

# Spotlight on Success

## The Only Thing Growing is the Business

Aspen Valley Landscape Supply is a leading supplier to the landscape industry. The company is a distributor of hard materials. These products, including paving blocks, decorative stone and mulch, are used by landscape contractors as an integral part of their construction projects. The paradox is that the company does not sell plant material of any kind — none of its products actually grow.

The business began in 1987 when Shara Weaver got permission from a sod farm in Lockport, Illinois, to sell used railroad ties on their lot. She put up a trailer on the lot, and it became the home of Aspen Valley for the next seven years. The company gradually added additional landscape products and focused on developing relationships with their customers.

“It is all about measuring and working with people,” says Shara. “Although it’s easy to get into the landscape business, even the most aggressive entrepreneur needs a little backing. We have made some great decisions to back some hard working people who have become our best customers.” In those early years, Shara built a strong business that was based on close working relationships with customers.

The company added a second location in Elgin, Illinois, in 1994. This new distribution was strategically placed to take advantage of the exceptional business opportunities in that area. In late 1995, Shara asked her husband, John Weaver, “if he could go out to Elgin and help out for a couple of days.” John had recently sold his partnership interest in a successful regional distributor of building materials. He brought his organizational skills to the company and the “couple of days” turned into seven years.

The growth of the company brought new challenges. The

**John & Shara Weaver**  
**Aspen Valley Landscape Supply**

*Client since 1996*

Weavers made a big effort to upgrade the company’s operating systems and financial controls. All of this had to occur while the company was experiencing annual growth at 20 percent per year. Expansion to a third facility in Park City, Illinois, in 1999 was an important strategic decision because it allowed the company to distribute products along the North Shore of Chicago. The couple has built a management team that has allowed them to spend some time in far away places.

Mowery & Schoenfeld started working with Aspen Valley in 1996. Tom Keenan, partner, has worked very closely with Shara and John in improving their financial reporting and in the implementation of a new accounting system. John notes “Tom has been an important part of our company. He has had a significant role in helping us meet our goals.”

We are very proud of our relationship with Shara and John Weaver and Aspen Valley Landscape Supply. They have proven that the combination of hard work and forward thinking can turn a company into an industry leader.

