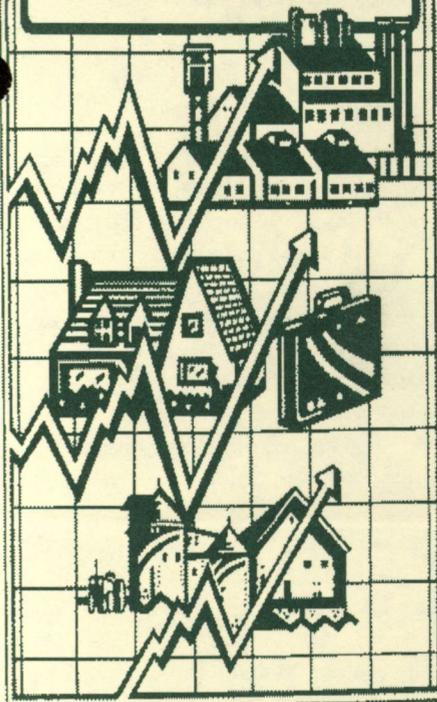


Feb / Mar 2000



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International Turf Producers Foundation (ITPF) Launches New Research and Education Initiative.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Turfgrass Producers International

Foundation Sets \$500,000 Goal

'Water Right' Campaign Focuses On Turf & Green Industry Future

A year ago, TPI's Water Policy Committee set out to define reasonable positions for the organization to take regarding the availability and use of water for turf use. What the committee discovered frightened even these long-time members.

They concluded:
1. a severe water crisis is already affecting many parts of the

world; 2. the crisis will worsen; 3. sooner or later, everyone will face a severe water crisis; and, 4. the turf and green industry must act immediately to obtain new water-use research and educate producers, consumers and policy makers.

ITPF Creates *Water Right* Campaign

When directors of the International Turf Producers Foundation (ITPF) were made aware of these findings they recognized that the scope of the problem is well beyond TPI's normal financial means. They developed the *Water Right* Campaign to raise a half-million dollars in three years to fund a world-wide research and education effort. The campaign will address everyone's right to use water, as well as producers' legal ownership rights to water.

Because there will be no green industry without reasonable access to reasonable

amounts of water, turf producers and manufacturers are being asked to make sizeable contributions to fund this effort and protect their businesses.

Leaders Support *Water Right*

Even before the campaign was fully publicized, pledges of \$5,000 for each of three years were made by most of the TPI and ITPF

Board members as well as members of the TPI Water Policy Committee. A growing number of manufacturers are also pledging \$15,000 to the campaign, with many more expected.

Four levels of *Water Right* Campaign contributors have been established:

Champions	\$15,000 (\$5,000/year)
Stewards	\$7,500 (\$2,500/year)
Grand Donors	\$3,000 (\$1,000/year)
Advocates	Below \$1,000/year

Because of ITPF's status as a tax exempt educational foundation, contributions are fully deductible.

A brochure describing the *Water Right* Campaign concept, purpose and financial need has been sent to all members.

Contribution pledge cards are also available.

Pledge to *Water Right*

Water-use research and educational materials are needed today, but they will only become a reality when you pledge your financial support.

Pledge Today...Make a Difference and Protect Your *Water Right*.

Pledge Yourself to the Following:

I pledge to educate myself and my customers about the environmental benefits of judicious landscape water use.

I pledge to support ITPF's *Water Right* Campaign.

I pledge to make myself available to assist in ITPF's fundraising efforts.

When Lawn Watering Is Banned...

**How much turf will you sell?*

**How badly is the environment damaged?*

**Will turf farm water use be outlawed?*

Marketing Tip

David Millar, Red Hen Turf Farm
New Carlisle, Indiana

Cable TV is a Good Way to Sell Sod.

Admit it, your first thought after reading this title is that TV advertising is too expensive for your farm. You owe it to yourself to check out cable advertising because it is a great way to sell sod and it's cheaper than you think.

Most sod is sold from printed advertising and you have likely heard all there is to say about this sales method. Cable TV allows you to use motion and the power of the voice to sell sod. A child running across a new lawn while a homeowner tells the viewers why she chose sod over seed carries big impact.

With a good TV ad, you can almost smell the new grass. Try doing that with a brochure. It is hard in a printed-ad to

point out the negative aspects of seeding compared to sodding. On the other hand, it's easy for a homeowner in a TV ad to say "My neighbors didn't like their seeded lawn because their kids tracked-in a lot of mud."

I found cable TV rates are much less than broadcast rates. Because they are affordable, several spots can be produced. Cable also tends to group programs on channels that appeal to certain groups. This allows you to write different ads for different targeted groups.

As an example, women like sod because it stops mud from being tracked into the house. Men like sod because it requires less of their time to establish / grow-in. Special spots can be produced in coop-

eration with retail outlets to sell sod for lawn repairs.

Another nice thing about cable is that they have different zones of coverage so you can pick and choose the areas where sod will likely be purchased. Our cable company charges us a modest production fee that they rebate back to us when the spots begin to run. You can either use the cable company to write the ads or write them yourself. Local modeling schools are a great source of actors that will work at modest fees in order to gain experience.

Just remember that you can communicate a lot with facial expressions and voice changes using TV advertising. You want your product to stand out...so let your creative thoughts flow.

Difficult People: 5 Personality Types and How to Deal With Them

Difficult people...we all have to deal with them sooner, or later. The sign of a great manager is the ability to get along with these people and turn the troublesome relationships into productive ones. The first thing you have to do is be able to recognize the common "difficult personality types." Once you understand the 'type' of person you're dealing with, you can respond appropriately.

1. Bullies are hostile and angry, and often use tantrums and threats to get their own way. How to cope: Firmly stand up for yourself. However, don't let the conversation turn into an argument or fight. Instead, make your points

and stick to them - no matter how much yelling or carrying on the bully does. Eventually, the bully will recognize that these tactics don't work on you.

2. Grippers love to complain about things, but they rarely offer solutions. How to cope: Let them know that you appreciate their concern, but that you expect them to come up with solutions. Questions like "What would you do to resolve this problem?" can be effective as long as you don't let the gripper off the hook when he says "I don't know."

3. Silent types answer questions with a "yes" or "no" without offering any other information. How to cope: Ask these people open-ended questions that require

more than a yes or no answer. And when they do give some input, let them know you value their opinions and they may speak up more freely.

4. Just Say No People always respond negatively to new ideas. How to cope: Don't argue...instead, ask these people for suggestions of what they think will work. If you keep asking, they will either learn to come up with alternative solutions - or stop criticizing every idea that comes along.

5. Stallers endlessly put off making decisions. How to cope: Listen carefully to discover the reason(s) that they won't make a decision. Address these reasons and you'll make headway.

Business Briefs

...business phone calls from home are tax-deductible.

Reminder: Any business-related call can be deducted. So can the cost of buying or renting services such as call-forwarding or call waiting on your home phone - if you need the services for business purposes.

Exception: If you have only one phone line, you cannot deduct regular local-service charges.

Just the fax...

Do you fax price-quote forms, directions to your farm or company promotional materials? If so, it would be worthwhile to see for yourself what you're sending out to the world. Fax a sample of these items to yourself, using another fax machine. Check-out the quality of the printing / graphics and overall appearance. Consider how the way your fax looks reflects on your company.

Frequently Asked Advertising ?'s

Free guide for small business - US Federal Trade Commission: Phone:877/382-4357, or visit www.ftc.gov on the web. Click on "Consumer Protection."

Financial-planning Resource Kit

Three free brochures on what you should know about financial planning, questions to ask, and choosing a financial planner. Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards: Phone: 888/237-6275.

TPI Time Capsule - A Retrospective Perspective

This second in a series of six retrospective Time Capsule articles first appeared 15 years ago in "Business Management."

Why Sales Calls Work

It's that time of year when growers in the North are out visiting their customers and looking for new ones, so it seems appropriate that this month's theme page deals with sales calls.

Many books have been written about successful selling and the ingredients of a successful sales call...but I've never seen one that is appropriate for the type of selling that we as sod growers do.

First of all, a majority of sod farms do not employ full-time salesmen; most selling is done during the off-season by an owner or manager. Secondly, because selling is done during the off-season, we rarely write an order (or should I say close a sale) and that's where the emphasis is usually placed in books on selling techniques. And yet, despite the fact that we rarely write an order, good sales calls are the foundation of a successful sod business.

So what constitutes a successful sales call...and how do we achieve one?

A successful sales call is one which leaves a potential buyer favorably disposed to consider buying from you when he needs sod. When people ask me what I do in the winter, I answer, "I go out and make friends...and in the summer, my friends buy sod from me."

Fortunately, this type of selling is easier than most. There is no pressure to close a sale and the timing of the call usually means that the prospective customer is in a pretty relaxed frame of mind. Nevertheless, there are some rules:

*** When invited into a prospect's office, encourage him to talk about things that interest him.** A quick look around often reveals special interests as evidenced by trophies, pictures, etc. If you see nothing of that sort, a simple "How did you get started in this business?" is usually enough to get him talking.

*** Don't wear-out your welcome.** If the prospect is busy or fidgeting, suggest that you come back at a later date, making an appointment if possible.

*** Don't give up.** If the prospect says he's buying from a competitor and is very happy, just smile and let him talk, or suggest that you would like to be considered as an alternate source if the occasion arises. Then explain why you feel qualified to fill this role...focusing on how you'll meet his needs as you understand them. In other words, give him your "sales pitch" by talking about quality, service, and how your sod will reflect positively on him.

*** Be agreeable.** Sometimes the prospect will tell you about all the times that the competitor has let him down. If this happens, don't knock the competitor or your prospect may feel it necessary to defend him and you lose the friendly atmosphere.

*** When it is time to leave, suggest a follow-up...**either another call or, if you've learned about a specific job coming up, a telephone call or written quotation.

*** Finally, leave something behind** that will remind him of your visit, such as a price list or promotional piece.

Many people find it hard to go out soliciting business because of a fear that is common to most of us: the fear of what is behind a closed door. What's actually lurking behind most doors is just a friend you haven't met yet.

Two Words That Persuade

Two key words will make you more persuasive. The words: "if" and "then." Whether you're trying to sell an idea or turfgrass sod, the message that works is "If you take this action, then you'll get this reward."

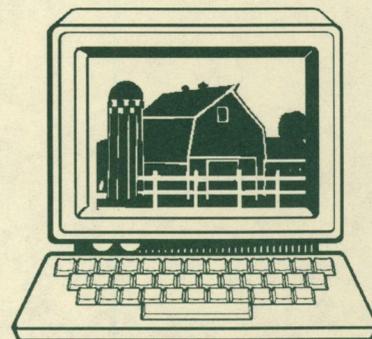
Next time you're trying to persuade someone, think about using these two short words to get what you want.

Shrewder Computing

Virus Protection Update

Do you have virus-protection software? If you ever use the internet or if you use floppy disks or other media from an outside source (accountant, printer, employee, etc.) you need to install computer virus protection software on your computer system(s). There are now thousands of viruses that can infect your computer through Internet use or shared storage disks.

And just because you have virus protection software, doesn't mean you're immune. With new viruses developed every day...it is essential that you update your software often. "Download-able" updates are often available by visiting the software provider's website.



You should also make sure that your virus protection software scans email and downloaded files for viruses. Your software should give you options about what it should do if a virus is detected. To be on the safe-side, you can dictate that the virus protection software should delete infected emails or internet-download files.

A computer consultant visiting TPI recently, indicated that a virus had infected his system, opened every one of his files, replaced the contents with "0" and saved the files. This virus effectively wiped-out his system. Lesson: No one is immune...Protect your valuable computer files!

TPI Action

ALL TPI MEMBERS are asked to send information and suggestions related to turf and landscape water-use. Examples include proven/practical conservation techniques for farms and landscapes; research results (available or proposed); and, names and contact information of water-use experts (researchers and government officials, both private and public).

TPI's Water Policy Committee hopes to assemble as much water related information as possible, and recognizes that TPI members in some parts of the world have already addressed problems others are just now facing. Being able to exchange ideas and information will be helpful to everyone and produce the best possible results.

TPI benefits its world-wide membership by tracking potential issues, as well as being able to assist it members when they confront specific issues. Currently, the following issues are being tracked, with all members invited to serve as spokespersons, contact their elected officials or share information with TPI:

(1) Ag Workers -- "Agricultural Job Opportunity Benefits and Security Act of 1999" (AgJOBS), Senate Bill #1814, addresses the shortage of a legal ag work force.

(2) Pesticide Availability -- "Regulatory Fairness and Openness Act of 1999," Senate Bill #1464 and House Bill #1592, addresses the EPA's intent to remove proven pesticides without the benefit of scientific data.

(3) Workplace Safety -- U.S. OSHA's Ergonomic Standards, while seeming to exempt farms, could have an impact under the general duty clause if a farm worker suffers any musculoskeletal disorder.

(4) Minimum Wage Increase -- while not a fact yet, negotiations between House, Senate and President will almost certainly result in a raise, the question being how much and how soon.

(5) Turf Crop Insurance -- efforts continue to determine if a private company form of insurance can be available, practical and affordable.

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

Website: <http://www.TurfgrassSod.org>

Jest For The Fun Of It

Ponder This...

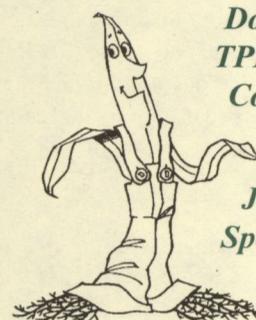
Ever wonder if illiterate people get the full effect of alphabet soup?

I always wanted to be somebody, but I should have been more specific.

Did you ever notice when you blow in a dog's face he gets mad at you? But when you take him in a car he sticks his head out the window.

Have you ever noticed? Anybody driving slower than you is an idiot, and anyone driving faster than you is a maniac.

The statistics on sanity are that 1 out of every 4 Americans is suffering from some form of mental illness. Think of your 3 best friends. If they are okay, then it's you.



*Don't Forget
TPI's Summer
Convention!*

*July 19-21
Spokane, WA*

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