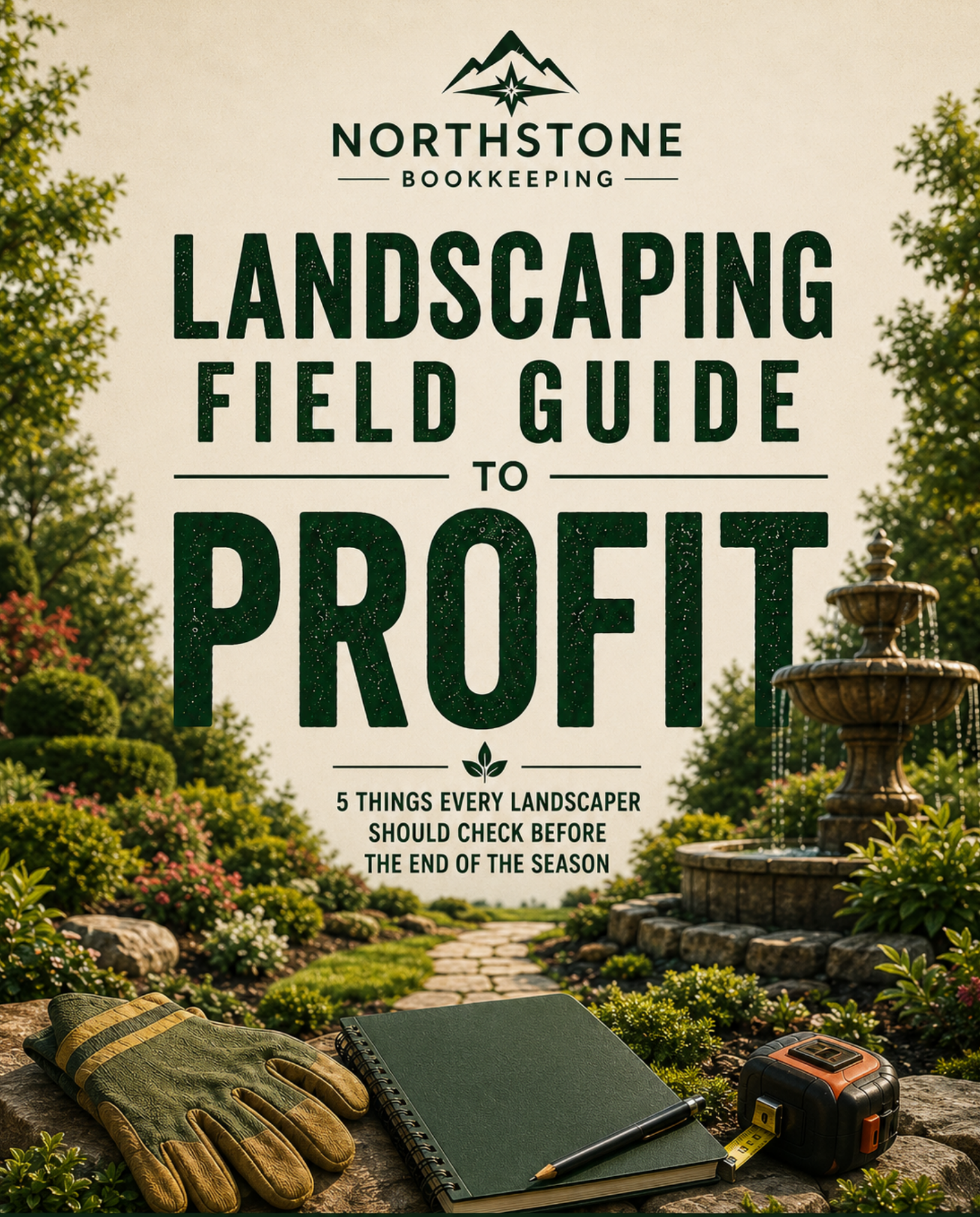
NORTHSTONE
BOOKKEEPING

LANDSCAPING FIELD GUIDE TO PROFIT

5 THINGS EVERY LANDSCAPER SHOULD CHECK BEFORE THE END OF THE SEASON



UNDERSTAND YOUR NUMBERS. GROW YOUR BUSINESS.

01 ARE YOU MAKING MONEY ON EVERY CREW?

Your company can be profitable overall while one crew quietly eats away at your margins.

One crew may consistently finish jobs under budget while another requires more labor hours, wastes more material, or needs more callbacks. If you're only looking at total company profit, those differences can disappear.

QUICK CHECK

Can you compare each of these by crew?

☐ Revenue
☐ Labor hours and labor cost
☐ Material costs
☐ Equipment and subcontractor costs
☐ Gross profit

YOUR SCORE: ___ / 5

HOW TO SCORE THIS CHECK

Look at two or three similar jobs completed by different crews in the last 30 days. Your job-costing report is the best place to start, but you may also find this information in timesheets, invoices, receipts, or your accounting software.

Check the box **only if you can confidently identify and compare that number by crew.** If the information isn't tracked, is difficult to find, or you're not sure it's accurate, leave it blank.

The goal isn't to get a perfect score. It's to find out what you can learn from these numbers.

02 ARE EQUIPMENT COSTS DISAPPEARING?

Mowers, trailers, trimmers, repairs, blades, fuel, and other equipment costs add up fast.

When all of those expenses get lumped into general overhead, it becomes difficult to see what your jobs are actually costing you. A job can look profitable on paper while the equipment required to complete it quietly eats away at the margin.

QUICK CHECK

Review your equipment-related expenses from the last 30 days.

Separate:

☐ Fuel
☐ Repairs and maintenance
☐ Replacement parts and blades
☐ Equipment rentals
☐ Other direct equipment costs

YOUR SCORE: ___ / 5

Then compare those costs to the jobs or crews actually using the equipment.

You don't need a perfect allocation system yet. **The goal is to find costs that are currently invisible when you look at job profitability.**

HOW TO SCORE THIS CHECK

Review your equipment-related expenses from the last 30 days. Start with your accounting software or expense reports, then use fuel receipts, repair invoices, rental bills, and equipment records to fill in any gaps.

Check the box **only if you can clearly identify the cost and connect it to the equipment, crew, or jobs using it.** If the expense is buried in a general category like "Repairs," "Fuel," or "Equipment" and you can't tell where the cost belongs, leave it blank.

You're testing whether your equipment costs are visible enough to understand what your work actually costs.

03 ARE RECURRING MAINTENANCE JOBS ACTUALLY PROFITABLE?

Recurring work can feel like some of the safest revenue in your business. The schedule is predictable, the customer is established, and the crew already knows the property.

But a contract that was profitable when you priced it may not be profitable today.

Labor rates increase. Fuel prices change. Material costs climb. Properties require more time than expected. Meanwhile, the customer's price stays exactly the same.

QUICK CHECK

Pick your five oldest recurring maintenance contracts.

Can you identify each of these for those contracts?

☐ Current contract revenue
☐ Actual labor hours and labor cost
☐ Materials and supplies
☐ Equipment and fuel costs
☐ Current gross profit

YOUR SCORE: ___ / 5

HOW TO SCORE THIS CHECK

Look at your five oldest recurring maintenance contracts and compare what each customer is paying today with what it actually costs you to service that property. Your job-costing report is the best place to start, but you may also find this information in contracts, timesheets, payroll records, invoices, receipts, or your accounting software.

Check the box **only if you can confidently identify that number for each contract.** If you're estimating, relying on what the job used to cost, or can't separate the expense from the rest of the business, leave it blank.

04 ARE DUPLICATE VENDOR PAYMENTS SLIPPING THROUGH?

Busy seasons create busy books.

Invoices arrive by email, paper, vendor portals, and sometimes more than one person is responsible for paying them. It doesn't take much for the same bill to get entered twice—or for an invoice to be paid once by check and again by card.

One duplicate payment may not seem significant. Several throughout the season can quietly turn into thousands of dollars.

QUICK CHECK

Review vendor payments from the last 90 days.

Can you confidently check for each of these?

☐ Matching invoice numbers
☐ Identical dollar amounts
☐ Multiple payments to the same vendor within a few days
☐ Bills paid by more than one payment method
☐ Vendor credits that haven't been applied

YOUR SCORE: ___ / 5

HOW TO SCORE THIS CHECK

Review your vendor transactions from the last 90 days. Your vendor or accounts payable reports are the best place to start, but you may also need to compare bank transactions, credit card activity, invoices, and vendor statements.

Check the box **only if you can confidently review your records for that type of issue.** If the information is spread across different places, payments aren't connected to invoices, or you can't easily tell whether something was paid twice, leave it blank.

Catching the mistake is good. Finding out why it happened is better.

A simple review now can prevent the same leak from continuing next season.

05 DO YOU KNOW YOUR CASH POSITION FOUR WEEKS FROM NOW?

A profitable business can still run out of cash.

Payroll, materials, equipment payments, fuel, insurance, and vendor bills don't wait for customers to pay. If you're only looking at today's bank balance, you may not see a cash shortage coming until you're already in it.

Knowing what's likely to happen over the next few weeks gives you time to make decisions **before cash gets tight.**

QUICK CHECK

Build a simple four-week cash forecast.

Can you confidently identify each of these?

☐ Cash currently available
☐ Customer payments you expect to receive
☐ Payroll and payroll taxes
☐ Vendor, loan, and equipment payments
☐ Recurring expenses and upcoming purchases

YOUR SCORE: ___ / 5

HOW TO SCORE THIS CHECK

Look at the next four weeks using your bank balance, open invoices, upcoming bills, payroll records, and accounting software.

Check the box **only if you can confidently estimate that amount and when it will affect your cash.** If you're unsure what's coming in or going out, leave it blank.

You don't need to predict every dollar perfectly. **You're looking for the week where things might get tight.**

YOUR PROFIT VISIBILITY SCORE

Add together the scores from each of the five checks.

YOUR TOTAL SCORE: _____ / 25

21–25 ★★★★★ STRONG VISIBILITY

Your numbers are giving you a clear picture of where your profit is coming from. Keep reviewing these areas regularly as your business grows.

16–20 ★★★★ GOOD FOUNDATION

You have a solid handle on your numbers, but a few blind spots may be keeping you from seeing the whole picture.

11–15 ★★★ SOME BLIND SPOTS

Important information is missing or difficult to find. Pick your lowest-scoring area and start there.

6–10 ★★ TIME TO DIG IN

Several areas of your business are difficult to measure. Better tracking could uncover costs or profit leaks you aren't currently seeing.

0–5 ★ LET'S TALK

Your numbers may not be giving you enough information to make confident decisions.

That's fixable.

NORTHSTONE BOOKKEEPING

Understand Your Numbers. Grow Your Business.

If you'd like a second set of eyes on what you found, reach out.

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