



## Start your year with giving back plan: You'll be better for it

By Steven Jomides, CEO of Lawns by Yorkshire, January 9, 2017 at 8:00 AM



Steven Jomides, CEO of Lawns by Yorkshire.

It's the start of the year and contrary to common thought I believe that it is the best time to talk about implementing a corporate strategy for giving back. And my thinking is strongly impacted by studies done years ago but about to capture the public imagination.

Michael Lewis' new book "The Undoing Project: A Friendship That Changed Our Minds" is about the ways a Nobel Prize-winning theory of the mind altered our perception of reality. It's based on the two psychologists who came up with what ultimately became the basis of the Oakland A's moneyball strategy (another great book by Lewis).

The two stars of "The Undoing Project" are professors at Hebrew University – Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman – who discovered patterns of human irrationality in the ways we trick ourselves and the steps we can try to take to avoid being fooled.

To that end, I think corporate giving shouldn't just a year-end goal or one to support causes important to us. It goes even deeper in terms of creating a corporate culture and Tversky and Kahneman point the way in very practical terms.

As the two have written, decisions can't be solely made based on numbers; a story is needed as well. It's an important part of leadership. They believe stinginess and generosity are both contagious. And, because behaving generously makes you happier, surround yourself with generous people. I couldn't agree more with them.

Happier people are better colleagues and it reflects in the work we do for our clients. That's why at Lawns By Yorkshire, we created a corporate stewardship and scholarship program, including a partnerships with the several youth-focused organizations that donate a portion of our earnings back to helping the very neighborhoods we serve.

Over the years, we've forged significant charitable partnerships with some of the world's most revered and community-minded professional sports celebrities and foundations. Many of these partnerships are designed to raise awareness and provide significant resources to improve the lives of inner-city at-risk youth.

The result is we view giving back as a year-round activity. I believe it's important for morale and think it is an approach other New Jersey small businesses might want to try. It's a way not just to feel better but also to distinguish your company for your competitors. Lawns By Yorkshire is proud of our reputation as one of New Jersey's most respected and community-minded professional landscaping companies.

So as a New Year resolution spend some time with Lewis' book and think about how to enhance your reputation with your team and also with your clients.

*Steven Jomides is CEO of Lawns by Yorkshire, headquartered in Westwood.*

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