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TPI Annual Business Meeting

Wednesday, July 27

11:30 am to 12:30 pm

The 2005 TPI Annual Business Meeting is every member's opportunity to help guide TPI's direction for the coming year and beyond.

In addition to electing new Board of Trustees and Officers, attendees will receive detailed reports of TPI's past year, and new items will be addressed.

Previously limited to Class "A" (turf producer) members, the Board of trustee slate is now open to Class "B" members as well. Every voice counts, so be sure to set aside some time to help guide your association.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Turfgrass Producers International

Roundtable Forum — July 27

Real-Life Idea/Experience Exchange

Are you looking for solutions to business and on-farm challenges? Do you have some good ideas to share with other members, perhaps suggestions for TPI leaders?

The TPI Roundtable Forum is the place to be!

Come to the Grand Ballroom of the Grand Summit Resort at 12:30 pm, Wednesday, July 27 and be prepared to share your ideas and suggestions with peers over a delicious buffet luncheon. You'll find the room filled with discussion tables with seating for 10.

Each table will have an assigned topic of commons interest to turf producers. Hosting every table will be a TPI Board member or staff person whose job is to facilitate the discussion and record specific ideas or recommendations to be presented to the TPI Board for serious consideration.

Even if you don't think you have an idea or suggestion to share, chances are a few comments from other participants will start the mental gears turning. At the least, you'll hear valuable information that you might otherwise have missed.

Here is a list of planned table topics:

- ♦ Study Tour—an open discussion of future tour sites
- ♦ Irrigation—effective use of water
- ♦ Worldwide Turf Issues—what's important to international members
- ♦ Turf Farm Innovations—using automation, GPS and electronics to cut costs
- ♦ Seed Quality—considerations of seed quality guidelines
- ♦ TPI Website—What TPI's website has to offer
- ♦ Hiring a Sales Person—sales staff profitability
- ♦ Family Estate Planning

- ♦ Warm-Season Vegetative Stock—quality
- ♦ TPI Conference and Convention—means for making great meetings even greater
- ♦ Junior Delegates—exclusive session for young people in turfgrass
- ♦ Women in the Turf Business—general idea exchange
- ♦ Ask the Experts—talk with *Turf News* Editor and Editor Advisors
- ♦ Ask the Experts—talk with ITPF Research Advisors
- ♦ Ask the Experts—talk with the event's guest speaker

Be sure to indicate on your Summer Convention registration form whether you plan to attend the Roundtable Forum, in order to help TPI better control space and costs.



Donkey® Forklift to be Auctioned at TPI Summer Convention



Bring your checkbook and be prepared to bid on the 3,000-lb capacity Donkey forklift donated by Quality Corporation to help raise ITPF research funds. The live auction will take place between 12:00 noon and 1:00 pm at Biograss® Sod Farm during the Field Day lunch break. A special thanks to Quality Corporation for this great contribution and support of ITPF.



Taking Care of Business

By Jim Stovall
Narrative Television Network
JimStovall@aol.com

Good Judgment for Entrepreneurs

As entrepreneurs, particularly in the beginning of a venture, we have to manage the most valuable asset we have. For most start-up entrepreneurial enterprises, the most valuable asset is you. Your time, effort, energy and talent are what turns a great idea into a great business. Too often, we get caught working harder, not smarter.

We are all faced with the continuing struggle between working smart and working hard. Those who simply work hard, instead of smart, confuse activity with productivity. Just because you are moving quickly does not necessarily mean you are getting closer to your goal. There are times when a pause for recreation, reflection and renewal are the fastest ways to move ahead.

Judge Brandeis served on the Supreme Court for several decades early in the 20th Century. He had a very distinguished judicial career; however, there was a time when he was strongly criticized for taking a vacation just before an extremely difficult and complex case that was to be reviewed by the Supreme Court.

Judge Brandeis' response to the criticism was, "I have found a way to successfully complete 12 months of work in 11. I have never found a way to successfully complete 12 months of work in 12." This is a reminder to all of us that time to pause and recharge our batteries may be the fastest way to get ahead.

If you were to enter a coast-to-coast road race, you would find the fastest way to get to the finish line involves stopping periodically for regular or preventive maintenance. Drivers who fail to take a pit-stop are in much greater danger of burning out an engine and losing the race through default and not poor performance.

Studies have shown the most effective countries with regard to productivity are not necessarily the ones with the longest or most grueling workweek. This is often overlooked in many organizations. We understand this with respect to maintaining and caring for our

equipment.

Always remember the most effective element that will lead you toward your personal and professional success is your ability to perform at your highest level. This is only possible when you maintain and care for your mind, body, spirit and attitude.

As you go through your day today, remember Judge Brandeis and his admonition to all of us. Winning the race is quite often a function of caring for yourself well enough so you can cross the finish line.

Today's the day!

Action Steps for Entrepreneurs

1— List the things you are uniquely qualified to do in your business. Focus on those things. If someone else can be doing it, they should be doing it.

2— Schedule your time off just like you schedule important appointments. As an entrepreneur, if you wait on your vacation until things are not busy, you may die behind your desk, having never left the office.

3— Take mid-morning and mid-afternoon breaks. For 10 minutes, sit and reflect, listen to enjoyable music or go for a brief walk. You'll get more done and feel better about your day.

4— Make your friends and family a priority. If people in corporate America can make it to softball games, school plays and scouting events, those of us who work for ourselves should be able to as well. One of the reasons you went into business for yourself was to enjoy some freedom. If you don't exercise freedom, you might as well not have it.

5— Try to work your schedule around tasks, not time. Look at your business day objectively and determine the most important things to get done. When you've got those things done, you are done—at least for the day. If you don't control your business, it will surely control you.

Being in business for yourself is among the most compelling parts of the Great American Dream. Entrepreneurship can give you freedom, creativity and

an unlimited income. However, unless you take control of your ship, you will find yourself working long hours for little or no money with little time to enjoy very few of the good things in life. Make sure that your business works for you as hard as you work for it. Success and money cannot buy the good things of life, but they can get everything else out of the way so you can enjoy them.

(*About the author:* Jim Stovall has enjoyed success as an author, athlete, investment broker and entrepreneur while dealing with the challenge of his own blindness. President of Narrative Television Network, he has authored and published many books including *The Ultimate Gift*. He was honored as the 2000 International Humanitarian of the Year, joining Jimmy Carter, Nancy Reagan and Mother Teresa. He is also a columnist and motivational speaker.)



Questions to Aid Delegation

Answering these questions will help you separate the jobs you should keep for yourself from those you can hand off to employees:

What do I do?—List all of the tasks and duties that are your responsibility. You can do this by the day, week or month.

Does everything I've listed require my personal attention?—To answer this, ask these questions about each item: What skills are needed? Is this a confidential matter that only I should deal with? Am I the only one with the information needed to do the job? Is this a task that I as owner/manager would prefer to take care of?

Which of the responsibilities on my list can my employees handle?

Would it be worth the time it would take to train employees to tackle some of the items on my list?

(*Note:* In most cases, the time it takes to train employees to do some of your tasks will pay off many times.



Marketing Tip

By Coach Karl Ruegg
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The Top 10 Marketing Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

No matter how successful you are, you've got to start over marketing with every new customer. And regardless of how well you know your stuff, you're still vulnerable to the same mistakes.

That's why I've compiled the following most common marketing mistakes that waste time, money and ultimately customers. Review these errors with an eye toward side-stepping any one of them when you see it coming.

1- Assuming you don't need to market yourself. No matter how big or successful you become, you'll always need to make sure your customers (current and potential) know who you are and what you can do for them. Coca-Cola, an example of one of the best-known brand names, continues to market itself aggressively every day.

2- Focusing on your image instead of your identity. The best way to stand out in the crowded market place is to differentiate your organization from all others. It's easier and more cost-effective to do this by concentrating on how you can really help the customer instead of building an image that's only distantly related to your product or service. Customers appreciate openness and sincerity more than contrived images.

3- Under valuing your product. Customers won't value what you have to offer if you don't value it yourself. Set fair prices but don't give too much away in the name of competitiveness.

4- Not measuring the effectiveness of your marketing efforts. You constantly have to evaluate whether you're earning enough on your marketing investment. Set goals and track your progress in terms of sales per thousand brochures, hundred call, or whatever measure seems appropriate.

5- Providing insufficient information. Conventional wisdom insists that prospects won't read lengthy marketing text. So, put the crucial "five W's" (who, where, what, why, when) of your message in your opening statement.

Although the majority of readers give up after the first 50 words, you can still give the customer all of the information he or she needs to make a decision.

6- Changing strategies too hastily. Don't be in a hurry to switch your marketing campaign's message or media because they seem old to you. Key marketing messages need to be repeated often in order to make an impact on the customer's consciousness.

7- Relying too heavily on referrals. Depending on referrals for new business limits your options. Design a marketing program that targets potential customers and gives them the opportunity to contact you directly. Otherwise you'll be at the mercy of whoever has the ability to refer customers to your company.

8- Failing to position your company as a leader in the market. Being seen as a leader in your industry gives you a distinct advantage over the competition. Identify a niche where your organization can truthfully label itself the best. If you can't find a niche, create one. Then let your role as an industry leader be a powerful factor in your marketing campaigns.

9- Keeping your marketing materials to yourself. Many companies spend big money on brochures and other marketing materials they keep in the office to hand out to walk-in prospects. Develop a marketing packet of company data to send out to people who call your office. Offer a booklet of useful information in your advertising and whenever you're interviewed for TV, radio, or the newspaper.

10- Not maintaining a mailing list. Establish a mailing list of past customers, prospects, people who have referred prospects and customers, and other important business contacts. Be sure to communicate with these people at least quarterly. A simple one- or two-page newsletter with a few bits of useful information will keep your name at the top of people's minds.

Shrewder Computing

Increase Sales, Advertise On-Line

Because consumers have grown more comfortable with shopping on-line, advertising on the internet could be an effective means to reach the core group of consumers most interested in your products and services. Here's how it works: Each time your ad appears on a website, it's called an impression. On-line advertising success is measured by the number of times customers click on your ad per every 1,000 impressions (the number of times an ad appears on a website). Most agencies charge for a pre-set number of click-throughs.

For years, banner ads remained standard and identical and eventually their click-through rates plummeted. As a result, on-line advertising agencies have begun experimenting with new kinds of ads that attract attention.

Sidebar Ads stress the vertical over horizontal dimension of an advertisement. Not only do they defy conventional expectations, but they also run beside news articles as opposed to above or below content, increasing the odds that more internet users will click-through.

Pop-Up Ads open a new window in front of the web page you are attempting to visit. Dreaded by internet users everywhere, pop-ups have proven effective at generating business. These costly ads force readers to at least momentarily review the ad. Tech-savvy web surfers have begun using programs to block these pop-up ads.

Keyword Ads are short text ads that are displayed only when certain key words are entered. This increases the chances that businesses will likely attract people already interested in their products.

Larger sites such as Yahoo or Google have their own ad reps you can contact. (Source: the uschamber.com newsletter)



TPI Action

TPI Office Relocates—New Phone, Fax, Address

After making every effort to minimize communication interruptions during our move, the TPI staff is settling into the new office facility in East Dundee, IL. Be sure to update your records with TPI's new address, phone and fax numbers. The Board of Trustees' decision to purchase a building ended years of paying rent. **Turfgrass Producers International, 2 East Main St., East Dundee, IL 60118, Tel: 800/405-8873 or 847 469-5555, Fax: 847/649-5678.**

TPI/Proj. EverGreen/Habitat for Humanity Team Up

Through TPI's involvement with Project EverGreen, a Habitat for Humanity project in the St. Paul, MN area resulted in four TPI member farms committing to collectively provide 12,000 sq. ft. of sod for one duplex and four single family homes. According to Project EverGreen Executive Director Den Gardner, "The purpose of this pilot project is to show consumers the importance of a well-maintained landscape with sod." Central Turf Farms, Jirik Sod Farms, B&B Hoffman Sod Farm and Blue Valley Sod, Inc. are the farms who agreed to donate the sod.

Gardner added, "The Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity chapter is the 5th largest in the U.S. and the only chapter involved in multiple-dwelling homes. Based on the expected success of this project, we plan to expand to other areas of the country."

TPI Media Coverage Nears 40 Million Impressions!

During the past 12-month period, TPI's public relations (PR) efforts have generated a new record high of over 40 million impressions. These impressions are based on the audited numbers of individuals in the audiences reached by newspapers, trade and consumer magazines, TV and radio throughout the U.S.

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

Tel: 800/405-8873 or 847/649-5555

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, "Which surface do you think is more likely to shorten your career?" Here are their responses:

Club	Real Grass	Artificial Turf	Neither
Arizona Cardinals	0.0%	87.8%	12.2%
Atlanta Falcons	0.0%	82.4%	17.6%
Baltimore Ravens	0.0%	83.0%	17.0%
Buffalo Bills	1.8%	89.3%	8.9%
Carolina Panthers	0.0%	86.3%	13.7%
Chicago Bears	0.0%	88.9%	11.1%
Cincinnati Bengals	2.0%	72.0%	26.0%
Cleveland Browns	0.0%	79.7%	20.3%
Dallas Cowboys	0.0%	82.5%	17.5%
Denver Broncos	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%
Detroit Lions	0.0%	80.4%	19.6%
Green Bay Packers	0.0%	89.7%	10.3%
Houston Texans	0.0%	96.2%	3.8%
Indianapolis Colts	0.0%	89.7%	10.3%
Jacksonville Jaguars	0.0%	92.5%	7.5%
Kansas City Chiefs	0.0%	92.9%	7.1%
Miami Dolphins	0.0%	92.1%	7.9%
Minnesota Vikings	3.8%	78.8%	17.3%
New England Patriots	1.8%	91.1%	7.1%
New Orleans Saints	0.0%	88.4%	11.6%
New York Giants	0.0%	76.1%	23.9%
New York Jets	0.0%	84.4%	15.6%
Oakland Raiders	0.0%	82.9%	17.1%
Philadelphia Eagles	0.0%	87.8%	12.2%
Pittsburgh Steelers	1.9%	84.6%	13.5%
St. Louis Rams	2.1%	83.3%	14.6%
San Diego Chargers	0.0%	93.2%	6.8%
San Francisco 49ers	0.0%	86.7%	13.3%
Seattle Seahawks	0.0%	83.7%	16.3%
Tampa Bay Buccaneers	2.6%	84.6%	12.8%
Tennessee Titans	2.1%	87.2%	10.6%
Washington Redskins	0.0%	90.0%	10.0%

Business Management

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