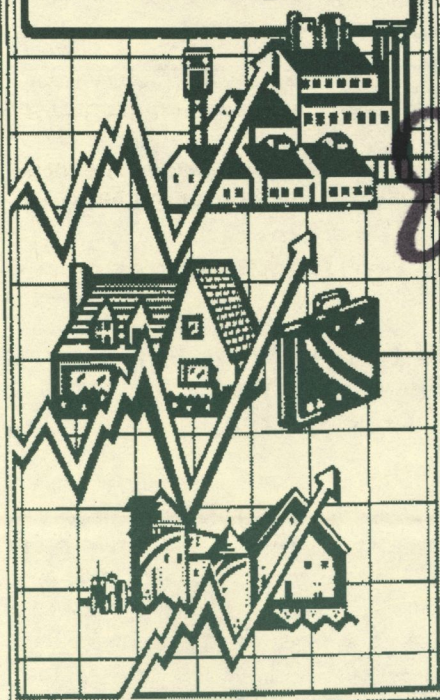


[June/July]



July/July-'01



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Turfgrass Producers International

TPI Midwinter Conference Location Changed

2002: Orlando, Florida

2003: Birmingham, England

BEARD
COURTESY

The 2002 TPI Midwinter Conference, originally scheduled to be held in Birmingham, England, has been rescheduled for January 28 through February 1 in Orlando, FL.

The TPI Board decided to postpone the England venue for one year because of current concerns about foot and mouth disease affecting segments of England, and fears of possibly bringing the disease back to farms in the U.S. and other countries. The decision to delay the England location for one year is based on the Board's belief the problem will most likely be fully eliminated before 2003.

Meanwhile, the 2002 Midwinter Conference will center in and around the Sheraton World Resort in Orlando, FL.

Located on 28 tropically landscaped acres, the Sheraton features 40 meeting rooms, 1,102 guest rooms and suites, a fitness center, three pools, and dining from gourmet to deli. In addition to nearby championship golf courses, Walt Disney World Resort and Universal Orlando are less than five minutes away. SeaWorld is located a short walk and an hour's drive will take you to the Kennedy Space Center and the beaches. Complete details will be published in a future issue of *Turf News*, as well as a special promotional mailing.

For the 2003 TPI Midwinter Conference in Birmingham, England, educational assemblies and exhibits will both be held February 27 and 28. A comprehensive schedule (including optional pre-and post-conference tours) has yet to be finalized.

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

Creating Instant Rapport Page 2
With this Powerful Strategy

How Grandma Can Help Page 3
Treat Your Customers With Care

Jest for the Fun of It Page 4
TPI's "Funny Business" Department

Marketing Tip Page 2
Long Time Listener, First Time User

Shrewer Computing Page 3
Avoiding the Software Police

Taking Care of Business Page 3
The Next Generation

TPI Membership Renewal Page 1
And Update Information

TPI Strategic Vision Session Page 1
Using Math for Web Searches

TPI Midwinter Conference Page 1
Location Changed to Orlando, FL

TPI Action Page 4
— *Special Strategic Visioning Session*
— *20% Off Gempler's Publications*
— *"WATER RIGHT" Books Still Free to TPI Members*

TPI Strategic Vision Session Scheduled for Toronto

On behalf of the TPI Board, TPI President Earl Slack has invited all TPI Members to participate in a special half-day planning session that will be conducted the day before the TPI Summer Convention and Field Day begins in Toronto.

On Thursday, July 19, the session is scheduled to begin at 7:30 am in the Westin Harbour Castle Hotel. Professional facilitator Jim Whitt has been contracted to direct the session. Earl advised, "With Jim's guidance, we will be divided into random groups of 10 people to consider the changes we've seen to sod production in the past, identify what changes we see (or hope) will develop in the future, and then explore what we will have to do as individuals and as an organization to make the future what we want it to be.

"As turfgrass sod producers, and as an international organization, we have enjoyed the good fortune that comes with

prosperity and success. Yet, we can all admit every aspect of our business and this association could be improved. The purpose of this special session is to help us find the ways to accomplish those goals."

Although space is very limited, those interested in participating should contact the TPI office.

Update Information with Membership Renewal

When renewing your TPI membership for 2001-2002, be sure to review all portions of your record and make any necessary corrections or additions. Be on the alert for easy-to-overlook changes in telephone area codes, e-mail and websites, and other details about the farm's production that can help a prospective customer locate you.

Taking Care of Business

By Matthew Campbell
Campbell Sod Inc.
Rossville, KS

The Next Generation An Ongoing Experience of Learning

"I want to thoroughly be used up when I die. Life is no brief candle to me; it is a sort of splendid torch which I get a hold of for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations." George Bernard Shaw

"Never give up on what you really want to do. The person with big dreams is more powerful than one with all the facts." H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

Everyday, people make important decisions and, sometimes, compromises with the those around them. Our success or failure often depends not ~~only~~ on the decisions we make but also on our ability to communicate effectively with each other. With so much awareness for good communication skills in today's world, then why is it so difficult for family members to do the same?

There are three reasons why problems persist in situations like this. First, parents often try to convince their children to copy their way of doing things, instead of teaching the children how to develop and use their own skills.

Second is the children's youthful, energetic attitude of believing their many thoughts and goals are right, without always thinking them through.

The third reason is the sometimes lack of good communication. There has to be a respectful understanding and willing-

ness to compromise between the different ages. Built on the foundation of good communication, the healthy parent-child relationship extends beyond the home to the business world in a less stressful and more productive environment.

Attitude: a state of mind or feeling with regard to a person or thing.

Understanding this sentence and all of its parts is the key to having a good attitude. One could have a good state of mind for something or someone but may be hiding feelings that are bothersome to them. The work around the farm enhanced my attitude. The more work I did for the business or farm the more appreciation I had towards the life-style in which I was raised.

Experience: activity or practice through which knowledge or skill is gained.

Growing up, my total experience consisted of what I learned at school and

from my parents. Later, experiences with others provided additional perspectives. Using what I learned from my parents and from others will help me to achieve my own identity, as well as establish my credibility to my parents.

Patience: enduring affliction with calmness, while being tolerant and understanding, and then persevering.

Knowing when or when not to speak, knowing when or when not to do something, and knowing when or when not to take charge are all situations that require patience. Without patience, I could harm myself or, worse, my credibility with other people. My dad recently told me, "Son, you have just enough knowledge and experience right now at your age to make yourself dangerous. You just have not gained your credibility with other people, yet, but you will with time."

Patience is very important. If you have the right attitude and you grow and develop into a mature person and gain experience but lose patience with yourself, you will not be able to maintain or get that parent/child relationship you want.

Matt Campbell is the 25-year-old son of Art and Marilyn Campbell of Campbell Sod. He is majoring in turf and sports turf management at Kansas State University, from which he will graduate in December of this year.

Creating Instant Rapport

Use this powerful strategy to gain instant rapport with any referred prospect: Just discover something your referral source likes about the prospect: then follow these steps:

- ♦ Ask your source, "I'm curious, Tom (referral source). What's do you really like or admire about George (prospect)?"
- ♦ Tell your prospect, "Tom Cooper suggested I give you a call. I have to tell you, you've got a real admirer in Tom. He told me that you... (paraphrase what you learned from your source)."

How Your Grandma Can Help You Sell

Chances are that your company provides quality products, reasonable prices and good service—everything any customer could want...or is it?

What about your employees' interpretation of service when customers make an unusual request, or call late in the day on a Friday afternoon? If the request is treated as odd, or if the late phone call as an interruption, the customer or prospect could be receiving a negative message.

Solution: Consider the typical responses we hear too often in these

situations. Now, add the word "Grandma" at the end. This test will help you eliminate the words and phrases that alienate customers and prospects. Here are a few examples:

- "Sorry, we're closing soon, Grandma."
- "It's not our policy, Grandma."
- "I don't know; I'll have to transfer you, Grandma."

Suggestion: If you wouldn't say it to your grandmother, or any other person you care about, why would you say it to your customers?

Marketing Tip

By Greg S. Douglas
Sod Solutions, Inc.
Mt. Pleasant, NC

A Long Time Listener, First Time User?

Like many of you, we at Sod Solutions are always looking for new and more effective ways to market our brands but recently we've been able to achieve outstanding results using a "not so new" medium...radio.

Radio has undergone dramatic changes over the last 10 years. During this time Talk Radio, an entirely new genre of programming, has emerged and almost single-handedly taken AM radio from the brink of obsolescence in many markets to the pinnacle of ratings dominance. From nationally syndicated programs such as *The Rush Limbaugh Show*, *Dr. Laura*, and *ESPN Radio*, to local talk shows, Talk Radio exhibits the ability to attract and keep a consistent audience. Naturally, this characteristic is of interest to any person or business with a message to deliver.

At Sod Solutions, one goal of our marketing program is to utilize advertising to expose as many likely consumers as possible to our brands of improved warm season turfgrasses. Domestically our brands are only used in the southern portions of the United States and because the majority of consumers using our brands have common characteristics, it was important for us to have an advertising medium that could reach specific geographic and demographic targets. We feel that radio's combination of local reach and a demographically predictable Talk Radio audience fits our needs nicely.

In developing a strategy for radio advertising, it certainly doesn't hurt to engage the services of market-savvy professionals who know the medium. We've found that the fees for many of the services they provide (advertising creation, advice on when to run the ad, selection of stations to air the ad based on coverage and audience demographic) are included in the advertising rates. If so, take full advantage.

However, if you find yourself with questions to answer, use common sense and do your homework. Ask yourself and your customers about their radio habits. Is

there a station or program that all or most of your customers listen to? Is there a time of day when most of your customers are around a radio? Is there a specific geographic region that you are trying to increase market share within? What are the most listened to stations serving this target area? Like any other marketing activity, the better you understand your audience and their habits, the more effective you can be.

As for cost, advertising rates will generally be higher for programming that attracts larger measured audiences. The industry accepted service for rating audience listenership is Arbitron and most advertising rates will be based on recent Arbitron results. Use these ratings as a guide, but do your homework and know your intended audience first and foremost. Don't advertise at certain times or during a specific program just because the audience is largest. Look for those times and programs where *your* targeted audience is highest.

Often, you'll be able to control your costs and accomplish your goals simultaneously. Occasionally, if you keep your ears open, you'll even come across bargains such as new radio stations carrying popular programming that haven't been on the air long enough to be Arbitron rated. Because ratings have not been documented, ad rates are usually much lower for these programs than on other more established stations. If you come across a situation like this, consider this option strongly.

At Sod Solutions, our on-going search for new and better ways to deliver our message sometimes makes it easy to forget what's been most effective over the years. Radio is one such medium that has proven effective and has recently demonstrated its ability to adapt itself to a changing society. During your next marketing budget meeting, consider radio—it may be just what you need to get your message heard by all those *long-time listeners, first-time callers*.

Shrewder Computing

Avoiding the Software Police

On May 11, 2001, a federal jury in Chicago returned a guilty verdict in the first trial under the No Electronic Theft Act of 1997 which was enacted to facilitate prosecution of Internet copyright piracy.

Software piracy in the workplace has become far more common in the past decade. It can be as simple as two employees installing the same program in their computers when the license agreement permits only one. It can be as widespread as the deliberate, systematic copying of programs throughout an organization, or the purchase of computers with "pre-loaded" software that was never authorized by the software's creators. It can also include programs transmitted via bulletin boards, e-mail, news groups, site links and—most notably—Internet auction sites that defraud bidders by claiming the illegal software is a genuine product obtained at a deep discount.

If your business has obtained software from any of these or other sources and did not come with a license for its use, proper documentation, or other obvious proof it is genuine, you may well be using pirated software and are taking a big risk for your company. Conspiracy to infringe a copyright carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine—restitution is mandatory.

A recent campaign by the Business Software Alliance (BSA) focused on persuading organizations to license all software in their offices. BSA does not have subpoena power but can get it if you don't comply with their request to see your software licenses. According to Chicago Attorney Henry Schaffer, if your organization receives a letter from BSA or any computer company, it is best to be cooperative as long as the requests are not unduly burdensome. If unsure, contact your legal advisor.

TPI Action

OPEN FORUM SUMMER COMMITTEE MEETINGS WILL NOT BE HELD in Toronto at the TPI Convention because of the special strategic visioning session that will be conducted July 19. . The annual business meeting will be conducted July 19 from 1:30 - 2:30 pm, in the Westin Harbour Hotel, Toronto, ON.

20% DISCOUNTS ON GEMPLER'S PUBLICATIONS will be offered exclusively to TPI members through a special flier in the next issue of the "Ag/Hort Alert." The special ag safety and employee management newsletter is provided by TPI to all Class A - U.S. members as a special benefit of membership.

Because of the relationship between Glempler's and TPI, the company asked permission to make this special discount offer to the membership, as a means of showing their appreciation to the group for its long-standing group subscription.

The flier will include a unique key code that must be used by TPI members to obtain the special 20% discount.

"WATER RIGHT" BOOKS REMAIN FREE TO TPI MEMBERS when requests are accompanied by a comprehensive distribution list. An article in the May/June issue of "Turf News" magazine stated that ITPF Directors were asking for a \$5.00 contribution for postage and handling to help defray the costs of the book. While funds are needed for this purpose, ITPF officials want to clarify that only non-TPI members would be required to make a contribution. A complimentary copy of the book was sent to all TPI members in February.

As a compendium of information and ideas that can "conserve our water and preserve our environment," (the book's subtitle), the publication is an excellent resource to deliver to water-policy decision-makers in all areas. While it's effectiveness will be strong at anytime, it can be particularly helpful when a water crisis arises and conservation tactics are being developed.

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: info@TurfGrassSod.org
Website: <http://www.TurfGrassSod.org>

Jest For The Fun Of It

Humor for Those Who Take Life Too Seriously

Save the whales...collect the whole set.

A day without sunshine is like... night.

On the other hand...you have different fingers.

I just got lost in thought...and it was unfamiliar territory.

If at first you don't succeed...then skydiving isn't for you.

I wonder how much deeper the ocean would be without sponges.

Honk if you love peace and quiet.

Remember, half the people you know are below average.

Nothing is foolproof to a talented fool.

Atheism is a non-prophet organization.

He who laughs last, thinks the slowest.

When everything's coming your way, chances are you're in the wrong lane. Or, you're Bill Clinton!

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

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