

On the CUTTING EDGE

Senior Dalen Deets balances classes with owning his own landscaping business.

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by

As Dalen Deets senior year comes to an end, his future is shaping to be different from many of his peers. During the summer of 2022, Deets made a choice to quit his job and start his own landscape company, Cutting Edge Landscape, which he plans to continue running after he graduates from high school.

"My parents made me get a job working at Culvers, and I made seven dollars an hour, and I realized that I made more off mowing my neighbors lawn in 30 minutes than I would working 4 hours at Culvers," Deets said.

Although, starting a business is not as easy as just quitting your job. Starting a business requires you to build from the ground up, which comes with many challenges and responsibilities, which Deets faced when he founded Cutting Edge.

"We didn't have any money or nice equipment, so we were doing a lot of manual labor, and we didn't really have a customer base to start up," Deets said.

Despite the challenges, Deets has enjoyed the process and the experience of being able to work for himself, an experience that some don't get to achieve.

"My favorite part about working for myself is getting to choose what the company stands for and what we like to do. And I like being able to build stuff from the ground up," Deets said.

Many people have inspired and helped Deets through his journey with his business. Most notably other lawn care professionals from the community, and professionals from social media.

"I've gotten to meet some cool people in the local community, some other owners, but mainly people off of social media," Deets said.

Not only was Deets inspired by social media, he also used it to learn new services for Cutting Edge to provide, which helped grow and expand the business.

"A lot of it was reaching out to people on social media, and then just watching Youtube, and just being observant and learning different things, and always just having a learning mindset," Deets said.

It wasn't just other lawn care professionals that helped Deets, his biggest supporters have been his friends and family closest to him.

"They know what goes into it, and they know that I need to make sacrifices and they really support me through that," Deets said.

Since he started his business, Deets has made many investments into Cutting Edge, most notably the biggest investment has been a \$46,000 truck.

"We mainly use the truck for driving around to pick up materials and getting to job sites," Deets said.

Deets has also invested heavily into advertising to help grow the business. He's invested in many different tactics including physical advertisements such as signs, or digital advertisements on social media.

"We do some physical things like door hangers, yard signs, and then we run

some Facebook ads also," Deets said.

Cutting Edge offers a variety of services, including grass fertilization and weed control, lawn mowing, and brush clearing and overgrowth control. Cutting Edge provides services for different types of clients as well.

"We do maintenance, turf care, things like mulch, and then we do installations where we take out landscapes and put completely new ones in. And that's for commercial and residential clients," Deets said.

Due to how much the business had grown, Deets had started to need help, so he started to employ some of his friends. Employing friends is not as easy as it might seem, as it can come with many different challenges.

"It definitely can get hard sometimes when you have to be their boss. Even though you're friends with them, it's just important to manage the balance

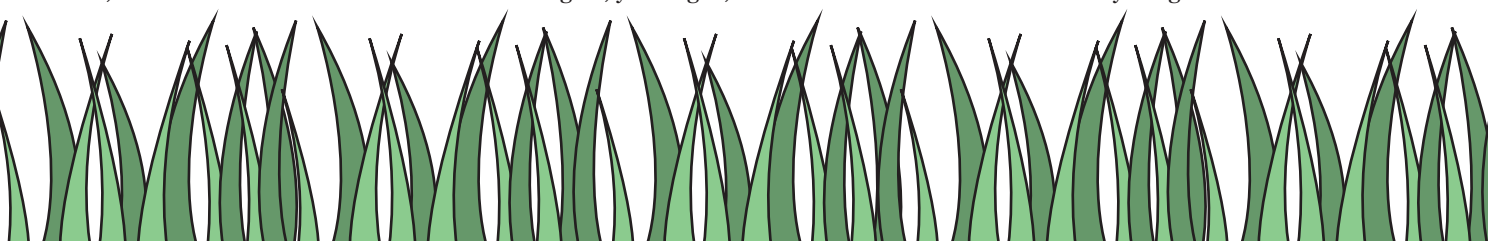
of being friends when you're not working, and being the boss but still having fun when you are working," Deets said.

Two of his employees are seniors Isaac Ozias and Kale Stewart. Ozias had started working for Cutting Edge in March of 2023, and had quit his job in the food industry to start working for Deets.

"I worked at Pizza Hut and I didn't really like the food, like doing the food work or anything and he had offered me a



Above: A lawn mowed by Senior Dalen Deets and his employees, "We transformed an overgrown property for a new client, setting them up for success in their new home," Deets said.



Senior Dalen Deets working with a weed trimmer and lawn mower during a job for a customer. "We were taking care of a lawn for a client and making sure we provide excellence in every detail," Deets said.



job," Ozias said.

Stewart started working for Deets a year ago, and joined due to how well the business ran, especially considering it's run by high school students.

"It was a good environment and everything. The company seemed very put together," Stewart said.

Despite the challenges that can come with working for your friend, Stewart emphasized that it didn't affect their friendship.

"We separate our friendship, and then once it's business time, we actually get down to business," Stewart said.

Ozias believes that their friendship has actually gotten stronger since they have started working together.

"Our friendship has probably gotten better since I started working for Cutting Edge," Ozias said.

As a business owner in high school, Deets is naturally a lot younger than his peers in the industry. But Ozias and Stewart both agreed that it didn't affect their experiences working for him.

"Dalen is a really good boss, really flexible for hours, and he's a really good person," Ozias said.

According to Stewart, Deets is very experienced in the landscape industry, despite his young age.

"He knows what he's doing," Stewart said.

Even though they didn't start

Cutting Edge, Ozias and Stewart both have passion for Cutting Edge, and the landscaping industry.

"I like doing more hands-on stuff, and being out in the community working for people in their houses," Ozias said.

Stewart specifically emphasized how Cutting Edge has impacted him and helped him grow as a person.

"I think it's made me a better person just by being in the workspace and being around people that I know," Stewart said.

Despite already having multiple employees, Deets is still planning on growing Cutting Edge, and ensuring the quality is going to be an important factor as the business keeps growing.

"The main thing is just building systems so that [Cutting Edge] doesn't rely on the people, the people rely on the systems so that everything is standardized as one business as opposed to individuals doing their own thing," Deets said.

As the business continues to grow, Deets is looking forward to the future of Cutting Edge.

"We are excited to continue our growth and be a leader driving growth within our community," Deets said. 

PRICING PROFILE

A dive into Cutting Edge Landscape's most popular services.

\$50



Lawn Mowing

Reliable weekly or bi-weekly mowing with clean edges and consistent cuts to keep your lawn looking neat, healthy, and professionally maintained.

\$65



Fertilization & Weed Control

Customized fertilization programs designed to promote thick, green turf while controlling weeds and improving soil health throughout the growing season.

\$5000



Landscape Installation

Professional installation services including plantings, mulch beds, sod, and landscape upgrades designed to enhance your property's appearance and value.

*Descriptions from <https://thecuttingedgelawn.us>

