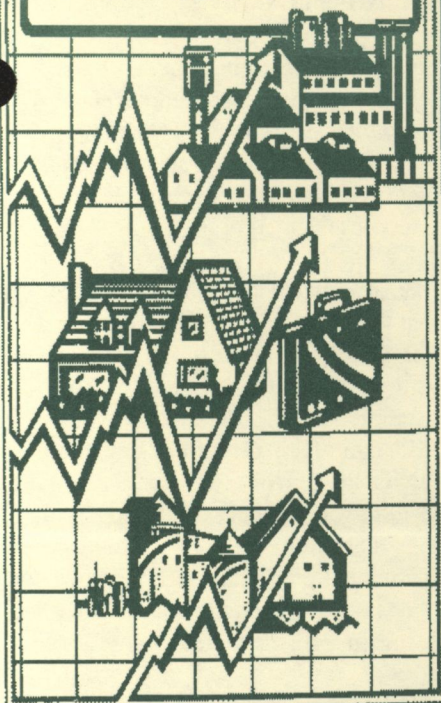


Dec / Jan '99-'00



ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

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Website Expansion Page 1
TPI expands resources online to benefit members world-wide.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Turfgrass Producers International

San Antonio, Texas--Feb. 8-12, 2000

Unique Tours Offer New Insights

Recycled water research, retail landscape supplies and turf farms will highlight two special Midwinter Conference TPI tours.

Milberger Landscape Facility will hold an open-house Feb. 8 & 9, from 9 am to 5 pm both days. Participants will supply their own transportation for this free tour. This facility offers a variety of landscaping materials and tools to San Antonio consumers and will provide some excellent ideas others can consider for their market area.

Leon Creek Water Recycling Center will be one of the featured stops on the Feb. 12 tour, as well as **Thomas Bros. Grass Co.**, and **Bladerunner Turf Farms, Inc.**

Water is king in the southwest and because San Antonio is totally reliant on the Edward Aquifer for their drinking

water, special attention is being focused on recycled water use. Bladerunner Turf, in conjunction with the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) has established a Turf Study area designed to examine the use of recycled water and turf aesthetics, vitality and nutrient levels. Information gained through this study site could have world-wide implications and applications for turf producers and homeowners alike. TPI's tour will be among the first to visit this newly developed site.

After visiting the Water Recycling Center and Thomas Bros. Grass farm where specialized and modified equipment will be highlighted, the Saturday tour will end at Bladerunner Farms for a Texas-style crawfish boil dinner and party.

Saturday's TPI tour event will cost \$40, including the crawfish dinner and all transportation.

Dates To Remember:

San Antonio Hotel Reservation Deadline -- December 20

Please note, the hotel's reservation fax number has changed to 210/354-2700. The number listed on the TPI hotel reservation form is not correct.

Early-Bird Registration Discount Deadline -- January 3

Full Refund Deadline for Conference Cancellation --January 19

-----Future TPI Meetings-----

Summer Convention & Field Days, Spokane, WA -- July 19 - 21

Midwinter Conference Albuquerque, NM -- Feb. 7-9

Summer Convention & Field Days, Toronto, ON -- July 19-21

TPI Website Expands

Several new features are now up and running that you'll want to check out:

- Expanded Links Page features relevant websites on topics from insect & diseases to economics.
- Member Bulletin section (updated monthly) will keep you up-to-date on TPI activities, governmental affairs and new programs & resources.
- Press Room section (scheduled for posting by year-end) features turf-positive articles and press releases that you can adapt for use in promoting your company and educating your customers and the public.
- Members Only section continues to grow with resources being added for downloading by TPI member firms.

Growth Though Change

Dale Barrie, Tuf-Turf Sod Farms
St. Albert, Alberta Canada

I was unable to attend TPI's Summer Convention in Lansing in July. As has been customary, before, during and after my chairmanship of the committee that oversees this newsletter, those who don't attend the meetings are easy targets for article-writing assignments. So here goes... This is hot off the press from a project my wife Deborah recently completed as part of her Master in Business Administration (MBA) coursework.

Change is occurring everyday in the world, our country, our town, our company and our family. But change is not to be feared or hidden from - change can be positive. We like to be proactive in adapting to change.

A theory on the evolution of an organization provides a framework for one to assess where their organization has been, its history, so that change can be understood and managed. As shown in the graph below, Greiner suggests that each

phase of organizational growth has two components. A growth or 'evolutionary' phase, followed by a crisis or 'revolutionary' phase.

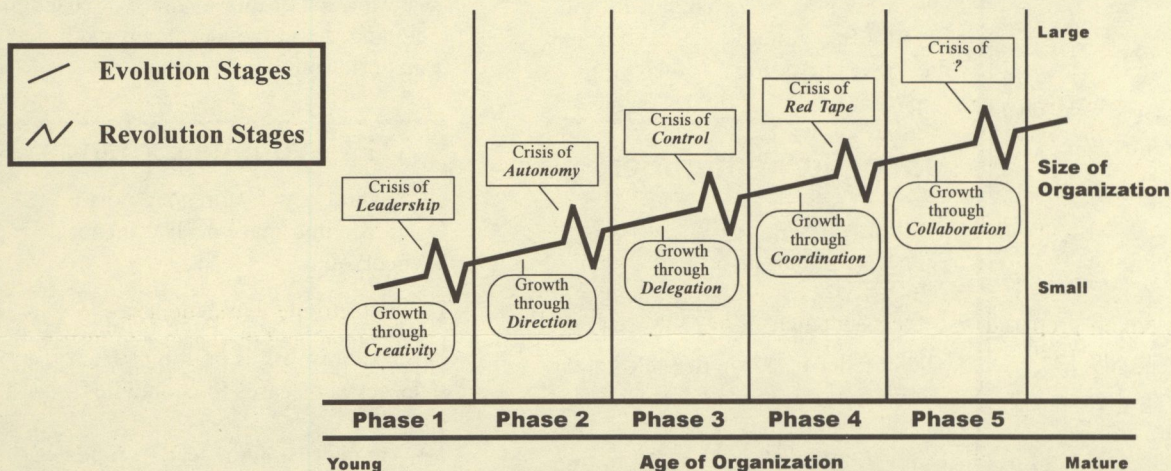
Organizations that can assess and manage the crises at a given phase will "evolve" into the next phase. For example, phase one is characterized by the initial growth of the organization through the skills and knowledge of the founders or owners. But there comes a time when the founders are no longer capable of managing their growing operations. They become overworked and will often avoid making critical decisions.

At this point the organization is in the 'revolutionary stage' referred to as the Crisis of Leadership. To evolve to the next phase, this crisis must be resolved. Some companies decide to retrench at this point to ensure that the present leaders are able to manage the company. But many of these companies that show

no further growth in volume or size, become stagnant and some eventually close their operations. Those that evolve will often put in place strong management with the skills to take the business into phase 2.

What is interesting about this theory is that the solution to the crisis at one phase will often turn out to be the cause of the crisis of the next phase. For example, a Crisis of Control, where leadership feels they are losing control of the business, will often create procedures to follow and paperwork to do. While this does allow the organization to evolve to the next phase, as the firm grows the Crisis of Red Tape may occur when too many controls have been put in place.

The bottom line is this: Change will impact every business at various stages in its lifecycle. Companies that are proactive and welcome change as a positive influence will be the successful businesses down the road.



From: Greiner, L.,
Evolution and
revolution as
organizations grow,
*Harvard Business
Review*, May/June,
1998.

Business Briefs

* Advertising Tip:

Here's a good reason for putting extra emphasis on the benefits of turfgrass sod in your ad headlines and copy:

Ads that refer to product benefits are 2-3 times more likely to be remembered than ads that don't stress benefits.

*Cahners Advertising Research Report,
275 Washington St., Newton, MA 02158*

Phone Calls Interrupted...Take Note:

You're on the phone and someone comes in your office and either interrupts your call or stands there, staring at you, waiting for you to finish your call. Either way, it's an unnecessary distraction.

Keep a note pad in plain view so would-be interrupters can leave you a message. That way, you can stay focused on your call and the person you're talking to.

Editor's Note

It's clear from the above article that growth is never effortless. At each stage of your company's growth, you must reevaluate your long-term goals and your priorities (business and personal.) Also, every decision has consequences- positive and negative - that must be weighed before you implement your growth-plan. Remember too that by not making a decision regarding your company's growth, you're making a decision.

Taking Care of Business

Jack Meyers, Meyers Turf Farms,
Stilwell, Kansas

Picture is Worth a Thousand Words ...and maybe thousands of dollars!

If you are a sod producer and also an installer, as we are, a polaroid camera can save you dollars and grief. Documentation of your work protects you from claims of damage and a poor product.

We take pictures before work is done, especially if a driveway is cracked or chipped or trees appear damaged. We photograph front and back of residences as they are completed. This shows that when the sod went in, the green-side was up and it was alive and well.

This practice can eliminate problems when a builder calls with homeowner complaints that imply we put down dead sod, or damaged their property. The thousand words saved by the one picture translates into savings for you. These 'before and after' photos can also be used as a marketing tool showing the results of a sodding job-well-done.

Building Relationships with Your Customer's Employees

We also sell wholesale to local landscapers who buy sod loaded on their trucks. We develop better relationships with these customers by seeing that their truck drivers are made to feel valued. We keep cookies, crackers and canned pop available to give the drivers while their trucks are loaded. In season, we give out home-grown popcorn, pumpkins for the kids, or other vegetables we grow on the farm. Our philosophy is this: If you treat your customers' employees well, it will reflect very well on you.

Water Guidelines Reduce Problems

Lastly, we use pamphlets available through TPI that explain watering new turfgrass sod. We let our customers know that our sod is guaranteed to die if not watered. When the customer understands the importance of watering and is given tips on when and how to water...everyone benefits.

TPI Time Capsule - A Retrospective Perspective

In the first of a series of six articles, we'll look issues and articles that have appeared in this newsletter over the past 15 years. Many relevant topics that have been covered bear repeating with updated information provided where necessary. The following article has been excerpted from a column that Ron Nixon prepared for "Business Management" in 1989.

After reading "Lawn and Sports Turf Benefits," by Eliot and Beverly Roberts of the Lawn Institute...I realized how much more I have to learn. Turfgrass is not only nice to have, but very necessary for the perpetuation of our environment.

The release of oxygen, the reduction of carbon dioxide and dust in the air, and the cooling of temperatures are all things that we as human beings cannot live without. Our world has some serious problems and the increased planting of turfgrass could go a long way toward solving things like global warming, clean groundwater and breathable air.

What kind of corporate citizens would we be if we had answers for many environmental problems, but would not inform the rest of society? There are misinformed people telling untruths about turfgrass being bad for the environment, and if you do not do something to counter their statements, they may very well succeed.

It's up to you to get the message out about what turfgrass can do for the environment. There is a need for you to speak up in your local area. TPI has a number of great resources to help you speak out about these issues. Many turf-positive articles and news releases are now available in electronic formats as well as in print! Contact TPI today for a list of resources available in the "Information Central" database.

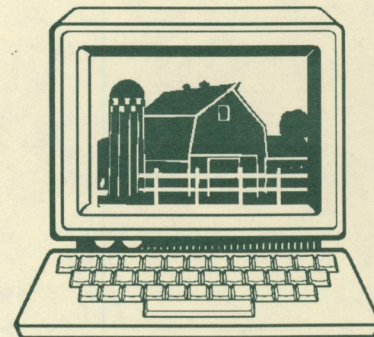
Take advantage of your TPI-member benefits and help encourage turfgrass use. You won't be tooting your own horn - just telling the truth about turfgrass.

Shrewder Computing

e-Newsletters

If you send a newsletter to current and prospective customers, you can easily make the transition to an electronic newsletter. All you'll need are the e-mail addresses of your customers. You can either copy the text of your newsletter and paste it into the message portion of the outgoing email, or attach the newsletter document to the email.

Attaching the newsletter document allows you to keep the file formatted. Attaching is also preferred if there are a number of email addresses in the "To" field of the email - as is the case when you are sending the email to multiple recipients.



Electronic newsletters save postage, and they are easier to distribute since they don't require printing, envelopes, etc. You also make the newsletter easy for your customers to save and retrieve.

The software program you use to develop your newsletter is important too. For your attachment to be of use to your customers, they have to be able to open it (no surprise.) Keep this in mind, and consider using a standard program that saves files in a way that your customers are likely to be able to access. This newsletter is available in electronic format that you can request by calling 847/705-9898.

TPI Action

All U.S. TPI members are strongly encouraged to contact their Senators and Representatives to gain support for the following pending legislation:

Regulatory Fairness and Openness Act of 1999 -- Senate Bill #1464, and House Bill #1592 -- both seek to require the EPA to utilize or obtain sound scientific information as a basis for implementing the Food Quality and Protection Act.

Agricultural Job Opportunity Benefits and Security Act of 1999 (AgJOBS) -- Senate Bill #1814 (with House version to be introduced soon), would reform the H-2A seasonal ag worker visa process and establish a process for currently illegal workers to adjust their status by continuing to work on farms.

It is also important that TPI members inform their workers and communities of the significance of this legislation so they understand the facts of the bill and its many positive effects.

Contributions to help advance this legislation are desperately needed by the National Council of Agricultural Employers. Send a check for either \$1.00 per acre or employee to NCAE 1112 16th St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036, Today!

While elected officials are in their home districts during the current recess, you may want to make a personal call on their office.

Is Dursban or Lorsban (chlorpyrifos) important to you? Tell the EPA.

Several months ago, TPI provided the EPA with detailed information regarding the significance of chlorpyrifos to turf production, but they also need to hear from actual users as they gather information for FQPA considerations.

Email to opp-docekt@epa.gov, entering "chlorpyrifos OPP-34203" in the subject line, or send information via www.dursban.com.

Other issues being tracked by TPI:

Ergonomics Standards issued by EPA in a 700-page document

Minimum wage increases being negotiated by House, Senate and President

Federal crop insurance reforms that could be beneficial to turf producers

To Receive Additional Information On Any of These Items, Contact the TPI Office

Phone: 800/405-8873 or 847/705-9898

Fax: 847/705-8347 or E-mail to Turf-Grass@MSN.COM

Jest For The Fun Of It

Actual Bumper Stickers Seen in the U

Never underestimate the power of stupid people in large groups.

Worry...God knows all about you.

Please don't honk, I'm asleep at the wheel.

This is NOT an abandoned vehicle!

Hire teenagers while they still know it all.

Life's too short to dance with ugly women.

My child is an Honor Roll Student
at Woodland County Day School
(sent in by The Johnson's, Deerfield, NJ)



"If debt is a measure of consumer confidence, we're becoming very confident indeed!"

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Turfgrass Producers International
1855-A Hicks Road, Rolling Meadows, IL 60008

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