COMMUNICATE from page 22

Your voice, in fact, is another key. It should be assured; use a strong, full (but not overwhelming) resonance. Speak clearly and distinctly. Show enthusiasm through pitch, volume and inflection. Vary your vocal qualities, but always speak naturally and at ease.

"Communicating is about openness," Jousan adds. Here are the keys:

- **Care** about what you’re talking about.
- **Connect**—use your physical self and tell stories or solve problems.
- **Commit**—you learn to speak by making a commitment.

If you’ve ever taken a Dale Carnegie course—and they are recommended, especially for people in managerial positions—

In order to find out why the mistake was made, you must pay careful attention to that same employee.

- Apply the Golden Rule and respect the dignity of others. For instance, criticizing that employee in front of his peers is taboo. Always take him or her aside.
- Be quick to admit mistakes and slow to criticize. And when you criticize, above all, be constructive so that the employee will follow instructions and do it right next time.

Additional information on this subject is available through a wide variety of books you can find at your local public library. Look in the section with the Dewey Decimal code number 658.84.

—Ierry Roche

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**Compost preferred over topsoil as soil amendment**

As compost becomes more available to landscapers, more and more topsoil is being replaced with compost for a variety of project uses.

- Whether for general grading purposes, lawn establishment or renovation, or tree and shrub planting, landscapers purchase and handle a tremendous amount of soil products.

One of those products—topsoil—has never been available in good quantity. Wide differences in availability exist among different areas of the country. Even within small geographic areas, price and supply can vary considerably, especially given the high cost of trucking topsoil, even over short distances.

Many contractors have difficulty with topsoil availability in metropolitan areas. In fact, some city and county governments have banned the shipment of topsoil across city or county lines to limit the stripping of topsoil before construction or new development.

Compost, on the other hand, is becoming increasingly available. More and more cities and towns, private composters and landscape contractors are composting.

The quality of materials used determines the quality of the compost you produce.

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Composting offers bottom line rewards as well as ecological benefits.

The company recouped that expense.
Compost efficacy

- Research by Peter Landschoot and Andy McNitt at the Penn State University Turfgrass Research Center during a 1992-1993 research project, studied the efficacy of seven compost amendments on clay loam subsoils. They were most interested in how different compost mixes effected turfgrass rate of establishment; overall turf quality; organic matter content; bulk density and infiltration.

“Our goal,” says Landschoot, “was to simulate a situation in which a contractor removes good topsoil from a new development and hauls it away from the site—a common practice that leaves a subsoil high in clay, low in organic matter and nutrients and unsuitable for good turf growth.”

Eight different composts, a reed sedge peat and a topsoil were applied at two rates: 6.2 cu. yds. per 1000 sq. ft. and 3.1 cu. yds. per 1000 sq. ft., at depths of four to six inches. The compost mixes tested were:

- yard trimmings;
- a biosolid compost from the water department;
- brewery waste;
- mushroom media;
- paper pulp;
- a mixture of various manures;
- a topsoil-amended plot.

The plots were seeded with Kentucky bluegrass. Among the findings:

- all compost treatments increased soil organic matter content, reduced bulk density and increased water infiltration rates when compared with the topsoil treatments and the unamended control plot;
- good turf quality was correlated with increasing levels of available phosphorus and nitrogen recovery;
- starter fertilizer increased the rate of turf establishment with all treatments except the biosolid compost and the brewery residues.

Landschoot says the quality of the material used is a big issue, as well as the length of time it takes before the organic portions of composts break down, how long soil improvements last and the effects of compost additions under heavy-traffic conditions. He plans to examine those issues in the near future, as well as a look at the efficacy of various compost mixtures when used as a topdressing.

Sprayer tune-up time

- A pre-season check is a good time to spot needed repairs.

Although sprayer brands and types differ slightly, they operate on the same principles. Industry and university experts recommend using the following checklist to tune-up all sprayers:

**Check for wear and tear—**Look for obvious damage to frame, running gear and tank.

- Drain antifreeze or water and check the pump for cracks or leaks.
- Test throttling valves, pressure gauges, hoses and clamps for leaks.
- Check nozzle gaskets for a tight fit.
- Clean line and tip strainers with fresh water and a soft brush.

**Check for uniformity—**Calibrate. Make sure nozzle size flow rate, and spray pattern are uniform across the boom.

- Measure flow rates from each nozzle and replace any tip which varies 10 percent or more from manufacturer's specifications. If two or more nozzles are off by 10 percent, replace the entire set of tips.

**Do's and don'ts—**Do check the chemical label to determine recommended application rate.

**Don't** think of calibration as a once-a-year task.

**Don't** try to calibrate your nozzles by blindly raising or lowering pressure to change flow rate. There isn't a linear relationship between the two variables. For example, a nozzle spraying at 10 psi will deliver only twice the amount of liquid when the pressure is increased four times to 40 psi.

**Do** adjust for variances in nozzle flow rate when spraying solutions with substantially different densities than water. Some solutions, such as 28 percent nitrogen, are heavier than water and would flow at a lower rate through the same nozzle.

When checking ground speed for calibration purposes, use a stopwatch to measure the time it takes the tractor to go 250 feet, then calculate speed with this formula:

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\text{Distance (ft.) \times 60} \div \text{Time (sec.) \times 88}
\]

Calibrate each nozzle individually, and check for worn or split hoses or leaky valves. LM