

Franchise Owner Profile

Name: Kenny Gute, Spring-Green Franchise Owner

Location: Boone, Iowa

Taking the Lead

After putting the time in as an employee, Kenny Gute's dream of owning a Spring-Green franchise became a reality.

It didn't take long for Kenny Gute to fall in love with all the green industry had to offer.

"I started mowing yards in high school and decided that I was going to go to college for landscaping," Gute said. He attended Des Moines Area Community College and graduated with a degree in landscaping.

He began looking for a job and came across an ad in the newspaper for his local Spring-Green Lawn Care franchise; he decided to give the company a try. Gute spent a quarter century as an employee there, first as a field technician, then as a manager.

"I liked making improvements to people's lawns, that you could transform a yard so fast and impress people," Gute said. "I fell in love with it from the beginning and wanted to stay with the company."

But Gute always knew he wanted more from his job with Spring-Green and hoped to someday take over the business. When the owner retired, he got his opportunity: In 2016, he became the owner of the Ames, Iowa, and Des Moines, Iowa, area Spring-Green franchise.

"I treated the business as my own in hopes that one day I would be able to buy it," he said. "I work for good people, and when the timing was finally right, we officially made it our business after 25 years."

Balancing Work, Personal Life

Gute and his wife, Lisa, have been together for most of the time he has been with Spring-Green — and they both fell in love with the business.

Since Gute bought the franchise, Lisa has signed on as well to handle some of the financial aspects of the business. She'll also take on some marketing responsibilities in the future.

"We have always strived together to own this business," he said.

One benefit of the spouses working together is that it gives them a little more flexibility and allows them to take time off as a family — a more challenging task during the years when his wife worked in retail.

But the couple has also agreed to keep their work and personal lives as separate as possible, confining their business talk to work hours.

"When you both work together and that's all you live for is work ... you've got to put it on the back burner sometimes, and that's what we do," Gute said. "It takes a lot of teamwork."

Just a Call Away

The greatest Spring-Green resource for Gute and his team has been support from the call center.

“Since I’ve been here, the call center has been awesome,” Gute said. “We use them in the spring for our Integrated Mail Campaign, and it relieves a lot of pressure off our office.”

Another helpful resource: Spring-Green’s built-in marketing expertise. While he’s busy working in the business day-to-day, it’s a benefit to have a team at the corporate office who handles setting up and testing the marketing campaigns to continue bringing in new business.

“What’s kept me here is the corporate staff. They are very easy to work with. You give them a call, and you get a solution,” Gute said. “As long as the market stays where it is ... we will continue to be a very successful business.”

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.