As a business waste transportation is defined as unnecessary movement of product from one location to another. It may be 10 inches or 10 miles. The goal is to reduce the distance and number of times any item is moved. On the surface this may seem easy, but it requires planning and forward looking vision to accomplish. Moving product from one location to another within a business or worksite location can become normal and considered necessary. Look at your business system and see how many times a product is touched and moved before the customer receives it. The customer is not willing to pay for you to move product around within your business. Reducing the number of times product is moved, reduces costs.

In a production environment that requires multiple steps, moving product to a staging area and then moving again to the location where the next step is performed is a waste. In a perfect system, product is handed directly from step 1 to step 2 without any additional handling. Locating these steps as close as possible to each other reduces space and labor requirements.

Every time a product is touched by someone it costs the business money. Reducing touches reduces costs.

A business waste is defined as anything a customer is unwilling to pay for. The conventional definition of transportation is the delivery of goods from a supplier to a customer. Customers are, or should be, willing to pay for this service. “Free” delivery is not possible. Someone must pay for it. If the costs are not separated, they are hidden in the price the customer pays for the product. If your business is dependent upon providing this service to gain new, or service existing customers, it is critical for you to focus on this area and eliminate as much cost as possible to become competitive. The costs involved in delivery can be controlled by focusing on creating an efficient handling and delivery system. You must eliminate unnecessary movement of product within your organization and minimize distance product is moved through efficient scheduling of deliveries.

Each landscape project is unique in the challenges faced. The landscape contractor handles large, bulky, and heavy products such as landscape supplies and plant materials. The more difficult the product is to handle the larger the cost savings that can be realized by reducing handling. Do you have the product delivered to your main place of business, unloaded, loaded again on to your vehicles to be delivered to the worksite, only to be unloaded and put into a holding area until you are ready to install? Then is the product moved to the final installation site? In a lean environment the product is delivered directly to the worksite. When unloaded it is moved directly to the final installation site. Several handling steps are eliminated.

Some questions to consider are:
• Who can most cost effectively deliver product, your business or your supplier?
• What are the true costs to send yourself or employees to the supplier’s site to pick up materials, compared to their delivery charges?
• Could the time involved in picking up supplies be used to reduce employee count or used to generate profits greater than the perceived savings from picking up the materials yourself?
• Is delivery of product to the worksite one of the core competencies you want your business to focus on?

Businesses involved in the green industry may benefit by shifting delivery services to the supplier of the products, combined with just in time delivery (JIT). Good business relationships are key for this to be successful. You must be confident you will receive what you expect, when and where you expect it.

Reducing the number of times your business handles and moves products reduces costs.