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### Business Management Going Electronic

In response to the challenging economy, TPI is planning to provide members the *Business Management* newsletter electronically. This will significantly reduce printing and postage costs while continuing to provide you valuable content. If you are not currently receiving e-mail correspondence from TPI, please provide your e-mail address by contacting the TPI office at 847-649-5555 or sending an e-mail to Susan Hall at *shall@TurfGrassSod.org*.

This December/January issue of Business Management will be the last hard copy issue. If you would prefer to receive a printed copy, please contact the TPI office. If we receive significant response from TPI members, we will take appropriate action.

## BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

**Turfgrass Producers International** 

### **Grow Your Business with Media Relations**

Media exposure can greatly help your company, especially when marketing budgets are low and competition is high. Learning to leverage the power of the media can help you stand out from the competition without expending too many resources.

There is absolutely no reason to believe you must have superpowers or be famous to approach the media. People interview people they like. If you can develop a good rapport, that's half the battle. You can adopt an approach that will cause interviewers to come back to you time after time.

First, be respectful of the reporter's or editor's time. Deadlines are 24/7 these days, and you are one of many sources with articles, ideas and pitches. If you have initiated the contact, your first question should be, "Are you on deadline?" If they say "Yes," never forge ahead anyway. If they are on deadline, ask "When would be a better time to call you?"

Here are a few ideas to help make sure editors and reporters accept your articles, book you as a guest on shows or interview you for pieces they are writing or videotaping.

1. Become familiar with the journalists with whom you would like to cultivate relationships. Follow their work and let them know when you enjoy something they have written. Comment on something specific. Watch the broadcast. Read the magazine, newspaper or blog. Listen to the radio show or podcast. Familiarize yourself with the content. Look at the ads to see what audience the advertisers are targeting.

Once you become familiar with the audience, you will understand what it wants. This will allow you to tailor your content, making it more valuable. Providing great content is the best way to motivate reporters to contact you in the future.

Ask the reporter or interviewer if there is anything else you need to know to better reach the audience. That way you can fashion the content of your remarks as you prepare for an interview or, if you are writing an article, strike the appropriate tone.

2. Be observant during conversations. If the reporter is heading out the door to pick up children from soccer, make a note of it. Remember to ask about the children's progress next time you call. Be on the lookout for items of interest to a soccer parent. You can send the reporter a parenting article about involvement in children's

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sporting activities, for example. This costs nothing and will not be a breach of ethics on the reporter's part to accept it.

3. Reporters and editors often spend most of their time in the world of ideas. They like to think and talk about challenging ideas. When you are conversing, remember to bring up the topic they like to talk about. Similarly, if you see a subject that you know will interest a reporter, copy and send it to him or her.

4. Don't let months pass without contact. Send birthday or holiday cards. If you come across an event or idea related to an area of

the reporter's interest, call and leave them a quick voice mail about it. They will get the message that you are thinking about them as people, not just using them for your own purposes.

If the reporter or editor you would like to get to know is local, drop by the office (with appropriate notice), or suggest coffee or lunch. Treat the reporter as you would any other friend or acquaintance you value. If you're in the game just to advance yourself, this will be all too readily apparent and you will alienate the very people you are trying to impress.

**5.** When interviewed, give good quotes. Strive for simple, declarative sentences. Use concrete images. Answer the question. Remember the reporter is working hard to gain the knowledge needed to write a good story.

Be enthusiastic on the phone. Even if you're not doing an interview for broadcast, the reporter will appreciate your passion. Stand up and smile—your energy and cheerfulness will come across. Laugh or get the interviewer laughing.

6. Don't forget to maintain relationships once they are established. Sometimes the reporter will call you as a source, but you aren't right for that particular subject. You can still help by suggesting another person to call. If the reporter needs a second or third source to interview, suggest names of other people.

Effective media relations are all about relationships. If you develop, nurture and maintain good relationships with reporters and editors, you will become the expert they seek time after time. Ultimately, this will help you stand out from the competition and boost your sales.

Pam Lontos is co-author of I See Your Name Everywhere, published by Morgan James. She is a former vice president of sales for Disney's Shamrock Broadcasting. Her public relations firm, PR/PR, works with established businesses and entrepreneurs.

## **Taking Care of Business**

By Cyndi Laurin and Craig Morningstar www. The Rudolph Factor.com.

# Five Ways to Find, Empower Your "Rudolphs"

The Age of Innovation is here. Leaders in all industries now acknowledge that our global economy has changed the game forever. Products and processes still matter, but what keeps a company competitive is innovative people. Without a culture of innovation, you will not stay on top for long. When you throw the stalled economy into the mix, your employees' bright ideas may be all that stands between your company and disaster.

It's been long said that people are a company's best asset. The recession has underscored this. Bright, empowered people, or "Rudolphs," have always been important. Now they're imperative.

An innovative culture is the antithesis of the "we pay you to work, not think" mentality. Unless all employees are fully engaged and empowered to solve problems, you'll never be able to think your way out of a financial morass.

How do you infuse this magic ingredient into your culture? *The Rudolph Factor* answers that question. Along the way it tells the story of The Boeing Company, zeroing in on the C-17 Program's spectacular turnaround.

We use Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer as an analogy to delve inside a corporate culture that reinvented itself. Boeing learned lessons about innovation that can be replicated in any business.

Rudolphs are the 10 percent of any organization's people who are the true agents of innovation. Rudolphs connect the dots that others don't see. Since they tend to identify causes of problems rather than symptoms, they generate sustainable solutions more quickly and efficiently.

In finding these crucial individuals, nurturing them and putting their ideas to work, you achieve consistently higher levels of innovation and thrive in every economy. Here are just a few insights on creating a Rudolph-friendly culture:

1. Lead in ways that don't force people to check their red noses at the door. The old (yet still prevalent) command-and-control style of management is antithetical to environments that nurture Rudolphs. Nurturing innovative thinking requires as much from leaders as it does from employees. Leaders must continually be more participative, treat all employees as business partners regardless of their titles, and focus on removing barriers and providing resources for people to be successful.

Don't worry that by shifting responsibility and control to employees you're opening the door to a free-for-all. You're not saying everyone can do whatever they please. Rather, you're giving employees a voice and an avenue to implement ideas, which compels them to voluntarily take on creative thinking above

and beyond their current responsibilities.

2. Embrace the AVTAR approach to creating a Rudolph culture. When you're seeking to change your culture, think "participative," not "imposed from above." AVTAR is spelled out as follows:

Awareness: Generate awareness of a proposed change.

Value: Share information that inspires employees to find value in a proposed change. Until employees recognize for themselves the value in the proposed change, you cannot take the next step. Thinking: Here, employees begin to bear the responsibility for the proposed change. This shift in thinking requires managers to let go of their own agendas. It also requires employees to ask questions reflecting their new awareness.

Actions: In this stage, responsibility has mostly

shifted to employees. New actions and behaviors begin to appear based upon new ways of thinking.

Results: Results flow organically, an outcome of the shift in thinking and new actions and behaviors (not enforced by rewards and punishment).

3. Learn to recognize Rudolphs. Rudolphs are often labeled square pegs, radicals, misfits, loose cannons, zealots or innovators. While their "Rudolphness" may differ based on context, circumstance and environment, one constant is that they cannot help but spend time involuntarily thinking about the things they are most passionate about; acquiring the capabilities to manifest their thoughts into reality; and taking action.

Rudolphs are not synonymous with entrepreneurs. They generally don't want to start their own companies because they want to keep doing what they do. They do not want to worry about raising capital, finding business and hiring workers. It's their passion for improvement that makes them fantastic employees or business partners.

4. Identify (and meet) your Rudolphs' unmet needs. Rudolphs are not like other employees. They really do have unique needs, such as:

- an outlet to share ideas on a regular basis
- protection from their direct manager as well as ill-willed peers
- permission to take risks and share unconventional ideas
- access to collaborative teams that also include non-Rudolphs
- the ability to execute their ideas, but not in a haphazard fashion
- Rudolphs are not always aggressive enough to fight for their ideas or savvy enough to

navigate the maze of office politics. Unless you already have a Rudolph-friendly culture that embraces risk, take steps to shield and nurture them. If you don't, they'll stay in hiding with their noses dimmed and everyone will lose.

5. Put systems in place to encourage innovative thinking. Rudolph cultures draw creativity and innovation from employees. This requires more than the old-fashioned suggestion box program. Boeing's Creative Edge Program, designed to make the C-17 cargo aircraft more affordable, paid employees for their cost-saving ideas. In return, employees have generated over \$90 million with their ideas over the past decade and continue to impact the bottom line in significant ways. Every year, hundreds of employees contribute their innovative ideas and are awarded from \$50 to \$250 per employee plus one to two percent of the first year net savings. One employee actually earned \$32,000 this way.

Programs like this illustrate the principle of drawing innovation out of people rather than trying to impose it on them. The prospect of earning some extra money tends to refine the creative process, which results in better conceived, more workable ideas. Just implementing these kinds of systems is enough to draw previously unsuspected Rudolphs out of the shadows.

That brings us to the real appeal of *The Ru-dolph Factor*. The book presupposes that Rudolphs are already lurking somewhere on the sidelines, waiting for you to find the "on switch" that illuminates their guiding beacon. That's great news for cash-strapped companies that can ill-afford to hire expensive superstars.

For too many years, too many companies have unwittingly stifled their employees. The recession has been forcing them to take a hard look at what is and what isn't working. What they're realizing is that any policy or system that represses innovation has to go. Smart companies know it's time to clean the mud off their Rudolphs's noses and let their creative and profitable ideas shine.

Cyndi Laurin, PhD, is an author, international speaker and founder of Guide to Greatness, LLC. Craig Morningstar is a senior-level executive whose background includes positions at Southwest Airlines and Charles Schwab. He has founded, operated and sold several companies.

The Rudolph Factor: Finding the Bright Lights that Drive Innovation in Your Business (Wiley, July 2009, ISBN: 978-04704510-3-8, \$21.95) is available at bookstores, major online booksellers or direct from the publisher by calling 800-225-5945. In Canada, call 800-567-4797. Visit www.TheRudolphFactor.com

### **Safety Management**

### OSHA to Determine Accuracy of Worker Injury, Illness Data

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is initiating a national emphasis program (NEP) on recordkeeping to assess the accuracy of injury and illness data recorded by employers.

The recordkeeping NEP involves inspecting occupational injury and illness records prepared by businesses and appropriately enforcing regulatory requirements when employers are found to be under-recording injuries and illnesses.

"This information is not only used by OSHA to determine which workplaces to inspect, but is an important tool employers and workers can use to identify health and safety problems in their workplaces," said acting Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Jordan Barab.

The inspections include a records review, employee interviews and a limited safety and health inspection of the workplace. The NEP will focus on selected industries with high injury and illness rates. For more information, visit www.osha.gov.

#### OSHA Publishes GHS/HazCom Proposed Rule

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) published the long-awaited Proposed Rule to modify the Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) to conform with the United Nations' (UN) Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) on Sept. 30, 2009.

According to OSHA, the proposed modifications will improve the dality and consistency of information provided to employers and employees regarding chemical hazards and associated protective measures.

The proposed modifications to the HazCom standard include:

- Revised criteria for classification of chemical hazards;
- Revised labeling provisions that include requirements for use of standardized signal words, pictograms, hazard statements and precautionary statements;
- Specified format for Safety Data Sheets (currently known as Material Safety Data Sheets); and
- Related revisions to definitions of terms used in the standard and requirements for employee training on labels and Safety Data Sheets.

OSHA is proposing to modify provisions of a number of other standards, including standards for flammable and combustible liquids, process safety management and most substance-specific health standards, to ensure consistency with the modified HCS requirements.

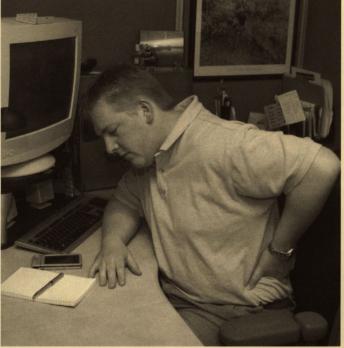
OSHA currently anticipates a two-year phase-in period for new hazard communication training requirements and a three-year phase-in period for overall implementation once the Final Rule is published.

The Agency is allowing a 90-day comment period on the Proposal. Comments must be submitted to OSHA by December 29, 2009. OSHA also will schedule an informal public hearing on the Proposed Rule. The location and date of the hearing will be announced in the Federal Register.

To view the Proposed Rule, visit www.jjkeller.com/referencematerials/093009GHSHazcom.pdf

### omputer Workstation Setup Reduces Musculoskeletal Pain

Many companies purchase ergonomic desks and chairs to create safe, comfortable computer workstations for their employees. But, a recent



An adjustable chair does not reduce pain unless properly adjusted.

study shows that setup and adjustment is critical in reducing pain related to poor work postures.

A study conducted by Jasminka Goldoni Laestadius, MD, PhD, of The World Bank's Joint Bank/Fund Health Services Department, examined two groups of workers to see whether a proactive approach to ergonomics (which used a professional ergonomist to set up and adjust computer workstations) could reduce pain and other symptoms in office workers.

The study indicated that the proactive approach reduced symptoms of musculoskeletal pain and eyestrain, but only for workers receiving an expert workstation setup. This group also had a significant increase in productivity. Neither group had a significant reduction in sick leave.

A reduction in symptoms was clearly related to improved work postures, which means that equipment, such as an adjustable chair, does not add value unless properly adjusted, the researchers reported. To be effective in reducing pain and improving productivity, a proactive ergonomics program needs to include an individual workstation assessment.

The study was published in the October *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, official publication of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM).

#### H1N1 Flu: International Situation Update

For frequent updates on H1N1 influenza cases, please visit www.cdc. gov/h1n1flu/updates/international/ or www.who.int. The 2009 H1N1 influenza virus continues to be the dominant influenza virus in circulation around the world, reports the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Since April 19, 2009, over half of all influenza positive specimens reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) were 2009 H1N1. In temperate regions of the Southern Hemisphere, disease due to the virus has returned to below baseline. In tropical regions of the Americas and Asia, influenza activity due to 2009 H1N1 remains variable.

In temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere, influenza-like illness (ILI) activity due to 2009 H1N1 is above baseline in many areas, including parts of Western Europe, most of the United States, and parts of Mexico and

According to WHO, the majority of 2009 H1N1 influenza isolates tested worldwide remain sensitive to oseltamivir, an antiviral medicine used to treat influenza. Only 39 2009 H1N1 isolates tested worldwide have been found to be resistant to this medicine.

users of cell phones while driving. Studies show that a driver using a cell phone is four times more likely to be in a crash than a driver focused on the

Dialing and texting carry the highest degree of risk of all cell phone-related activities, according to other studies. A driver is 23 times more likely to get into a collision if they are texting or typing behind the wheel. Text messaging takes the driver's eyes away from the road for 4.6 seconds

over a six-second interval. This compares to driving an entire length of a football field without looking at the road while travelling 90 kilometers (55 miles) per hour.

Hands-free is not risk free, cautions the Canada Safety Council (http://safety-council. org). When talking on a telephone, whether it's hands-free or hands-held, the driver's attention is on the conversation and less on the road. It's the conversation that's distracting.



A driver using a cell phone is four times more likely to be in a crash than a driver focused on the road.

#### Ontario Law on Distracted Driving Takes Effect

Distracted driving legislation took effect in Ontario on October 26, 2009. The law makes it illegal for drivers to talk, text, type or dial using hand-held cell phones and other hand-held communication and entertainment devices. These devices can be used if programmed before starting

More than 50 countries worldwide and a growing number of North American jurisdictions have similar distracted driving legislation including Quebec, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, California and New York.

Young people under 35 are the most frequent

# Mow Food, Please The Lawn Institute Cookbook

### A great holiday gift!

Are you looking for a great way to say thanks to your staff or customers? Mow Food, Please contains over 300 recipes from TPI members and the histories of 40 sponsor farms. Sure to be a hit with friends and family alike, the cookbook lets you share the holiday experiences of TPI members around the world to make your holidays a little brighter.

Cookbooks are only \$25 each! 6 books for the price of 5 or 12 books for the price of 10 plus shipping and handling.

#### **Shipping and Handling Charges** U.S. Canada

1 Book for \$6 1 Book for \$11

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### **Marketing Tip**

By Ted Janusz
www.januspresentations.com

### Twitter, MySpace and Facebook Demystified

Q: I hear people talking about Twitter, MySpace and Facebook. What are they and should I be using them to promote turfgrass sod?

Twitter, Facebook and MySpace are components of something else you may have heard people talking about: Web 2.0, a popular term for Internet applications in which the users are actively engaged in creating and distributing Web content. Let's look at these applications.

"Twitter is like text messaging, only you can also do it from the Web," says Dan Tynan, author of the Tynan on Technology blog. "Instead of sending a message to just one person, you can send it to thousands of people at once. You can follow anyone's update (called 'tweets') simply by clicking the Follow button on their profile, or vice-versa. Each tweet can be no longer than 140 characters."

According to ComScore, Twitter is the fast-est-growing major Web site in the United States with 17 million registered users. That's up 3,000 percent from a year ago.

### While this is fine, what is Twitter's business application?

In the past, companies would spend as much as \$10,000 to \$15,000 on focus groups to get the reactions of customers. Now they can follow what real customers are saying about them in real time, says Natalie Pethouhoff, an analyst at Forrester Research. What's more, they can answer questions and resolve complaints from real customers immediately if they so choose.

### Top Four Web sites

According to Google Trends, the number one Web site in the United States is Yahoo, followed by YouTube. The third most visited site is Facebook, followed by MySpace.

You can post your video on YouTube for free. A Flip video camera (priced at under \$150 on Amazon.com) can do the trick.

### What is the business application of YouTube?

Here's an example. Blendtec, a Utah-based blender manufacturer posted a series of videos entitled "Will it Blend?" In these videos, the company attempted to pulverize items such as golf balls and iPods. The first eight episodes resulted in three million downloads in a week. Blendtec sold out of the \$600 blender in the first 24 hours. The key to business success on YouTube is to be humorous, offbeat or very personal.

#### What is the business application of Facebook?

Facebook surpassed MySpace in the number of users in the United States last May and is the world's second most popular Website (behind YouTube)

MySpace and Facebook are popular because social networking allows more than e-mail or text messaging. In addition to writing on someone else's "wall" on Facebook, you can share photographs and videos.

People have a "profile" on Facebook, whereas a business has a "page." You and I can have "friends" on Facebook, while a business has "fans." What businesses really benefit from on Facebook is the trusted referrals of their friends.

### What is the business application of MySpace?

MySpace provides a free service to people looking to connect with others having similar interests. This site was initially popular with bands that didn't want to go through the hassle of creating and maintaining a Web site, but wanted a way to distribute their music, photographs, videos and other information. MySpace usage has since spread to people of all interests and ages.

Successful marketing using any of the Web 2.0 applications means an ad cannot look like an ad or else it will be rejected by the social networking visitors. On average, your customers are subjected to 1,500 to 5,000 advertising impressions each day. Since they have learned how to block most of these interruptions, they are six times more likely to read an article than an advertisement.

#### The New Free TV?

There is a danger for businesses to view social networking sites as the new television. "If you are going to go there, you had better go for the right reasons," says Seth Godin, author of the best-selling book on marketing, *Purple Cow.* "If your reason is to sell more stuff, don't bother. It's not going to work."

However, if you use social networking sites as ways to connect to real people, not because you want to sell anything, then it's a great way to spend a half hour a day."

Godin says, "As a byproduct of that . . . yes, in fact, your business will do better, because you are a trusted member of the community."

Ted Janusz is a professional speaker, author and marketing consultant. He was a keynote speaker at the Independent Computer Consultants Association annual conference in San Francisco in November. Janusz has been invited to appear on the Geraldo show on FOX News Network. Janusz has presented dozens of Creative Marketing Conferences across the country for Rockhurst University. eBay selected him to conduct "eBay University" seminars nationwide. Visit www.januspresentations.com; or contact him at ted@januspresentations.com, 614-440-7487.

# **Shrewder Computing**

### Mail Merge Emails

If you use Outlook, did you know you can use Word to do mail merge and create custom e-mails to a group of people? If not, check out: http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/word/HA011464811033.aspx

MAPILabs (http://www.mapilab.com/) takes that great feature and makes it even more powerful with an inexpensive (\$24) Word/Outlook add-on that "fixes" two huge Word merge to e-mail limitations.

Word merge to e-mail won't let you have attachments. In the past, my way around this was to put Outlook into "work offline" mode, do the merge, open all the messages in my outbox and manually (or using a macro) attach the file or files. Then I switched back to the online mode to send the messages.

With Mail Merge Toolkit, I can now select to merge to the toolkit. This lets me attach the files right at the time of merging.

Using Mail Merge Toolkit, I can now also do merge substitutions in the subject line of the e-mail. This lets me personalize e-mails more.

#### **Send Personally**

If you want to send the same e-mail to several people, you can put all of their e-mail addresses in the "TO" field. That really makes some people mad since it discloses their e-mail addresses to other recipients.

The alternative is to send the e-mail to yourself and use the BCC for the list. But, many spam filters assume that BCC sent e-mails are spam so some of your recipients won't get your message.

Send Personally is a solution. It is another inexpensive (\$24) related MAPILabs add-on.

Send Personally adds a button to Outlook, next to the send button. If you click this Send Personally button, it takes your list of e-mails in the TO field and sends the e-mail to each one as if you had done it individually. You can even do some limited data merging without resorting to doing a full scale Word merge.

Gregg Marshall, CPMR, CSP, is a speaker, author and consultant. He can be reached by email at gmarshall@repconnection.com, or visit his Website at http://www.repconnection.com.

OTP

### **TPI** Action

### Hot off The Press: TPI's 2009-10 Membership Directory

By the time you receive this issue of *Business Management*, you should already have received TPI's 2009-10 Membership Directory in the mail. If you have not received your copy, please contact Susan Hall, 847-649-5555 or write shall@TurfGrassSod.org.

The directory features listings of all TPI members, including turfgrass sod producers, suppliers, educators, students, industry associates, and retired and honorary members. Also available on the TPI Web site, the directory is an excellent reference tool for buyers of turfgrass sod and related products.



#### **TPI Keeping Costs in Line**

Over the past couple of years, TPI has implemented many cost-saving measures while still offering members the high level of services they expect.

- This has included contracting the editorial services of Den Gardner and Lynn Grooms.
   Den's high profile in the green industry helps serve TPI, its members and *Turf News* readers. He serves as the executive director of the Turf and Ornamental Communicators
   Association (TOCA) and Project Evergreen. Lynn has more than 25 years of editorial and
   writing experience. She is involved in the daily coordination, editing and writing of articles
   for *Turf News* and *Business Management*.
- TPI also utilizes the services of Meetings & Events USA for the annual Summer Convention & Field Days and Midwinter Conference under the direction of Certified Meeting Professional Sandy Reynolds.
- As noted on page one of this newsletter, the TPI board plans to reduce printing and
  postage costs by publishing and distributing *Business Management* electronically. If you
  have a new e-mail address, please contact the TPI office, Tel. 847-649-5555 or e-mail
  Susan Hall, *shall@TurfGrassSod.org*. If you want to continue receiving a printed copy of
  the newsletter, please let us know. If there is significant interest, TPI will make appropriate
  arrangements to mail hard copies.

These are just some examples of how TPI is working to minimize operating expenses and provide you the most cost-efficient member services possible.

### Spotlight on The Benefits of Turfgrass

This article is the third in a series of articles focusing on the numerous benefits of turfgrass. Consider the environmental benefits of turfgrass:

- · Cools the air
- · Produces oxygen
- Filters air and reduces pollution
- · Captures and suppresses dust
- Recharges and filters groundwater supply
- · Reduces storm water runoff
- · Controls soil erosion
- · Retains and sequesters carbon
- Assists decomposition of pollutants
- · Restores soil quality

The turfgrass rootzone is itself a unique soil system. According to the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Florida, a healthy turf rootzone will help improve soil processes that cause the breakdown of pollutants, including pesticides. Large populations of diverse microflora and microfauna are supported by the turfgrass ecosystem. As a result, pollutants are rapidly decomposed as they travel through the turfgrass ecosystem.

The University of Minnesota's Sustainable Urban Landscape Information Series, "Environmental Benefits of a Healthy, Sustainable Lawn," reports that because the turfgrass root zone is an area of high soil microorganism activity, many commonly used turfgrass pesticides, once in contact with the soil, are readily broken down into the basic elements of carbon, oxygen, hydrogen and a small amount of mineral elements.

### **Business Management**

### **Turfgrass Producers International**

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