns for customers."

After serving his country in the Marine Corps, Ives went to work for a large landscaping company in the area — but quickly realized he'd be happier running his own business.

"I was running all of their operations as the operations manager. I figured I'm doing everything already, so I might as well go into business for myself," he said.

In February 2001 he launched Evergreen Exteriors, based in Clinton Township, Michigan, offering landscape, lawn maintenance, lawn care, snow removal, and landscape design services.

The company was successful, but Ives knew it could do even more with the right resources. That's what led him to investigate into Spring-Green Lawn Care. As he learned more about the company and opportunities it brought, he began thinking about adding a franchise to diversify and grow his existing business.

Hitting the Ground Running

The more he learned about Spring-Green and started taking advantage of its resources — from marketing to the call center and his dedicated business consultant — the more ready he was to bring the franchise to his customers.

"The only question I had was, 'How fast can we start?'" he said.

It's been easy to deal with every aspect of Spring-Green, he said. Getting the support he needs has made him feel at ease. "As a business owner, a lot of decisions are made from your gut instinct," Ives said. "With Spring-Green, my gut feeling told me it was an educated risk."

Implementing Next-Level Marketing

Ives's in-house marketing strategies had worked to boost business for Evergreen Exteriors, so he knew partnering with Spring-Green — and taking advantage of its proven marketing expertise — would only increase response.

Growing the maintenance and landscaping business at Evergreen Exteriors relied primarily on word of mouth, but Ives knew marketing could play a larger role in growing lawn care services.

“We approached other [franchises] when considering diversifying our business, but the marketing with Spring-Green is what interested me,” he said. “Having the marketing and everything already included, with professionals who have been doing it for years was a huge selling point.”

With the help of Spring-Green’s marketing team, Ives hit all his first-year projections. The marketing efforts were “exactly what I always wanted to do but couldn’t afford,” he said. “It was pennies on the dollar to what I would have paid if I’d done it privately.”

Balancing Complementary Businesses

Ives continues to run Evergreen Exteriors alongside his Spring-Green franchise, balancing his time between the two companies.

“The Spring-Green portion of it is starting to run itself already,” Ives said. “The Evergreen side is a little more time consuming because it’s a much bigger operation. It’s [a matter of] setting time aside for each business and making sure things are getting done.”

“Our job is to make everything look better, and we will do our best to make it happen,” Ives said.

About Spring-Green Lawn Care

Founded in 1977, the Plainfield, Ill.-based Spring-Green Lawn Care has been delivering lawn and tree care services nationwide for over 40 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 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, visit www.springgreenfranchise.com.

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