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Gempler's ALERT Newsletter Goes On-Line

Beginning with the October 2005 issue of Gempler's ALERT newsletter, members will be able to access it on-line at the "Members Only" section of the TPI website www.TurfgrassSod.org. Each issue of the newsletter ALERT is scheduled for members to download and print by the second week of each month.

Gempler's ALERT, originally available only to U.S. and Canadian turf producer members, will now be available to any dues-paying TPI member worldwide. If you have any questions, contact Terri at the TPI office at tberkowitz@TurfGrassSod.org

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Turfgrass Producers International

February 14-18, 2006

Service with a Smile in Savannah

What could be a more appropriate theme for the 2006 TPI Midwinter Conference than one that reflects its venue of historical southern charm: *Service with a Smile in Savannah*. Complete Conference information, including hotel and registration forms, should arrive in your mailbox soon. It also will be posted in the "Events" section of the TPI website www.TurfGrassSod.org. Take advantage of the early registration discount (December 15, 2005) and reserve your place at this year's event.

Focus of the TPI Midwinter Conference is on education. The first session for attendees who arrive in time for Wednesday's Pre-Conference seminar is entitled "The Art of Bringing the Customers Back," by Richard Flint, author of 11 books, counselor and talk-show participant.

The General Education sessions begin with the highly informative "Show and Tell" presentations in which three turf producers from different countries describe their operations. Using a PowerPoint program to show their farms, equipment, staff and family, these individuals will describe in detail how they operate their turf farms. From these presentations, attendees always learn something new and useful that they can take home and apply immediately to increase efficiency, or save time and money.

The second General Education session will feature presentations by several turfgrass extension specialists. This session is the result of a meeting earlier this year when the TPI PR Working Group met with extension specialists. All participants agreed on the value of increasing two-way communications and working more closely together to more effectively educate the general public as well as

each other.

An always informative event is the Roundtable Forum from which numerous ideas have developed. If you feel strongly about a particular topic, want to share your ideas or just sit in and listen to the conversations, this is the place to be. Each roundtable features a different topic of interest from which members can choose. When you arrive, just fill your plate, select a table and join in the conversation. A TPI Board or staff member will be at each table to take notes and to facilitate the information exchange. Afterwards, the Board will review all comments from roundtables. Many TPI benefits and programs are underway as a result of these comments.

Attendees will find more live information during the JCB factory tour with dinner. There will even be entertainment by the Dancing Diggers!

This year's ITPF Banquet will be held conveniently in the host hotel, Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa. Visit the TPI website frequently as more information is made available. Attendees can expect great great food and entertainment, and maybe even a surprise or two! Presentation of the annual TPI Awards and Honors is always a highlight of this event.



TPI Honors & Award Nominations Due Soon

November 1st is the deadline for TPI to receive your nominations for the various TPI Awards and Honors. If you know of a deserving individual, now is the time to complete the nomination form and fax it to the TPI office at 847/6495678, right away. You will find the TPI Award Nomination Form on the "Members Only" section of the TPI website.

Communicate Confidently in Any Situation

We've all seen powerful communicators who are able to bring conflicting factions together on a common course, who can win over customers and bring in contracts, and who can add pride and teamwork to a lethargic or disgruntled workforce. What characteristic do these people have in common? "Confidence," especially pertaining to communications.

If you want to further your career and business and improve many personal aspects of your life, you must continually improve your communications skills. Put aside past communication blunders and take communication tips from the master himself: William Shakespeare. Here's what he suggests:

Get into a positive state of mind—"For 'tis the mind that makes the body rich." (Petruchio—*Taming of the Shrew*)

Anxiety is usually self-generated. As your brain sends negative thoughts and raises a host of "what if's," your body responds physically with sweaty palms, stomach butterflies and stuttering speech. To counter this, ask yourself, "What's the worst that could happen?" Usually it's less than what your mind has foretold, so focus, instead, on the good that will come out of the communications—increased recognition or the ability to help a customer solve a problem.

Review your basic personal values—Which of these descriptions is closer to how others perceive you—"In thy face, I see the map of honor, truth, and loyalty." (*Henry VI speaking, Part 2*)

OR

"How tartly that gentleman looks! I never can see him but I am heart burned an hour after." (*Beatrice, Much Ado About Nothing*)

Regardless of your communications skills, if your ethics are questionable, others will size you up immediately as an unpleasant phony, someone to avoid. Know what you stand for and live by those values in all that you say and do.

Check your image—"He came ever in the rearward of the fashion." (*Henry IV, Part 2*)

Your appearance is the first impression people have of you and they will size you up, based on your appearance. Rarely will they give you a second chance to alter that perception. Resolve to make your first impression positive.

Develop some warmth—"Loosen up
"Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort as if he mock'd himself." (*Julius Caesar*)

People generally respond well to an honest smile. If you lack friendliness and don't seem to really care about others, they are likely to avoid you. On the other hand, a friendly smile encourages friendship and cooperation.

Put brain in gear before mouth—"Weigh'st thy words before thou givest them breath." (*Othello*)

Have you ever made some rash statement that later came back to haunt you? Before speaking on a topic of some concern and possible risk, pause and review in your mind what you are going to say about it. If you your words come out wrong, try to rectify it immediately by making a clarification, not an apology.

Work on your language skills—"Tis but a peevish boy; yet he talks well; But what care I for words? Yet words do well when he that speaks them pleases those that hear." (*As You Like It*)

Being able to use language well adds to your credibility and encourages others to listen to what you have to say. Saying "uh," "um" and "ya' know" causes people not to listen, to interrupt and to downgrade your ability. Try Toastmaster's Club or practice with colleagues and friends.

Watch your body language—"Tell me where is fancy bred, Or in the heart, or in the head? How begot, how nourished? Reply, reply. It is engendered in the eyes." (*Merchant of Venice*)

Body language often has more of an impact on people than their spoken word. Looking people in the eye, standing up straight, and using physical animation help to build credibility when speaking. If your words and body actions don't match, you send signals that you're insin-

cere and not credible. Be certain your body language matches your message.

Be a good listener as well as talker—"I cried 'Hum', and 'Well, go to!' But marked him not a word. O, he is as tedious as a tired horse, a railing wife, worse than a smoky house." (*Henry IV, Part 1*)

Many people are guilty of over-blabbing. They drone on and on, never realizing that, listening is sometimes more important than talking. To lead the communication, ask one or two astute questions and then shut up so the other person can talk and then you can share information that benefits you both.

Take care of the details, such as hygiene and manners—"And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath." (*Midsummer Night's Dream*)

Before you speak, be certain that bad breath, unkempt hair, floppy hose or a gurgling stomach will not distract your listeners. Show others consideration and respect. When you pay attention to manners and hygiene, you greatly increase the chances of people listening to you.

Try it out in advance—"Come, sit down, every mother's son and rehearse your parts." (*Midsummer Night's Dream*)

Many people down play the value of practice. In the real world, the winning communicators are the political candidates who simulate debates ahead of the real thing, attorneys who conduct mock trials, and presentation teams who practice going after big money.

Get moving—"Up, princes! and, with spirit of honor edged. More sharper than your swords, hie to the field." (*Henry V*)

When "show-time" arrives, breathe deeply, put yourself in a positive mindset and meet with that customer ready to engage, enjoy and advance. When opportunities arise, the high achievers use their communications skills to stand out and make themselves known in the most positive way.

Marketing Tip

By Tom Reilly
Tom Reilly Training
www.TomReillyTraining.com

Danger in the Comfort Zone

A comfort zone happens when we let routines become "rut-tines." We stop doing all of those things that make life fun, interesting and challenging. We're not growing at the rate we once grew; we may not be growing at all—stagnating. It's estimated that one in four salespeople at any given time is in a comfort zone. I believe that number is low.

There is a difference between reaching, with an occasional rest stop, and being permanently at rest in a parking zone. It's the same difference between striving versus surviving, pursuing versus responding, growing versus maintaining and pro-acting versus reacting. When we are in the pursuit mode for an extended length of time, we tire and need a rest. And that's okay; you just don't want to become Rip Van Winkle. If you're tired and need a break to relax and energize, that's a good thing. On the other hand, if you've decided to coast, remember that coasting is only one way—downhill!

One of life's stark realities is that regardless of what we do, life goes on. We cannot stop the world; we can only try to slow down our world. If you coast, the world will continue to spin on its axis, your competition will continue to

chip away at your business, and you will fall progressively farther behind on a daily basis.

Think back to a time when life was exciting and your work rewarding. You were learning, generating new ideas, trying to carve out a place for yourself in the world—chasing your dreams. Your dreams in those days were big enough to make your bones itch. You got up in the morning without the assistance of your alarm clock. You may have had trouble sleeping the night before because you were so excited about the next day. Chasing your dream was more fun than the actual event. What happened?

Instead of settling in, you just settled for less. You stopped reading, studying and growing. You let the fun slip away. You fought the natural human drive to evolve. Within each of us is the desire to grow, to develop, to evolve and to become more of that raw material that we brought into the world with us. Life itself is the expression of optimism: All living creatures naturally strive to become more of what they were born with. Among all living things, only humans make a conscious decision to stop growing.

None of us set out to be mediocre; we just accept it along our journey. Can you stand to be mediocre or would you like to shine your light on the world? No one has a monopoly on potential; each of us carries our own around with us. Some very smart people believe the roots of disappointment and guilt lie in our failure to pursue our potential. We begin to chase our potential when we use the most powerful part of our bodies: our minds. When we begin again to dream of possibilities and new ways to solve old problems and when we fuel ourselves with knowledge that comes only from professional study, then we begin to feel the blood racing through our veins, letting us know that we are once again actively engaged in life. We have blasted out of our comfort zones and are reaching for new heights.



Shrewder Computing

How NOT To Be A Millionaire!

If I sent an e-mail asking you to help me transfer \$25 million out of the country and all you had to do was send your Social Security number, blank company letterhead and your bank account and pin number, would you respond?

Thousands of such e-mails land in in-boxes daily. Known as "The Nigerian Letter Scam," or "section 419s" for the section of the Nigerian penal code that deals with fraud, these e-mails share common characteristics: the sender claims to be a government, bank official, attorney or related to some such individual. Some e-mails, in an attempt at legitimacy, mention the contact information was obtained from a reputable-sounding business organization that actually doesn't exist. And they ask for your help in moving large amounts of money out of a country in exchange for a significant percentage.

Unfortunately, some people respond to these requests and lose thousands of dollars in the process. According to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), most people are too embarrassed to report they've fallen prey to the attack. Roughly 15,000 of all on-line complaints sent to the FTC last year were Section 419s. However, the FTC stresses that the scam is not limited to Nigeria; it's global as are its victims.

The Internet Fraud Complaint Center recommends these steps: Be skeptical and do not believe these promise of large sums of money in exchange for your cooperation.

Send a copy of the e-mail to the following:

uce@ftc.gov (FTC)

419.fcd@ussf.treas.gov (Secret Service)

Both agencies recommend not responding to the senders.

A Humorous Comparison of U.S. Gas Prices

Compared with Gasoline.....

Lipton Ice Tea: 16-oz. @ \$1.19 = \$9.52/gal.
Ocean Spray: 16-oz. @ \$1.25 = \$10.00/gal.
Gatorade: 20-oz. @ \$1.59 = \$10.17/gal.
Diet Snapple: 16-oz. @ \$1.29 = \$10.32/gal.
Whiteout: 7-oz. @ \$1.39 = \$25.42/gal.
Brake Fluid: 12-oz. @ \$3.15 = \$33.60/gal.
Scope : 2.5-oz. @ \$0.99 = \$84.48/gal.
Pepto Bismol: 4-oz. @ \$3.85 = \$123.20/gal.
Vick's Nyquil: 6-oz @ \$8.35 = \$178.13/gal.
Evian water: 9-oz. @ \$1.49 = \$21.19/gal.
(buyers don't even know the source or stop to think that "Evian" spelled backwards is "Naïve"!)

So, the next time you're at the gas pump, be glad your car doesn't run on water, Scope, Whiteout or—horror of all horrors—Pepto Bismol or Nyquil.

TPI Action

Turfgrass Sod to be Defined in Specialty Crop Legislation

TPI is working with U.S. federal legislators to define turfgrass sod as a "specialty crop" in upcoming legislation, including the 2007 Farm Bill. Successful efforts will open the door for state turfgrass associations to more effectively pursue the annual specialty crop marketing funds allocated to individual states by the federal government.

While turfgrass sod often is considered a specialty crop, without explicit statutory definitional language or guidance in the past, the USDA has not known how to treat turfgrass when implementing legislation. The consequence occasionally has been the exclusion of turfgrass because the USDA relied on traditional agricultural definitions of "food and fiber" within which turfgrass sod and nursery crops "do not fit." To overcome this ambiguity on federal public policy issues, in the past TPI has sought successfully to explicitly include turfgrass sod within legislation affecting our industry.

Turfgrass Industry Economic Overview to be Published in *Turf News*

After sifting through a volume of statistical information from government and non-government surveys, TPI will be publishing a two-page "Turfgrass Industry Economic Overview" in the next issue of *Turf News* magazine. It might surprise some individuals to discover that the turfgrass and the green industry are a \$100 billion industry! The value of having this information available is in responding to questions from the general news media, government, research scientists and various businesses.

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, "What surface do you think is more likely to affect your quality of life after football?" Here are their responses:

Club	Real Grass	Artificial Turf
Arizona Cardinals	4.1%	85.7%
Atlanta Falcons	0.0%	90.4%
Baltimore Ravens	8.2%	77.6%
Buffalo Bills	3.5%	91.2%
Carolina Panthers	2.0%	92.2%
Chicago Bears	2.8%	91.7%
Cincinnati Bengals	1.9%	80.8%
Cleveland Browns	0.0%	93.2%
Dallas Cowboys	2.4%	78.0%
Denver Broncos	5.7%	91.4%
Detroit Lions	7.8%	80.4%
Green Bay Packers	0.0%	90.0%
Houston Texans	5.8%	90.4%
Indianapolis Colts	1.8%	87.7%
Jacksonville Jaguars	0.0%	97.6%
Kansas City Chiefs	3.6%	82.1%
Miami Dolphins	0.0%	91.9%
Minnesota Vikings	3.8%	76.9%
New England Patriots	3.6%	83.9%
New Orleans Saints	2.3%	83.7%
New York Giants	2.1%	91.5%
New York Jets	0.0%	82.2%
Oakland Raiders	0.0%	97.1%
Philadelphia Eagles	0.0%	85.7%
Pittsburgh Steelers	2.0%	84.3%
St. Louis Rams	4.2%	89.6%
San Diego Chargers	4.5%	88.6%
San Francisco 49ers	0.0%	86.7%
Seattle Seahawks	0.0%	88.0%
Tampa Bay Buccaneers	2.6%	92.1%
Tennessee Titans	8.0%	91.3%
Washington Redskins	5.0%	90.0%
League Totals	2.79%	87.3%

Business Management

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