

Aug./Sept. 2006



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Turfgrass Producers International

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Labor Reform Update

U.S. House to Hold "Field Hearings"

Working closely with the National Council of Agricultural Employers (NCAE), TPI presents the following labor reform update excerpted from a memo by NCAE Executive Vice President Sharon Hughes, CAE. TPI joins NCAE's call for active member involvement to help our government leaders to resolve this important issue.

Growers and agricultural employers across the U.S. banded together during the recent fight over immigration in the Senate. As a result, the Senate rejected several "poison pill" amendments and passed a comprehensive immigration reform bill that includes AgJOBS; however, the House has decided to hold a series of "field hearings" on the Senate legislation designed to slow and kill comprehensive reform. Since the passage of the Senate bill, anti-reform groups have sent hundreds of thousands of letters and e-mails (and bricks to build a wall) to the Representatives' offices. Our agricultural industry has not voiced its needs as vocally or persistently. Simply put, we have been out-shouted.

The only way to combat the threat to our industry is to speak directly to the decision makers. We need you to help spread the message that agriculture needs comprehensive reform. Call your local Representative and set up a face-to-face meeting between him or her and as many local growers as you can find. Representatives are only hearing one side, and to prevent our voice from being lost, it's important members contact them right away.

Contact information for Congressional district offices can be found in the Legislative Action Center at www.NCAEonline.org. If you need any information, contact the NCAE office in Washington, DC, and the staff will be

happy to give you any help you need with scheduling meetings, providing information packets, and helping you convey to your congressman the truth: the future of American agriculture is at stake. It's time for a solution, and the solution for agriculture is comprehensive reform.

Contacting Your Representative

Go to <http://capwiz.com/ncae/home/> where you will find the NCAE Legislative Action center and NCAE's most recent alerts. Enter your zip code, and you will be given the contact information for your Representative's district offices.

American agriculture urgently needs Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform legislation that includes specific provisions for agriculture. S.2611, the Specter-Hagel-Martinez bill, contains the bipartisan provisions of AgJOBS.



2007 TPI Midwinter Conference & TPA Field Day—February 5-9

Monday, February 5
Tree-Top Walk, Albert River Winery, Turf Force Farm Tour

Tuesday, February 6
Brisbane River Cruise, Australia Zoo, Twin View Turf Tour

Wednesday, February 7
Exhibits Session #1, Women's Forum Tea, Exhibits Session #2

Thursday, February 8
General Education Session #1, Roundtable Forum, General Education Session #2, ITPF Banquet

Friday February 9
TPA Field Day

Avoid Loss of Member Benefits (Renew by September 1)

If you haven't already renewed your TPI membership, be sure to do so by September 1, 2006 to be included in the TPI website and printed *TPI Membership Directory* and to continue receiving *Turf News*, *Business Management* newsletter and a wide range of member communications and notices of events.

If your renewal notice has been misplaced, or even if you're not sure whether you renewed your membership, contact the TPI office right away and a helpful staff member will assist you.

When Your Family's the Boss . . .

The majority of family-owned businesses don't survive past the second generation although succeeding generations have every intention of keeping the business going. Factors ranging from the lack of estate planning to dissension among family members can cause the business to close its doors. The more stress a business has, the slimmer its chance for survival.

Stress of Family and Business

When you work for a non-family member business, it's easy to separate work time from personal time. However, when you're part of a family-owned business, having a distinct business role isn't always easy. Even though you're perfectly qualified to take on "adult" business responsibilities, the senior or controlling generation that saw you grow up might have a difficult time transcending their previous memories of you as a child. This often adds stress to the junior generation workers who over compensate in order to prove themselves.

Other family business stress factors could be gaining respect from non-family employees, dealing with sibling or cousin rivalry, wanting to change the business but not being able to, and working with non-family employees who try to sabotage the junior generation's success for their own personal gain.

We also need to realize that life for the senior generation isn't always stress-free either. While they're in control and may appear to "have it all," their stresses come from dealing with tough issues like estate and succession planning. Rather than create tension among family members, the senior generation often agonizes over the decision and delays as long as possible. They need to have the right plans in place to avoid potentially heavy estate taxes that often force heirs to sell the business in order to pay the taxes.

The Stress-Free Family Business

While the phrase "stress-free family business" may sound like an oxymoron, it's actually something you can achieve. The trick is to tackle the stress from both a business and a personal perspective. Following are the four ways to reduce and possibly eliminate the stress from any family-owned business succession.

Business Perspective

1— Schedule quarterly family business meetings—These meetings should take place off-site and only focus on the big business issues related to the family. The main topics should relate to estate planning, succession planning and role planning (excluding any day-to-day operation issues) with time for all family members to air their concerns about the business' future and leadership. Because these meetings can become "heated," you might want to consider having an outside moderator present.

2— Hire an Outside Board of Directors—Although most family-owned businesses don't have an outside board of directors, they can be a good source for new values, new insights and objectivity.

Personal Perspective

3— Simplify Your Life—The biggest challenge to family business members is

to maintain separation between their business and personal lives to avoid imbalance which could lead to emotional burn-out. To avoid that type of stress, you need to simplify your life by focusing on leaving your work life at work and your family life at home. It's called "compartmentalizing." Another simplification tactic is delegation which means to set up your support system and determining which tasks others can better accomplish. This allows you to focus on your top priorities and responsibilities instead of non-essential tasks and can greatly reduce your stress level.

4— Learn to Say No—When your family business demands more than you can give, remember you can say "No," gracefully and respectfully. If your dad (who's also your boss) asks you to take on a new project you can't handle with your current responsibilities, help him to understand your workload. Ask him to help prioritize what you should be doing and you'll feel your stress level decline.

By taking time for yourself and keeping your perspectives in order, you can survive the stresses that come with the territory. When you do, you'll enjoy all the rewards a family business has to offer.



IRS Drops Enforcement of Long-Distance Excise Tax

In May 2006, the IRS announced that it will no longer pursue litigation related to the excise tax on long-distance telephone service (also known as the *Spanish-American War Tax*). As a result, the telephone companies have been directed to cease collecting and paying the tax on services billed after July 31, 2006. Additionally, the telephone companies are no longer required to report those who refuse to pay the tax on services billed after May 25, 2006.

This action is being taken after several Federal Appeals Courts ruled the tax was no longer valid. Consequently, taxpayers will be able to claim refunds, on their 2006 tax return, for taxes billed for long distance service for the period February 28, 2003 to August 1, 2006. The refund amount will include interest.

The IRS is developing a simple method for claiming the refund. For Schedule "C" filers, the IRS is developing a standard amount for the refund. Small businesses that do not file a Schedule "C" will not be eligible for the standard refund. Businesses that are permitted to take the standard refund amount will not be required to produce records. Others will likely be required to produce some records. Excise taxes paid on local telephone service will not be included in the refund; however, the IRS has requested that Congress repeal the tax paid on local service. To learn more about the refund, visit www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/n-06-50.pdf.

Marketing Tip

By T. Scott Gross
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What Builds Loyalty?

Loyalty is defined as: *Resistance to change*. It is better than customer satisfaction because research shows that satisfied customers are not necessarily loyal customers.

According to Thomas Jones and Earl Sasser in a 1995 issue of the *Harvard Business Review*, "Any drop from total satisfaction results in a major drop in loyalty." They were introducing the idea that there is a difference between being completely satisfied and merely satisfied.

Looked at in reverse, customers who are completely satisfied are much more likely to repurchase than customers who are simply satisfied. As there are degrees of satisfaction, so are there degrees of loyalty and they vary geometrically not arithmetically. (Little changes in satisfaction make for huge changes in loyalty.).

Loyalty is a major indicator of share-of-customer. This means that loyal customers give you a larger percentage of their business. Share-of-customer is important because in a highly competitive world where everyone is fighting for new customers, you can increase sales simply by doing more business with the customers you already have.

Make your customers feel so good they come back twice as often, and you can double frequency and probably sales without adding a single new face.

Satisfying customers is not enough. They must be completely satisfied, wowed or delighted. Any customer who is *merely* satisfied is fair game for your competition. Any customer who is *only* satisfied may have reasons for not being completely satisfied. If you can discover the reasons why the customers of your competitors are not completely satisfied, you have the key to a quick gain in market share.

If you can discover what is keeping your customers from being completely satisfied, you have the key to increased customer loyalty and possibly increased share of customer.

How do you find out? Ask! Here are some questions you can ask:

- ▲ Do you intend to purchase again soon? Why or why not? Where else do you buy from? Why?
- ▲ How likely are you to recommend us? Why or why not?
- ▲ What influenced your decision to purchase from us? What about buying from the other guy?

Here we are in the lightning round of creating a powerful, personal brand, and it's time for a story. My good friend John loves his wife Trish just about as much as I love my wife Buns. My guess is that John and his wife will be married forever and then some. He and I were trying to figure out what this thing called love is.

They say that love is blind. Maybe so. It's not all that different from products that have moved from "trademark" to "lovemark."

John and I figured that when you love someone, you love the entire package. Things we find endearing about our spouses would be downright irritating in someone else. Ain't love "brand?"

Why does your lover love you? What is the reason for hanging around? Don't know? Better ask!

There are many factors that influence customer loyalty; the goal is to create an "I can't get this anywhere else" feeling. Here are just a few factors to focus on:

- ▲ Product Excellence
- ▲ Product Leadership
- ▲ Operational Excellence
- ▲ Other Customers
- ▲ Cause
- ▲ Government Regulations
- ▲ Choice-Selection
- ▲ Individual Employees
- ▲ Value Through Knowledge
- ▲ Exclusivity
- ▲ Price
- ▲ Customer Intimacy



Shrewder Computing

Your Word.doc Could Reveal Embarrassing Information

A very important Microsoft Word document was received at the TPI office via e-mail. The staff member who received and opened the document had been tracking changes to a Word document he was working on. Consequently, his Word system opened the new file to reveal the sender's original document, changes, comments and the authors of those changes and comments. Fortunately, all comments were professional and a phone call to the sender turned into a lesson on how to send only the intended final document.

To avoid a similar situation, possibly embarrassment, here are some actions you can take:

- ▲ On the screen's bottom taskbar, if the letters "TRK" appear, your changes are being recorded, along with your PC licensor's name; to turn the tracking off, click on "Tools" and then "Track Changes" (the "TRK" should disappear)
- ▲ Not shown is whether your Word document's "Fast Save" command is enabled; if so, your changes are being tracked. To unenable the "Fast Save," click on "Tools" and select "Options"; then click on the "Save" tab and make sure the "allow fast saves" box is not checked—if it is, click on it to remove the check.
- ▲ By clicking on "File" and selecting "Properties," recipients can find your firm's name and other information you might not want public. To remove that information, click on "Tools" and select "Options" and then click on the "Security" tab. Make sure the "Remove personal information from the file on save" is checked. However, that affects only that file and you will need to change the Word default to have all future files changed.

TPI Action

September 29, 2006 is a Very Important Date!

TPI offers this final reminder that September 29th is the cut-off date for members to:

- ▲ Take advantage of the Early Bird Registration Discount for 2007 TPI Midwinter Conference
- ▲ Schedule airfares for TPI Conference Airfare through Ultimate Travel Adventures
- ▲ Book the TPI Study Tour New Zealand and/or Australia (through Ultimate Travel Adventures)—unless sold out earlier.

Bylaws Amendment Passes

By unanimous vote at the recent TPI Annual Business Meeting, TPI's bylaws (Article V and Article VI) were amended to improve the Nominating Committee process by:

- ▲ Making the Nominating Committee a five-person committee
- ▲ Adding one additional "at large" member selected by the Past President's Council
- ▲ The Member at-large appointment (one by the President and one by the Past President's Council) must be from the general membership and must not be a past or present Board member and shall not be a current nominee candidate.

First ITPF Dr. Henry W. Indyke Scholarship Winners Named

During the Field Day break, the first-ever ITPF Dr. Henry W. Indyke Scholarships were presented! From nine highly qualified applications submitted, two students were chosen to receive a \$5,000 scholarship each toward their education. Names of the recipients and a description of the judging process will be published in the September/October edition of Turf News.

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

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

Fax: 847/649-5678

e-mail: info@TurfGrassSod.org

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

Mow Food, Please!

(October 1st is the cut-off date for receiving ITPF Cookbook recipes. Recent submissions include the following.)

Seafood Chowder

(one gallon)

Note: The quantities in (parenthesis) are the original recipe requirements to make 12 gallons of seafood chowder.

Ingredients:

- 8 oz. potatoes (5 lbs.)
- 1/4 stalk of celery (3 bunches)
- 1 medium size onion (4 lbs.)
- 1 lemon's juice (as needed)
- 2.5 quarts of seafood stock or 2 bottles clam juice (7 gals/10-12 bottles)
- 4 oz. carrots (4 lbs.)
- 8 oz. clams (5 lbs.)
- 8 oz. shrimp (5 lbs.)
- 4 oz. scallops (3 lbs.)
- 4 oz. fish (3 lbs.)
- 14-oz. can of cooked, crushed tomatoes (2 #10 cans)

Spices:

- Bay leaves
- Oregano
- L&P Worcestershire Sauce
- Tabasco Sauce
- Old Bay or other seafood seasoning
- Fresh Garlic
- Salt & Pepper

Directions:

To the seafood stock, add lemon juice and celery. While that's cooking, dice all "diceable" items and add to the pot, bring to a boil and then simmer for 2 to 2-1/2 hours. Next, stir in a browned roux of butter and flour to thicken, and simmer for additional hour.

Business Management

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