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TPI Honors & Award Recipients to be Named at TPI Midwinter Conference!

Register for the ITPF Banquet Awards & Fundraiser program to support to these deserving recipients.

This special TPI program is conducted only once a year at the TPI Midwinter Conference. To maintain the integrity of these prestigious awards for each category, they are presented only if the judges agree there are worthy candidates.

Don't miss this event to find out who the recipients will be for the TPI Honorary Member(s), Distinguished Service, and Innovator awards of the year.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Turfgrass Producers International

Savannah, Georgia—February 14-17, 2006

TPI Midwinter Conference

\$AVE on Early Registration—Ends December 15, 2005!

In addition to visiting with friends and peers from all over the world, the TPI Midwinter Conference provides members with a wealth of valuable "take-home" information through Education Sessions, Roundtable Forum, Exhibits and lots more. "These events are one of the best investments of our time and money, considering what we gain," is the description many TPI members use to describe their participation in TPI Conferences and Conventions.

There is a way to further increase this already great bargain, if you haven't already done so! Just be sure to register for the TPI Midwinter Conference by Thursday, December 15, 2005 to receive the \$50 discount for each person fully registered by that date!

And that's not all! Book your hotel reservation at the TPI host hotel (Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa) by Wednesday, January 11, 2006 (space available) and you're guaranteed the TPI room rate of \$145! TPI Meetings & Education Manager Kelly Butler advises not waiting until that date because the TPI "room block" might fill up sooner. Now for a preview of the Conference.

Education

From the Pre-Conference Seminar, to Education Sessions #1 and #2, attendees can learn from some of the best experts and professionals. Topics include a motivational expert's methods of "Bringing Customers Back"; a "Show and Tell" panel of turf producers describing their operations; a highly successful landscaper's sales techniques; a panel of turfgrass extension specialists whose presentations will cover "Angry Dogs & Irrate customers," "Recycled Water Use on Turf," and "Marketing via Public TV."

Exhibits

The Exhibit sessions provide attendees with numerous opportunities to meet with representatives from the turf industry's top equipment and parts manufacturers, suppliers and service providers. To help attendees make the most of their one-on-one time with the various representatives, lunch will be available at no charge, as part of the package price.


ITPF Banquet, Awards & Fundraiser

Attendees begin with a cocktail reception before heading to the dining area for a memorable low-country seafood boil (non-seafood options available). Entertainment by the talented "Blue Dogs" is loosely described as "bluegrass" but covers a wide range of enjoyable music taste; a regional favorite of the southern U.S.

The prestigious TPI Honors & Awards program portion of the evening will recognize special individuals for their dedication and selfless giving to TPI and the overall turf industry.

The ITPF Silent Auction will progress unobtrusively throughout the evening toward the goal of raising money for turfgrass education and research efforts. Be sure to check out the various boards listing the many auction items and keep in mind this is an opportunity to give back to the industry that has given so much to all members.

Roundtable Forum

Attendees of past Roundtable Forums are seeing many of their ideas and suggestions implemented by the TPI Board. If you want to share your ideas, express concerns or just exchange information with peers, this is the place to be. 

Taking Care of Business

By Dan Coughlin
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Business Leadership Happens at the Intersection of Proper Behaviors and Great Business Results

Leadership means influencing how other people think in ways that generate better sustainable results for the organization and the people in it. If they are adding more value to customers, then they have decided to invest energy into the act of adding value. Consequently, leadership means influencing people to invest their energy in doing the right things that will achieve better sustainable business results.

Classic example: Martin Luther King, Jr. said that the desired outcome was equal rights for all Americans, and the right way to get there was through non-violent resistance. He caused the intersection that generated one of the greatest social changes in the shortest periods of time in the history of the world.

So what are proper behaviors and great business results? Consider any painfully boring session your organization might have gone through to establish your corporate values. That's where it all starts. Values are beliefs that determine behaviors. If your corporate values say things like "integrity, honesty, teamwork, open communication, creativity, customers first, dignity, respect, etc.," then you know what the desired behaviors are for the people in your organization.

You know the desired behaviors and you know the desired business results. The missing link is that elusive characteristic known as leadership. A business leader influences the people in the organization to behave in a way that demonstrates the desired values AND achieves the desired business results. Please remember this next statement: "Labels or titles don't make the leader." Any person in your organization can influence the way others think in ways that cause them to behave properly, in alignment with the stated business values, AND achieve the desired results.

Here's the challenge: Leadership is invisible work. It can happen by asking a question, making a statement, honestly sharing feedback (based on observed behavior) with another person, giving them a chapter in a book to read and

such. So what makes one person a great leader and another equally competent person merely a tactician or strategist? Why is one person able to effectively influence other people to cause the all-important intersection of proper behaviors and desired results, while another person merely does what he is told to do? Are some people just born leaders and others can never hope to lead successfully?

Here are the answers in reverse order. No, people are not born to lead. True leaders step off the train of daily tasks, and they ask themselves,

1— What result are we trying to achieve?

2— What behaviors do people need to demonstrate in order to achieve those results in a sustainable manner?

3— How can I influence people to think in ways that will generate both the desired behaviors and the desired results?"

Once the business leader determines the answers to those questions, he or she moves into action. This is the sandbox I play in everyday as an executive coach. My goal is to figure out the proper behaviors for people in a particular organization, the desired business results for the organization and the influence I need to provide to a specific individual to generate the intersection of the desired behaviors and business results. Any leadership approach I use can be implemented by any person at any level in any organization in any industry. The hard part is convincing yourself to take the time to step off of the train long enough to answer the three questions above, and then having the courage to put your plan into action.

The "tweedle-dees and tweedle-dums" who ruined Enron, WorldComm, Parmalat, Adelphi Communications and Arthur Andersen were not business leaders. They influenced people to generate great results but with completely wrong behaviors. They missed the important intersection of business leadership by a hundred miles.

Even though business leadership is invisible and your influence will often go unnoticed and unappreciated, please trust me when I say that it is THE most important characteristic of a successful organization. The leader, regardless of title, provides the magic that moves results forward in a sustainable manner.

I found out that several business groups use my monthly electronic newsletter as the basis for discussions on how they can accelerate the achievement of their most important business outcomes. What a neat idea! Maybe these groups could be called, "Business Acceleration Teams." Toward that end, I'm going to add a new section each month called, "Questions For Business Acceleration Teams." The approach will be to take that month's topic and add a few open-ended discussion questions that your team could use to move the ideas into action in a practical manner. Here are this month's questions:

1. What are the two most important business outcomes we are working to achieve in the next six months?
2. What behaviors will be necessary in order to increase the chances we will achieve those desired business outcomes?
3. Whom do we need to influence in order to get both the desired behaviors and the desired business results?
4. How will we influence these people?
5. Who will specifically provide the influence to the various individuals?

If you want everyone on your team to have my free newsletter, go to the website below and sign up. Then, you're welcome to print it out and distribute it to everyone in your office.

Have a great holidays!

Dan Coughlin can be reached at Tel: 636/825-6611 or
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Also, you'll find more than 100 of Dan's free articles on business acceleration at
www.businessacceleration.com



Marketing Tip

By Peter Koeppel
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How to Avoid the Biggest Business Marketing Mistakes

Marketing challenges are common among businesses of all sizes, whether new or well established. Owners of new businesses might not know how to market their firms properly to get the results they want. In fact, many small and mid-sized companies lose sight of the marketing practices that made them successful. Even large, established companies tend to let their good marketing practices slide sometimes.

So what can you do if you suspect your marketing efforts are less than satisfactory? First, understand the following biggest marketing mistakes, and then learn how to avoid them.

—Not Developing a Marketing Plan

A marketing plan is a critical part of every successful business. It helps you define your product and service to fill a market niche, identify your target audience and determine what you need to get your target audience to buy your product or services in the short and long term.

—Not Planning a Marketing Budget

You need to invest money to publicize, market and advertise your business to make it successful. As a general rule, the marketing budget should be 10 percent of your revenue.

—Not Targeting a Specific Audience

Regardless of what product you have, not everyone is going to want it enough to buy it. Determine your target demographic and use appropriate media outlets to reach that audience. Trying to appeal to everyone doesn't work.

—Not Developing a Clear and Consistent Marketing Message

All your marketing materials, advertisements and promotions must convey a consistent look and message. Wherever your target audience sees your name, they should recognize it and form an immediate image of your company. Consistency increases the effectiveness of your marketing message, achieving more from your marketing budget, because the message is reinforced in all of your selected advertising mediums.

—Believing Your Product Will Sell

Itself

Many companies make the mistake of thinking that their product is so great and so different that they don't need to market it at all. Word of mouth and customer referrals can only take you so far in today's increasingly competitive marketplace.

—Not Clearly Defining the Product Benefits

The increasing competitiveness of today's marketplace offers customers more choices. Something has to get their attention to make them choose one product over another. You need to create this product differentiation.

Defining the uniqueness of your product will help your target audience consider you first. Work this uniqueness into your marketing plan and strategy to reach the specific audience you want.

—Not Diversifying Your Media Mix

There was a time when advertising options were limited. Today's media is very fragmented but you need to reach your audience through more than one outlet.

—Not Understanding the Lifetime Value of a Customer

If you can keep most of your customers for life, the value of those customers multiplies. Consider investing 10 percent of those customers' sales in marketing to earn a ten-to-one return on your investment.

—Not Up-Selling the Customer

Up-selling means taking advantage of the sales opportunity and incremental revenue by adding more or related products to a customer's purchase. For example, adding other landscaping materials such as mulch or top soil, are up-sells.

Just remember that marketing is critical to the success of every business. Avoid making any of these big mistakes that could make your marketing efforts ineffective. When you steer clear of these marketing mistakes, you can market your business successfully and increase your bottom line as a result.



Shrewder Computing

Computer Tune-Ups

We all know the importance of having our cars tuned up. But what about our computer? Computers need tune-ups too!

As you explore the internet, add and remove software, visit websites or just plain use the computer, files build up. Some of these files never leave. It's like sludge building up in your car engine without an oil change. One computer that came through a repair shop had 197 thousand-plus 'Temporary Internet Files' (TIF's) on board. These TIF's, along with 'Cookies' and 'Temp' files all tend to slow your computer down. Regular tune-ups will get rid of this excess sludge and help speed up the computer.

Other items standard in tune-ups include 'scan disk,' checking your hard drive for errors and bad sectors and repairing them or marking them 'Bad' so information is not written to them and later lost.

'Defragmenting' your harddrive is also important. Everything you do to your computer, from keystrokes to saving data or installing software, is saved to your hard drive. Your hard drive has a habit of placing this information wherever it finds room, often in between other information. Over time, these files and data become 'fragmented.' By 'defragmenting' your harddrive, all files are moved together to form one continuous stream so that your harddrive doesn't have to spend time looking for your data and, consequently, it runs faster.

Last but not least, check all fans for operation. Especially the Central Processing Unit (CPU) cooling fan. These fans are so quiet you don't notice when they often fail and let your CPU overheat, first slowing it down and finally shutting it down and/or damaging it permanently.

A once-a-year tune-up is fine for most usage.

TPI Action

Redesigned TPI Website to Launch at TPI Midwinter Conference!

Picture a modern website with "click-on" options that any audience will understand; easy-to-find information with clearly written summaries; access to every *Turf News* article ever published; turfgrass research studies; TPI press releases; brochures and much more! Those are just some of the features attendees of the 2006 TPI Midwinter Conference will see when TPI's redesigned website makes its debut in Savannah, GA.

A key element of the expanded website capability is TPI's link with the Turfgrass Information Center (TIC) to the institution's Turfgrass Information File (TGIF) database. TGIF contains more than 100,000 records of the most comprehensive collection of turfgrass educational materials in the world—includes *Turf News* magazine, *Business Management* newsletter, etc. This valuable information resource, otherwise accessible to others for a fee, will be available to TPI members at no charge as the latest member benefit. TPI members will be able to search the TGIF site for *Turf News* articles and turf research by subject, author and more.

Member Survey Results in Warm-Season Vegetative Stock Roundtable in Savannah

Although a recent TPI Seed Quality Survey focused on cool-season turfgrasses, it provided an opportunity for warm-season turf producers to express their interest in vegetative stock as one of the topics at Midwinter Conference's Roundtable. Based on the 88 percent of warm-season turf producers who indicated a positive response, TPI has scheduled a Warm Season-Vegetative Stock roundtable. If you are a warm-season turf producer, be sure to take advantage of this opportunity to exchange ideas with your peers.

To receive additional information on any of these items, contact the TPI Office

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Fax: 847/7649-5678

e-mail: info@TurfGrassSod.org

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

Artificial vs. Natural?

In a 2004 NFLPA Opinion Survey, players were asked, "Do you believe you have had one or more injuries on artificial turf that would not have occurred on grass?" Here are their responses:

Club	Yes	No	N/A
Arizona Cardinals	36.7%	28.6%	34.7
Atlanta Falcons	36.5%	26.9%	36.5
Baltimore Ravens	42.9%	24.5%	32.7
Buffalo Bills	56.1%	12.3%	31.6
Carolina Panthers	31.4%	27.5%	41.2
Chicago Bears	47.2%	11.1%	41.7
Cincinnati Bengals	30.8%	28.8%	40.4
Cleveland Browns	30.5%	25.4%	44.1
Dallas Cowboys	47.6%	16.7%	35.7
Denver Broncos	42.9%	25.7%	31.4
Detroit Lions	27.5%	15.7%	56.9
Green Bay Packers	55.0%	10.0%	35.0
Houston Texans	50.0%	16.7%	33.3
Indianapolis Colts	43.1%	19.0%	37.9
Jacksonville Jaguars	31.0%	23.8%	45.2
Kansas City Chiefs	42.9%	25.0%	32.1
Miami Dolphins	37.8%	27.0%	35.1
Minnesota Vikings	42.3%	38.5%	19.2
New England Patriots	33.9%	28.6%	37.5
New Orleans Saints	58.1%	18.6%	23.3
New York Giants	55.3%	12.8%	31.9
New York Jets	37.0%	26.1%	37.0
Oakland Raiders	48.6%	20.0%	31.4
Philadelphia Eagles	42.9%	14.3%	42.9
Pittsburgh Steelers	34.6%	23.1%	42.3
St. Louis Rams	39.6%	25.0%	35.4
San Diego Chargers	38.6%	13.6%	47.7
San Francisco 49ers	42.2%	15.6%	42.2
Seattle Seahawks	42.9%	32.7%	24.5
Tampa Bay Buccaneers	35.9%	33.3%	30.8
Tennessee Titans	45.7%	30.4%	23.9
Washington Redskins	50.0%	27.5%	22.5
League Totals	41.5%	22.7%	35.74

Business Management

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