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Remember—

Valid Passports are Required for Non-Australian Attendees of the 2007 TPI Midwinter Conference

When planning to attend the Midwinter Conference in Australia, be sure your passport is up to date and that its expiration date is at least six months beyond the event's dates.

If you do not have a passport yet, or need to renew it, you can begin the process on-line by searching for "passport renewal" to find the DS-82 form and other requirements. In the U.S., you can use the government service, or pay extra for service companies available on-line to handle and expedite the process.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Turfgrass Producers International

Queensland, Australia February 5-9, 2007

"Turf's Up Down Under!"

What a clever theme for the 2007 TPI Midwinter Conference with its emphasis "Turf's Up" as the event's primary focus and its location "Down Under" one of the most exciting venues ever! The momentum continues as you review what promises to be a very educational and entertaining schedule of activities and uniquely Australian experiences. Stereotyping is allowed when you envision the country's delightfully friendly Turfgrass Producers of Australia (TPA) members who are anxious to welcome and share their knowledge and information with you at the TPA Field day and throughout your stay.

Try to imagine what it'll be like visiting a real Australian farm, a winery, a tree-top walk, a river cruise, a visit to the famed Australia Zoo, in addition to the valuable educational sessions in which turf producers and other industry professionals from throughout the globe share their experiences and insights. TPI's popular "Show and Tell" sessions will feature guest speakers: 1) Stephen T. Brown of Quality Turf Farms, West Columbia, Texas; 2) Hamish Sutherland of HG Turf Maintenance, Alexandra, Victoria, Australia; and 3) Keaton

Vandemark of Vandemark Farms, Spring Hope North Carolina. From these sessions always comes a different and often more efficient way to operate a sod farm.

During the General Education sessions, expect to learn a lot from Ian Chivers, Ph.D., CEO of Natives Seeds Pty. Ltd., Sandringham, Victoria Australia, as he discusses "The Measurement of Strength of Turf Surfaces." Dr. Chivers has developed equipment to more accurately determine the durability of turf on horse racing tracks and sports fields which he has put to use in Australia and other countries. His other area of interest is the development of turf types of native grasses with potential uses in challenging environments of low rainfall, high heat and shallow soils.

The presentation by Jeffrey L. Bruce, FASLA Principal, Jeffrey L. Bruce & Co., N. Kansas City, MO, is entitled "Artificial Turf: What They Don't Want You to Know." In addition to heat, other synthetic turf problems, according to Bruce, include performance, durability, maintenance, disposal and warranties.



Turf Equipment Survey Deadline Extended—Your Support is Needed

The deadline for the TPI Turfgrass Sod Farm Equipment Survey has been extended so that all TPI "Class A" members can participate. For more information, visit the TPI website at www.TurfGrassSod.org and select "Turfgrass Sod Farm Equipment Survey link"

Here's a preview of what the survey is revealing: (as of 9/20/06)
—Average number of tractors used per reporting farming operation including permanently fixed units = 10.6 (up

1.6 from 2002)

- Percent of farms using automated turfgrass harvesters = 47% (not reported in 2002)
- Farms reporting more than 600 acres/242 hectares devoted to turfgrass production = 32%
- Most popular Pick-up & Light Truck brand name = Ford

Participating members have immediate access to all survey results after submitting their completed survey.

Increase Productivity & Decrease Costs Implement Information Retrieval Systems

Do you pile instead of file? Is your desk overflowing with mounds of paperwork? If it is, you're not alone. Many people claim that if they file it, it is out of sight and out of mind, often never to be found again. Today, U.S. workers generate 2.7 billion pieces of new paper a day—that is 45 sheets per person, per day! The problem, however, is how do you find it when you need it?

Smart Business Magazine reported U.S. workers waste on average at least two hours per week because they are not able to retrieve, share and determine how to store and organize documents and other information. The costs to businesses can be astounding. Office staff are likely costing their company over \$2,500 a year on wasted productivity.

It is no longer enough to create and maintain efficient filing systems for paper and electronic information. Consideration must be given as to how that information can be quickly accessed and retrieved when needed; otherwise, what good is it if you cannot locate it?

One of the main reasons people accumulate so much paper is they don't know what to keep and what to get rid of. Of the paper-based or electronic information we keep, 82 percent of the information we keep—whether electronic or paper-based—it will never be referenced again.

There are two questions you should be asking yourself about each piece of information: 1) Do I need this? and 2) Will I refer to it someday? If you can answer "Yes" to these questions, you need to "act" on the information or "store" it for later use. If you answered "No" to these questions, it's time to eliminate it.

Here are six strategies to help get an office organized, increase productivity and help with information retrieval:

1—The "delete" key is your friend.

When processing your e-mail, quickly decide if you need to respond, file or delete. If the information is not useful, delete it before you move on to the next e-mail. Your inbox should only contain e-mails that are waiting for a response or to be filed.

2—Create "file cabinets" in your Inbox. Creating sub-files for your inbox is like creating "file cabinets" for your electronic information. An organized system for filing e-mail is essential if you want to find and use the information later. The file names must be descriptive and have some consistency to allow quick and easy location of information. You could create files based on projects, people, associations, volunteer work, clients, prospects or a combination of several.

3—"My Documents" should not be used as a one-size-store-all location. Storing all of your e-mails in the My Documents file can make it very difficult to locate an e-mail or document when you need it. When setting up your files, go from the very general, to the specific.

4—Use consistent naming systems for computer files. In addition to a well organized filing structure for your computer files, you also need to use consistent naming systems for the files stored in each folder. That will allow you to continue being able to quickly and easily locate the ones you need, even as the number of documents increase.

5—The recycling bin and shredder are also your friends. Are you hanging on to documents, articles, magazines or other information because you are going to read it "someday?" Be realistic. If the item has been sitting in piles on your desk or the surrounding floor for six months, or even a year, there is a high probability you will never get around to reading this information. Even with the best intentions, the bottom line is that if you do not make the time—and generally

you don't—it will continue to pile up and you likely will never get to it.

If you do make the time for those items in the reading pile, save only the information you will use or refer to in the future. This information can be stored in a variety of ways. Here are some examples of what you may find and how to store them:

- A—A website you want to check out. Add it to your "to do" list. If you like the information on the website, add it to your "Favorites" in your Internet Browser.
- B—An idea could be stored in a file called "Ideas" or, more specifically, the type of tip. This eliminates your having to save the entire magazine or article for the one idea.
- C—A product you wish to buy—if it is not an item you plan to purchase immediately, create a file folder or envelope for "Potential Purchases."

6—Action Items! Let's face it; we all have a long "To-do" list that can include items such as calls to make, supplies to purchase, errands to run, projects to complete and other little nagging things that must get done. Maintain only one location where you keep the majority of these items.

If you are a paper person, get yourself a small journal book in which to keep this information—all in one compact place. Items such as sticky notes that you've written a number on so you can call someone, can be easily put in the book, or a business card can be paper clipped or stapled in your "To call" section.

By implementing these strategies, your office will be well on it's way to becoming a fine-tuned operation. Papers will be filed away, desks will be clear and employees will be more organized and productive.

Marketing Tip

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16 Ways to Increase Sales

The job today is to be in front of the customer when the need arises. Here are practical "put-'em-to-work-now" ideas for building sales:

1—Keep surprising your customers. Be dramatic. One insurance agency offered to buy small contractors "the biggest steak dinner in town" if its policies couldn't save them money.

2—Get to the right person. Addressing mail to "Facilities Manager" or "Landscape Contractor" is weak. It's worth the time to find the correct person's name who you want to do business with.

3—Be creative. It takes a highly creative approach to be distinctive and develop a compelling brochure or newsletter to avoid its ending up in the wastebasket. If people read it, you have a better chance to doing business with them.

4—Focus on what your customers care about, not pictures of your staff, or that you think you're the best, the oldest or the biggest—find out precisely what works and your product will sell.

5—Let people know what they should think of your company. They draw conclusions by making comparisons. Wise companies spend time and effort consciously influencing the way they are perceived by customers and prospects.

6—Make your offer a good one. Customers don't like being put on the spot, because no one wants to make a mistake. An offer such as "Come visit our farm and see for yourself" is a way to extend your hand, put people at ease and create confidence in your company and your product.

7—Be in the right place at the right time. "I wish you had called last week..." It's tempting to shrug off such comments, thinking no one can be everywhere at once. Wrong! The job today is to be in front of the customer when the need arises.

8—Name your product or service. One way to stand out from the crowd is to give your product or service a

distinctive name, like "Environmental Sod" instead of just plain old "sod" to separate your product from others. Be sure the name appeals to your customers!

9—Be relentless. In marketing and sales, persistence is power. Develop a consistent marketing momentum that will produce results.

10—Identify new prospects. The single most important daily activity in business is prospect identification. By making this a continuous process, companies have a steady flow of new sales leads. Add prospects to a database.

11—Write friendly customer-centered letters as if you were there with the person. You would never say to someone, "Pursuant to our agreement..." and "Enclosed please find..."

12—Focus on "Why should anyone want to do business with us? What makes us different? Why do we deserve business?" to uncover the real reasons why customers should want to do business with you.

13—Only tell part of the story at one time, instead of cramming everything into one brochure, ad or newsletter. Separate ideas into component parts and develop an on-going campaign.

14—Personalize everything, not "Dear Friend," "Dear Customer" or (especially) "Dear Valued Customer." There is power in using the customer's name.

15—Take advantage of testimonials. Your credibility increases if you let a satisfied customer blow your horn for you. The best way is to interview them and prepare comments for their approval. This reassures them and gets you testimonials that will work best.

16—Make marketing your mission. Too many companies only turn to marketing when they need to increase their sales. Communicating your company's message in new and interesting ways is an on-going process. It isn't good enough to produce the best product or service. The final goal is to get the customer to want what you sell.

Shrewder Computing

Take Control of Technology

It's easy to become overwhelmed with today's seemingly endless technology options, and the language used to describe them can be confusing.

This sense of being overwhelmed often leads people to refuse to use new tools, buy too little, too much or the wrong item for what they want to accomplish.

The first step in taking control of technology is to define what you are trying to do. Knowing your goals will help narrow your focus and make it easier to find what you need. Next, you should research what's available and how each item stacks up against the competition.

When you run across descriptions you don't understand, look up—or ask—what they mean so you can make meaningful comparisons. Be sure to use multiple sources for your research such as competing vendors and product websites to help you get unbiased information.

After defining your goals and comparing options, the next step might be the most difficult: purchasing the right tool without spending too much or too little. Don't splurge on the latest and greatest if it's more than what you really need.

The last step in taking control of technology is learning how to use it. You might have found the right tool for the job but what good is it if you don't know how to operate it correctly? Consider training options available at your area community colleges or technical training institute, on-line classes, books and CDs on the specific programs you are interested in.

Source: September 2006
"uschamber.com" "TECH
TOOLS," By Ricardo Harvin.



TPI Action

TPI Participates in 2006 NCAE Meeting

TPI participated in the National Council of Agricultural Employers (NCAE) 2006 Summer Agricultural Tours and Meetings. Topics addressed in the committee meetings included "Finance," "Labor Relations/Employee Benefits," "Labor Standards," "EPA/OSHA" and "Immigration." The NCAE meetings provided participants greater insight into legislation relating to immigration reform, farm labor and guest worker programs. TPI will continue to represent members in these issues.

Guideline Specifications to Turfgrass Sodding Brochure Updated

TPI has updated the "Guideline Specifications to Turfgrass Sodding" brochure with helpful information about soil preparation, sodding and post-installation maintenance over wide geographic/climatic areas. The brochure was originally developed for turf producers to present to landscape architects, landscape contractors and others who need industry standard specifications as part of their sodding project bid requirements. The brochure's information can be used as is or adapted as needed. It is available on the TPI website www.TurfGrassSod.org in the "Members Only" section where you can select "Marketing Brochures & Products" and scroll down to the appropriate selection.

International Turf Producers Foundation (ITPF) Update

With increasing competition from artificial turf sales and the misinformation being spread by "environmental" groups about water, fertilizers and pesticides, the ITPF is more important than ever in helping educate the general public about the benefits of turfgrass for our environment. The 2007 ITPF focus will be on educating consumers about turfgrass benefits—turfgrass sod in particular. Check your mail for information about this year's ITPF Annual Campaign and please support the only Foundation that supports the turfgrass production industry.

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>

How Many Acres Per Hour Can You Mow?

Mower Speed (mph)	(mower width in feet)				
	4'	5'	6'	7'	8'
2	0.9	1.2	1.4	1.6	1.9
3	1.4	1.8	2.1	2.5	2.9
4	1.9	2.4	2.9	3.3	3.8
5	2.4	3.6	3.9	4.2	4.8
6	2.9	3.6	4.3	5.0	5.8
7	3.3	4.2	5.0	5.9	6.7
8	3.8	4.8	5.8	6.7	7.7

Mower Speed (mph)	(mower width in feet)				
	10'	12'	15'	18'	20'
2	2.4	2.9	3.6	4.3	4.8
3	3.6	4.3	5.4	6.5	7.2
4	4.8	5.8	7.2	8.7	9.6
5	6.0	7.2	9.0	10.9	12.1
6	7.2	8.7	10.9	13.0	14.5
7	8.4	10.0	12.7	15.2	16.9
8	9.6	11.6	14.5	17.4	19.3

Mower Speed (mph)	(mower width in feet)				
	24'	30'	36'	45'	50'
2	5.8	7.2	8.7	10.9	12.1
3	8.7	10.9	13.0	16.3	18.1
4	11.6	14.0	17.4	21.8	24.2
5	14.5	18.1	21.8	27.2	30.3
6	17.4	21.8	26.1	32.7	36.3
7	20.3	25.4	30.5	38.1	42.4
8	23.2	29.0	34.9	43.6	48.4

Business Management

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