

The Value of a Great Landscape Design

Designing vs. Decorating

Nowadays, you won't walk into a place of business without hearing background music. It plays in sales areas, in lobbies and elevators; it plays on outdoor speakers as you approach store entrances, and you hear it on the telephone every time you are put on hold. Ever wonder **why** music has become so fundamental in the world of business? It's because music has the ability to alter a person's mood and attitude. A well-designed landscape functions in much the same way as music. Just as music is an integral part of the mood, image, and atmosphere that a business projects, landscaping is another major component that contributes to the overall vibe of a property.

Landscapes that are properly designed are much more than just decoration. The part of the landscape that is visible to the eye is only a small part of its overall value. A well-designed landscape creates a positive ambiance and makes a business or home feel inviting. Institutions, such as hospitals and universities, that produce potentially stressful environments have relied heavily on landscaping as a method of relieving anxiety. Most of the time, we don't even realize that factors like landscaping and music draw us to or away from certain properties, because these factors register primarily on a subconscious level. However, the feel of a business or home is just as important as its outward appearance, especially in terms of first impressions.

In the world of real estate, the first impression of the property is particularly important. Although impossible to quantify, there's no denying that landscaping is probably the single most important feature in capturing a potential buyer's interest. A Clemson University study found that homes with "excellent" landscaping will sell for 6 to 7% more than comparable homes that have just "good" landscaping. In addition, *Money Magazine* has determined that landscaping not only offers an excellent return on investment, but in fact, it ranks the highest out of any home improvement and has a 100-200% recovery value.

A landscape designer is concerned not only with the outward appearance of a property, but also with how the clients use their property. A properly designed landscape can work miracles on the outside of a home or building. It can make a small house look bigger and longer. It can make an old building look new again. It can create the illusion of space, even where there is little. It can create scenic views or screen unwanted views. It can extend the look and feel of indoor rooms to the outside of the home or building. Yet, these examples are just the tip of the iceberg. There are endless landscape possibilities when you have professional, experienced designers at your side.