Looking for Success? Look no further than... YOUR STAFF!

Your staff has a significant impact on your success. The work that they do is a direct reflection on you, your ability to train, motivate and to lead. Reaching the goals of your facility is only possible through good management of your people and their continued development. To make sure you are fully embracing the talents of your staff, use these simple techniques.

Top 10 Strategies to Engage Your Employees

1. **Seek input and listen.** Your staff is a great resource for ideas and improvements. Asking for their opinions and solutions to problems, truly listening to them, and implementing as appropriate, strengthens their commitment to you and to their job. Involving your staff in decision making builds loyalty and improves retention.

2. **Set expectations.** Clearly and consistently set expectations for each employee through jointly written performance objectives. Good performance can’t happen if they do not know what is expected. Reinforce your expectations verbally.

3. **Provide continuous feedback.** Praise accomplishments, large and small, and for those projects that weren’t as successful, use them as learning experiences to find out what could have been done differently. Don’t wait until the end of the year at performance time to express dissatisfaction.

4. **Show appreciation.** Just say “thank you!” When you reward their “softer” skills. And acknowledge good behaviors, you get more of the same.

5. **Be accessible.** By being visible and available, you send the message that you are part of the team and are ready to support their efforts to get the job done.

6. **Train, Train, Train.** Training in the correct procedures and equipment use is critical to getting the job done right, but also for health and safety reasons. The continuous upgrading of skills also provides employees with the means for promotion. Consider training opportunities in areas outside of their core responsibilities, such as in writing skills, public speaking, customer service, business management, etc. You and your facility will reap many benefits from improving their “softer” skills.

7. **Empower your staff.** Give them as much information as possible about what and why, and allow them to make decisions appropriate to their work.

8. **Provide a safe and comfortable working environment.** Don’t expect employees to use outdated or faulty equipment. With anxieties at an all time high regarding increased terrorist activity, make sure you have emergency procedures in place to protect the workforce in the event of an attack, and ensure that every employee is aware of these procedures.

9. **Treat with respect.** Respect and accept each person as an important member of the team.

10. **Inspire your staff.** Be a coach and a cheerleader. Be sure your boss knows about the good work they do. When you help them succeed, you succeed.

*This article is compliments of Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA), Lawrence, KS.

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New Jersey Turfgrass Industry Unites in an Historical Joint Venture

Two prominent New Jersey Associations, the NJ Landscape Contractors Association (NJLCA) and the NJ Turfgrass Association (NJTA), have signed an historical long-term agreement which will benefit green industry representatives across New Jersey and the region. The two associations have agreed on a joint venture to co-host the New Jersey Green Industry Expo.

For over 35 years, NJTA has run a very successful annual trade show and conference in early December. By joining efforts and resources, growth and expansion of the show is virtually guaranteed. “NJTA is excited about the opportunities this partnership will offer and believes the Expo will develop into a regional conference and trade show attracting attendees from up and down the East Coast,” says Chris Caron, President of the New Jersey Turfgrass Association.

Beginning December 5-7 of this year the show will be renamed the “Turf & Landscape Conference and Expo”. It will remain at the Taj Mahal, Atlantic City, NJ. The conference has always had well attended educational seminars and will continue to expand on this success by adding seminars earmarked specifically for the landscape contractor.

“This joint venture will be the perfect vehicle for NILCA to further develop the southern regions of the state,” states Brian Pifer, NILCA President. He also announced the first annual NILCA state convention, the Holiday Awards Dinner and the 40th Anniversary Celebration will be held at Expo.

“This partnership is exactly what the Expo needed to catapult it to new heights. We are certain it will benefit the entire Green Industry in New Jersey and we look forward to producing another first-rate Expo,” says Chris Carson, NJTA President.

NJTA will feature online registration for Expo 2006. For more information visit www.njturfgrass.org or call: (215) 757-6582

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New Jersey Turf & Landscape Conference and Expo 2006: Sports Field Managers Program

December 5-7, 2006

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2006

TUESDAY AM

9:00 Principles of sports field drainage
- Dr. Jeff Murphy, Rutgers Univ.

9:30 Effective pesticide applications with backpack sprayers
- Dr. John Grande, Rutgers Univ.

10:00 Cost comparison of natural grass and synthetic infill fields
- Dr. A.J. Powell, University of Kentucky

10:45 A synthetic infill field: One year later
- Joel Taylor, Haddonfield Twp, NJ

11:15 Managing sports fields on native soils
- Dr. A.J. Powell, University of Kentucky

12:00 End of Session

TUESDAY PM

1:00 IPM procedures for turfgrass
- Bruce Reimbold, Rutgers Univ.

1:30 IPM procedures for indoor facilities
- Dr. George Hamilton, Rutgers Univ.

2:00 Break

2:15 School IPM Q&A with the NJ DEP
- Dr. Albrecht Koppenhoffer, Rutgers

2:45 Case study panel: Implementing a school IPM program
- Moderator: Craig Tolley, County College of Morris, NJ
- Bruce Reimbold, Rutgers Univ.
- David Parks, Prine Hill Schools, NJ
- Barry Imbold, Hunterdon Central, NJ
- Bob Van Haasteren, Dwight Englewood Schools, NJ

3:30 End of Session

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2006

WEDNESDAY AM

7:30 Early Bird sports field managers networking roundtable

9:00 End of Session

WEDNESDAY PM

1:00 SFSNJ Business meeting

1:30 Identifying and controlling common turfgrass diseases of sports fields
- Dr. Mark Bucci, Rutgers Univ.

2:00 Overview of the Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) program
- Don Savard, CSFM, Salesianum School

2:30 Managing infield skin surfaces
- Ryan Radcliffe, Lakewood Blueclaws

3:00 Insect management update for sports fields
- Dr. Albrecht Koppenhoffer, Rutgers

3:30 End of Session