



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

AMERICAN SOD PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

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DECEMBER / JANUARY 1986

DUN & BRADSTREET COMMERCIAL COLLECTION SERVICE OPEN TO ASPA FOR NEW ENROLLMENTS & RENEWALS

ASPA Members can save an immediate \$75 by signing up for the Dun & Bradstreet Commercial Collection Service through the association. Rather than paying the \$100 enrollment fee, ASPA Members pay only \$25 for service throughout the 1986 calendar year.

Firms who had the service in 1985, should have renewed by December 1; however, they may now submit their \$25 fee and enrollment coupon to re-establish themselves with D&B.

Past-due D&B Reminder Stickers are provided without additional cost, and the collection service fees are set according to the amount being collected. A D&B Service Representative provides complete information and details.

-----complete and return to ASPA with payment-----

Farm/Firm _____
Representative _____ Phone (____) _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

___ My check for \$25, payable to ASPA is enclosed.
___ Charge \$25 to my VISA ___ or MasterCard ___
Card # _____ Expires _____
Signature _____

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is provided with the understanding that this publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting or other professional service. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought. Published bi-monthly for members of the American Sod Producers Association, under the auspices of the ASPA Business Management Committee. We invite your comments and recommendations.

SELLING SOD IN THE 'SLOW' SEASON

For many ASPA members, the so-called "slow season" on a sod farm may provide the ideal time to increase sales activities...even if a separate sales staff is not employed on the operation. ASPA's Membership Profile survey reported that nearly 57% of the membership does not employ any sales staff excluding the owner/operator. Another 25-plus percent employ one or two sales people on a full-time basis.

The idea of "selling" now seems appropriate because many sod operations are at less than peak times and "sales time" can be allocated more easily...the commercial customers are usually seeing slower times now too and could be more available to you and your message.

Here are a few ideas that can be incorporated into a sales process, that could increase future sales:

1. Review Past Sales Records: confirm what you probably already know...who bought what amount of sod from you last year?

2. Call On Established Clients First: person-to-person, let these people know that you not only appreciated their business, but are looking forward to serving their needs next year. Let them know what special varieties you will have and any new techniques you've developed to improve any aspect of your sod or operation. Ask them what they project their needs to be next year; what you could do to assist them; and any new developments they foresee in the future that you could start working on.

3. Call on Prospective Clients: again, in a person-to-person, one-on-one way, introduce yourself, your product and company to prospective commercial clients. Let them know that you're not only interested in their sod sales, and projections, but how you can help them prosper. Capsulize what your established clients told you about future needs, state of the business climate, etc. Share what you know that may help them, without losing the confidence of your established clients. Ask them what it would take to become a regular supplier of sod to their operation (it may not be lower price, but improved delivery service). Attempt to determine any objections they may have and deal with them in a straight forward and honest manner. Follow-up with a later meeting or phone call to continually let them know you really want their future business.

4. Meet 'Secondary' Business People: not everyone can buy sod and install it, but many 'secondary' businesses can help you...if you educate them on how it will also help them. Chemical lawn care services, lawn maintenance contractors, extension agents, etc., can refer people to you...and look like heros...when they know you have a quality product.

UNDERSTANDING NEEDS...The Key to Motivation (Part 2 of 2)

Prepared by Cecil Collings, Chairman
ASPA Business Management Committee

In the last issue of this newsletter, we discussed the how and when of rewards and reprimands. Whether or not a reward or incentive will work to encourage a desirable change in work or personal habits depends on whether or not the incentive meets a need that is a high priority at that time.

These needs are defined in Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs as: 1. Survival; 2. Safety; 3. Social; 4. Status; 5. Self Actualization.

The Survival need includes basic necessities such as water, food, warmth and shelter. Obviously attempting to appeal to a need as near the top of the hierarchy as Status will not be effective if the basic needs such as adequate food, shelter and security have not been met. Conversely, when these needs are met, and financial security is assured, additional money will be less motivational than a title or some form of public recognition.

One writer suggests that meetings involving planning or projects that require full attention should not be scheduled for the period immediately prior to lunch because if a person is starting to experience hunger, he will not be able to give full attention to the subject at hand, until the most basic need has been met.

Survival and Safety (job security) are easily understood, but the next three levels are not so simple and are more difficult to define.

We have all encountered the competent employee who shys away from any additional responsibility such as a foreman's job. The chances are his Social need (the need to belong to a group) is stronger at this time than is his desire for Status. Unless this person can find a new sense of belonging in a management group, he will not be a happy or productive foreman or supervisor.

Quite a number of people manage to achieve the fourth level, after having met their most basic needs, by becoming members of some peer group and garnering some status from that group, but few make it to the fifth level.

(please continue on next page)

Understanding Needs (continued)

I make no claim to any background in psychology, but I would define the person at the fifth level of human development as one who has a good positive self-image, accepts responsibility for his own actions, is quick to share credit for success and needs little outside reinforcement.

Obviously, this is the type of person we'd all like our employees to become.

MONEY SAVING INSURANCE SERVICE FOR SOD PRODUCERS

Ever wish you had your own insurance company? Sod producers have just that, in effect, when they insure in a dividend program for workers' compensation insurance approved by ASPA.

Under this recently approved program, policy holders earn dividends based on the claim experience of their business class. Best dividends are earned when injury claims are kept to a minimum through safety.

The highest dividends are earned by creating good safety records. Special accident prevention counseling is offered without charge, and loss prevention representatives provide suggestions for reducing hazards on the job. The success of policyholders' efforts is measured in each year's dividends.

Each participant is issued a standard workers' compensation policy and claims are handled by local representatives. Yearly dividends are based on the cost of claims paid in this savings class.

The program is underwritten by Casualty Reciprocal Exchange, a member of the Dodson Insurance Group, 92nd St. & State Line, Kansas City, MO 64114. Call toll-free for details 800-821-3760. In Missouri 800-892-3431.

'86 ASPA MIDWINTER CONFERENCE REMINDERS

Pre-Conference Golf Tournament: February 4
Pre-Conference Marketing Seminar: February 5
Midwinter Conference: February 5-7
Post-Conference Sod Farm Tour: February 8

START YOUR NEW YEAR WITH NEW IDEAS FROM ASPA