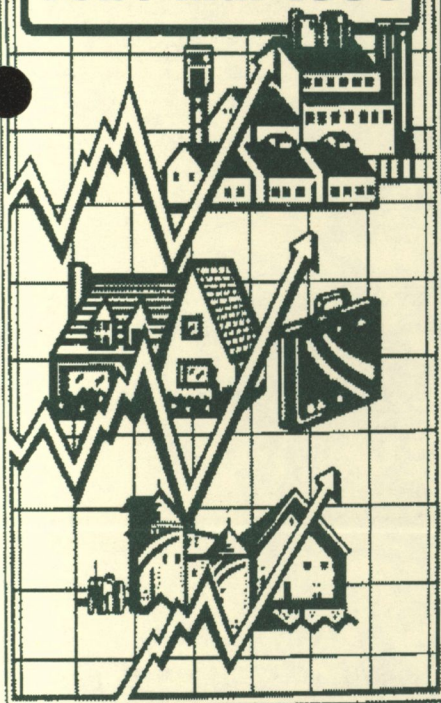


Feb / Mar 1999



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BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Turfgrass Producers International

Good News - Bad News Makes '99 Unpredictable

Turf producers around the world are facing a variety of "good news - bad news" issues in 1999. Preparing for the unknown may be a fool's game, or the following may alert TPI members of things to come:

Euro dollars coming out...what the introduction of a multi-nation currency in the European Union may mean is uncertain, but bears watching, on all sides.

Y2K or "Millennium Bug"...less than a year away, devastation or just discomfort may result. The more you read, the less you know how this "bug" will bounce.

Global economy - local effects...as with Y2K, the interlocked nature of everyone's economy makes us all vulnerable to tremors or opportunities anywhere.

Methyl bromide availability...at least in the U.S., has been extended from 2001 to 2005, but the real availability to match demand is unknown because of phase-out

plans currently in place.

Labor shortages...projected to continue practically everywhere with strong economies.

In the U.S. the Social Security Administration is lowering its "mismatch" notice level to 35%, triggering concerns about INS notification.

Immigration Service's receipt of funds for "Quick Response Teams" could mean more workplace raids and immediate loss of undocumented workers.

California Labor Dept. Survey reveals 42% of ag workers are illegal, further justifying TPI's position on the need for Guest Worker Program reforms.

How will any of this affect you? Let's talk in 12 months and see what 1999 was like!!! In the meantime, keep TPI posted on developments, and it will share the news and results.

Michigan State University to Host Summer Convention All New Event...Top to Bottom!

Brace yourself, innovative changes are coming your way! TPI's Summer Convention and Field Days, July 21-23, has been totally redesigned to give you more...More demos, more education and more excitement than ever before.

Michigan State University (MSU,) site of the first ASPA/TPI Summer Convention in 1967, will host this extraordinary event. MSU faculty members, facilities and grounds will be featured throughout the schedule which has been developed under the leadership of Michigan host committee chairman, Mark Huggett and Conference and Convention Committee chairman, Bryan Wood.

The New!

Events offered for the first time at TPI's Summer Convention: Full-day turfgrass seminar, equipment demonstrations held

in individual exhibitor demo-areas, indoor field-day exhibits and single-event pass availability for all activities.

The Improved!

The following activities reflect positive changes from past TPI events: shuttle-bus service between field day site and host hotel, university-led turfgrass test area tour, equipment demonstrations and stationary exhibit displays over the course of two days, and value-oriented ticket pricing.

In a few weeks, you'll receive full convention details by mail. Please review the information carefully, and plan to take part in this extraordinary educational opportunity. July 21-23, in East Lansing, Michigan, TPI is taking "innovation" from the drawing board to the field. Warning: Expect Excitement!

Turfgrass Symposium, July 20, 1999: A Short Course in Turfgrass Agronomics

A special full-day seminar will precede 1999 TPI Summer Convention & Field Days in Lansing, Michigan, July 21-23.

Full details will come to you by mail in a few weeks, but here's a preview of the topics and presenters:

Dr. Trey Rogers, Michigan State University (MSU)
Athletic Field and Poa supina Research

Dr. Terry Riordan, University of Nebraska (UNL)
Advances in Turfgrass Breeding

Dr. Jim Crum, MSU
Physical Properties of Soils

Dr. Hank Wilkinson, University of Illinois (U of I)
Lawn and Athletic Field Disease Management

Dr. Joe Vargas, MSU
Golf Course Turf Disease Management

Dr. Tom Voigt, U of I
Kentucky Bluegrass Cultivars for Golf Course Fairways

Mr. Greg Lyman, MSU
Environmental Issues in Sod Production

Dr. Bruce Branham, U of I
Poa annua control in Sod

Dr. Dave Smitley, MSU
Insect Management

Mr. David Gilstrap, MSU
Trends in Sports and Commercial Turf

Dr. Paul Rieke, MSU
Soil Management

Dr. Robert Shearman, UNL
National Turfgrass Evaluation Program

Mr. Pete Cookingham, MSU
Turfgrass Information Center

Dr. Jim Baird, MSU
Site-Specific Management for Sod Production

Athletic Coaches Offer Advice on How to Promote Teamwork

The best coaches in athletics know that having a bunch of talented players isn't enough to make you a winning team. To succeed, those players have to function as a team. The same is true in business, according to management guru Stephen Covey. Covey recently asked some top athletic coaches for their advice on how to build team spirit:

* Take a personal interest in the people who work for you. Pat Summitt, coach of Tennessee's championship women's basketball team, meets privately with each of her players four times a year. She tells them what she expects out of them, and discusses their goals - and fears. According to Summitt, these kinds of meetings are crucial if you want to really understand employees - and be able to motivate them.

* Respect individual differences. Motivation techniques that work for one player may not work for another, says Ben Smith, coach of the U.S. women's hockey team. Example: Smith knows he can "bark" at some of his older players, because he knows they can take it. If he tried that tactic with a younger player, it might demoralize her. Know what kind of management tactics your employees respond to, and customize your tactics for each employee.

* Put the team above all else. Rick Majerus, coach of the University of Utah

basketball team, insists that even his best scorers play tough defense - because it's for the good of the team. At the same time, however, Majerus says it's important that players realize not everyone can be a star. "It's important that there are players that have roles that enable others to emerge as stars," says Majerus.

* Always get everyone's input. If people are left out of decisions, they don't feel like they're part of the team. Hockey coach Ben Smith always asks his players what they think is wrong with the team - and what they would do to solve it. "It doesn't do the class any good if the teacher answers all the questions," he explains. In team sessions, you'll want to position yourself as the "coach," not the "boss."

* Good coaching involves good listening. If you are too busy talking, you can't get the information you need to coach effectively. In addition, employees need to "own" the problem if they ever hope to solve it and learn from it. By placing the team in the position of problem-solver, you open the door to solutions that you may never have considered. And it bears remembering that employees may have ideas outside their area of responsibility. You may have a field hand who happens to have a terrific idea that you can implement in your office.

Four Ways to Give Your Team a 'Business Focus'

As a manager, you have to guard against the team being so bogged down in day-to-day activities that it loses sight of overall business goals. To make sure the team stays focused on the big picture, try these tactics:

1. Hold customer meetings. Once a month or so, bring in a customer to talk about their view of your company and how the company / team might improve.
2. Study the competition. Come up with a list of competitors, and assign one to each team member. That person is responsible for studying that particular competitor - going to their Web site, reading their brochures, newsletters, and so on. Ask team members to give a report to the group on what they discovered.
3. Review the business plan regularly. Make sure your team knows what the company's strategy and goals are for the coming months.
4. Bring in "guest speakers." Once every couple of months, invite a local businessperson in to discuss how teams work in their company. This may open the door to productive, new ways for your team to develop.

Taking Care of Business: Use Your Government, You're Paying For It

Art Campbell, Campbell Sod
Rossville, Kansas

Pick Your Battles Carefully

The importance of prioritizing can not be better exemplified than by an individual focusing on issues that are important to them in their business.

These three suggestions should help:

1. Use your government for important industry/business issues.
2. Be persistent.
3. Get to know the lobbying process.

Strong belief in political battles doesn't mean that all issues that affect your farm are worth campaigning for. Your input to elected officials and career bureaucrats carries more weight if you are selective in what issues you address. It will also be necessary for you to be willing to listen to, and learn from, your governmental officials. The better you understand your governmental officials and the process for effecting change, the better your chances will be to bring about positive results.

However, you shouldn't wait to establish contact with your government officials. Good contacts with politicians take time to develop. By initiating and maintaining regular contact, you can build a strong relationship before your need to rely on it! If handled properly,

the respect you've generated ahead of time will get your issue more attention when the time comes.

Before proceeding, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- * Is the issue reasonable?
- * Am I willing to do the necessary research to back up my position?
- * Am I prepared to lobby long and hard?

Once you've made your decision that an issue is important to you, you'll need to be persistent in your efforts to address the issue. Decision making processes in the political arena are often time consuming and slow...but the process does work. It can work in your favor even if your quest is not the objective of the majority.

What is essential to remember is that documentable, to-the-point information will have greater impact than lengthy discussions based on your point of view. Just because you are paying for something, whether it be a piece of equipment or a process, if you haven't read the operator's manual or don't understand the process, you will only become frustrated.

Strong beliefs in your issue, persistence and an understanding of the lobbying process are the keys to a successful campaign.

How Many People Should Be 'On The Team'?

With five to seven people, a team can operate efficiently.

Small teams work best because in order to be truly effective, they need to be able to debate quickly (and objectively), make decisions fast, and communicate among themselves. Team

members may need to work with, or represent, other people but a small team will always perform better than a large one!

Press Release In Brief

Press releases should not have an accompanying cover letter. The press release should speak for itself with minimal personal contact. Interested editors who want additional information will call to get it, while others will only be annoyed by follow-up calls.

E-Mail Press Releases

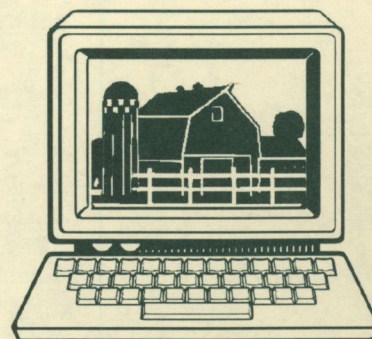
Include the text of the releases in the message rather than as attachments. Some editors may have trouble detaching your files because of system differences. Any release that is too long to fit in the text field of the e-mail is probably too long anyway.

Shrewder Computing

Computer Translation Software:

You can spend hundreds of dollars translating information for Hispanic employees. Now there's a software product that will do the same job for a fraction of the cost.

Spanish Assistant Deluxe translates documents, manuals and instructions just by typing them into any word processing program. The software also has a voice feature that reads aloud in Spanish what was typed in English.



The program provides sentence-by-sentence translation in both directions - English to Spanish, and vice versa! There are on-line bilingual dictionaries, grammar help, verb conjunctions and a utility for adding accented characters. What's more, a word-scan feature locates (prior to translation) words not recognized by the 100,000 word dictionary.

A nursery in Delaware even uses the voice feature to give 'verbal' instructions to Hispanic employees. They type the instructions in English, and place their two-way radio microphone next to the computer's speaker which delivers the message in Spanish.

Spanish Assistant Deluxe is a product of Globalink, 9302 Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22031. Phone: 703/273-5600. Web site URL is www.Globalink.com

TPI Action

Have You Sent in Your "2-Cents Worth" to the International Turf Producers Foundation (ITPF) to support turfgrass sod production research? Take another look at your year-end financial reports and see if a tax deductible contribution to the Foundation doesn't make more sense than paying taxes. Even if you can't take a deduction, consider how great this year was and ask yourself, "If I can't support necessary research with a contribution this year, when will it get any better?" Please do your share...2-cents per pallet or big roll sold in 1998 is not a tremendous amount, but when all of the TPI members contribute, the total is sizeable.

1998 Census of Horticulture forms should have been received by all U.S. members grossing more than \$10,000 and their accurate completion is vitally important to the entire industry. Conducted just once every 10 years, the results help suppliers make development and marketing decisions while lenders use the figures to evaluate loan requests. TPI will look to the results for future program guidance. If you need help or a copy of the form call 1/888/4AG-STAT.

TPI's PR Program has reached another 5.1 million readers/viewers (between July and December) with 220 turf-positive articles in 176 publications. This 4 1/2 year-old program has now **reached 85.75 million readers with over 1,160 articles** and is starting to see public perceptions about turf's environmental values improve.

Plan Ahead To Maximize The Benefit Of TPI's Future Meeting Locations

July 21-23, 1999, East Lansing Michigan -- Summer Convention

February 10-12, 2000, San Antonio, Texas -- Midwinter Conference

July 19-21, 2000, Spokane, Washington -- Summer Convention

February 7-9, 2001, Albuquerque, New Mexico -- Midwinter Conference

July 19-21, 2001, Toronto, Ontario -- Summer Convention

Combine business with pleasure and a family vacation to some wonderful and interesting cities in North America...(probably with a tax advantage).

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

Questions I'd Like to Have Answered

- * What would you attempt to do if you knew you could not fail?
- * What was the best thing before sliced bread?
- * Why do we park on driveways and drive on parkways?
- * Would you give your right arm to be ambidextrous?
- * If olive oil comes from olives... where does baby oil come from?
- * If you throw a cat out a car window, does it become kitty litter?
- * Why is it - when you transport something by car, it's called a shipment, but when you transport something by ship, it's called cargo?
- * Why do they call it a TV set, when you only get one?
- * If people don't like tailgaters, why do they bother buying bumper stickers?
- * If necessity is the mother of invention, why do so many unnecessary things get invented?



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

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