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The President's Desk

ANDREW GAYDON



Climate Change...

WOW, what a summer! Well, here in Ontario anyway. I understand many of our colleagues on the east coast would have welcomed a little less rain and a few more days of bright sunshine.

We experienced day after day of hot, dry weather. And when it did rain, it was of little benefit because it came down so fast and hard. I am sure many farmers, turf managers and gardeners were exasperated with the dry conditions, but it certainly was kind to the general public who, especially in Canada, deserve a good summer.

Because of the dry conditions, we are now discussing how we should rethink our gardens, parks, golf courses and sports complexes with respect to plants, grass varieties and most importantly, our watering habits.

We have all heard of the threats of global warming and it's often discussed around the water cooler or BBQ; however, summers like 2005 drive home the fact that it is real and we need to begin planning for the long term.

Scientists estimate that southern and central Canada will warm an average of 2-5 degrees Celsius within the next 75 to 100 years. The winter months are projected to warm faster than the summer months. These changes will have severe consequences for us, our children and the

ecosystems that support us. I think we all realize that we can not continue indefinitely with many of our current practices and behaviours but unfortunately, many of us seem quite slow to embrace change. Visit www.climatechange.gc.ca/onetonne/english/index.asp to find out more about *Canada's One Tonne Challenge* and how you can start to take small steps with respect to your own lifestyle that will make an impact.

Annual Field Day

Back to the present. The STA had yet another record Field Day on September 14 with high attendance and excellent speakers on very topical subjects. Check inside for coverage of this year's event.

As President, I would like to personally thank all the Field Day Committee, Jane Arnett-Rivers, Roy Forfar and Paul Turner for their tremendous commitment of time and effort into making the day a resounding success.

Thanks to the Town of Milton who were great hosts providing an excellent facility and making everything happen on schedule as promised.

A few other important ingredients were also crucial. Thanks to the Town of Milton who were great hosts providing an excellent facility and making everything happen on schedule just as promised. Finally, Lee Huether was the cement that put the program together, communicated to all concerned, generated the record attendance and quite simply, just 'made it happen.' Thanks Lee!

We are already planning for next year, but in the meantime, don't forget the Ontario Turfgrass Symposium *Strengthening Our Roots: A Growing Tradition*, February 20 & 21, 2006. An interesting and educational program is being finalized and your presence will be most welcomed.

The Board would like to wish you a very pleasant and healthy fall season. ♦

OTS 2006 Celebrates 15 Years This February!

STRENGTHENING OUR ROOTS: A GROWING TRADITION

The Ontario Turfgrass Symposium (OTS), celebrating 15 years of turf management education and leadership, offers educational programming that is second to none in the country. The symposium's theme, *Strengthening Our Roots: A Growing Tradition*, acknowledges the outstanding contribution the symposium has made to the Canadian turf industry.

Seminars will feature the latest in scientific research concerning reduction of pesticide use on turf, City of Toronto's Pesticide By-Law and identify the best grasses to use in restricted pesticide zones. Participants will learn about new grass species that can assist in conserving water on golf courses, home lawns and sports fields, as well as the latest trend in the United States of scrutinizing and limiting the application of phosphorous. These feature sessions further enhance the existing golf, lawn care, sod production and sports turf management sessions.

The 2006 venue, Rozanski Hall – the University of Guelph's newest, leading edge facility, has modern classrooms with state of the art presentation capabilities.



Proud sponsors of the symposium are the Guelph Turfgrass Institute, Sports Turf Association, Nursery Sod Growers Association, Ontario Recreation Facilities Association, Professional Lawn Care Association of Ontario, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Rural Affairs, and the Office of Open Learning, University of Guelph.

The two-day program is scheduled for February 20 & 21, 2006. To receive a 2006 OTS guide, please contact the Office of Open Learning, University of Guelph, at 519-767-5000 or info@open.uoguelph.ca.

Odds and Ends

2006 Turf Managers' Short Course, University of Guelph

Canada's most successful and valued Turf Managers' Short Course, held at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute, will be offered from January 30 – February 24, 2006. Benefit from the expertise and experience of industry professionals and University of Guelph faculty while enhancing your knowledge of all aspects of turf management and culture. For more detailed information, visit the TMSC website at www.open.uoguelph.ca/turfmanager or contact the Office of Open Learning, University of Guelph at 519-767-5000.

STA Membership Plaques

Display membership plaques are available in executive engraved walnut for \$50 plus S&H. To order, contact Lee at the STA office.

Winter 2005 Submissions

If you have something you'd like to submit for the next issue, please forward it to the STA office by October 21, 2005.



WELCOME TO THE TEAM! SPORTS TURF ASSOCIATION NEW MEMBERS...

Jeff Cunningham, City of Mississauga, ON

Mark Dykstra, City of Waterloo, ON

Jay Lavis, Dol Turf Restoration Ltd., Bond Head, ON

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Marc Patenaude, Pioneer Manufacturing Company, Inc., Barrie, ON

Rob Corey, Logic Alliance Inc., Kentville, NS

2005 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Jeff Fortune, City of Waterloo, ON
Turf Managers' Short Course

John Marshall, Blue Mountain Golf & Country Club, Collingwood, ON
Ontario Diploma in Horticulture (Turf Option)

Passing the Torch to a New Crop of Eager Students and Turfgrass Specialists

DONATIONS TO THE NORMAN E. MCCOLLUM TURFGRASS DIPLOMA ENTRANCE SCHOLARSHIP WELCOMED

After 37 years of teaching and research, Norman McCollum of the Guelph Turfgrass Institute (GTI) will be retiring in January 2006. Although Norman will no longer be involved in the day-to-day operations of the institute, his passion for his profession will continue with the establishment of the Norman E. McCollum Turfgrass Diploma Entrance Scholarship Award.

Norman retires as Superintendent of Research for the GTI. He graduated in 1966 with an Associate Diploma in Agriculture from the Ontario Agricultural College, University of Guelph, and then graduated from the Niagara Parks Commission School of Horticulture, magna cum laude.

Norman began his career as a Turfgrass Research Technician with Dr. Jack L.

Eggens in 1969 with the University of Guelph. One of Norman's chief professional accomplishments was in helping to establish the Turf Managers' Short Course offered through University of Guelph's Opening Learning Department. During his 35 years of teaching the course, over 2,000 individuals have benefited from Norman's expertise and guidance.

Norman has also been recognized for his support of students throughout the years by being named honorary class president for 10 diploma classes – OAC 79A, 80A, 81A, 83A, 85A, 87A, 93A, 95A, 97A and 2000A. Norman can also add scores of awards and recognition to his long list of accomplishments including those from the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Municipal Engineers Associa-

tion, the Ontario Golf Superintendents Association and the International Turfgrass Society.

In celebration of Norman's lifetime achievements, donations to the Norman E. McCollum Turfgrass Diploma Entrance Scholarship are welcomed.

Donation Information

If you wish to donate, please go to: www.alumni.uoguelph.ca/cgi-bin/online_giving2004.pl and fill in the required information. Note: under *pledge payment*, the answer is *no*. Under, *I would like to donate to*, click the button next to the *other* title, and type Norman's name in the box.



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2005 OTS Highlight. Team Leadership Skills: Five Tips

DR. LYNDA PINNINGTON HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE TWO-WAY TEAM COMMUNICATION

Over the past few years, many organizations have adopted a "team approach" in their workplace. This has happened for a variety of reasons: to increase productivity, reduce costs and improve employee morale to name a few. In most cases, the results have been positive. However, the shift to teamwork has also created an unexpected surprise for some managers and supervisors who may have been unaware that leading teams requires a different approach and different skills.

In this article, we will explore some of the keys to creating effective teams and some of the skills required by managers, supervisors and owners who wish to lead work teams successfully.

1. Clear Goals

To be effective, team members must have a clear understanding of the purpose and goals of the team. "Why do we need to

work as a team? What benefit will there be to me as an employee? What will be expected of me and how will it be different from working independently?" Employees will be asking all these questions and even if they do not ask them aloud, they will be thinking them. Team leaders have to ensure that they have some answers. Often, people will say that they have a good team at work, when in fact what they have is a nice group of people who get along well. A real team has specific goals and a clearly understood reason to exist.

A common mistake that is sometimes made in organizations is to make an announcement that there will be teams and then hope that somehow the employees themselves determine what this means. One company made a decision to adopt a team approach, bought sets of T-shirts in five different colours, had a company meeting to hand out the shirts and told

everyone, "You are now on the blue/red/yellow/green/black team." Unfortunately, that's as far as they went in the planning. The employees dutifully wore their designated shirts but had no idea what the purpose was or what it meant to be part of a particular team. After a few months, management became frustrated with the staff and blamed them for not being good team players. The whole thing came to a disappointing end because management had never really determined the purpose of the teams, nor had they communicated specific team goals to the staff.

2. Effective Communication

It seems as if communication is always mentioned, but it should be fairly obvious that if you want a group of people to work together as a team there has to be a solid basis for communication. This can mean many things from sharing knowledge and information to running effective team

meetings to being able to talk to one another about issues without creating conflict or hard feelings. Team leaders should work with team members to develop a Communication Plan which addresses the following questions:

- Who needs to be kept informed about what we are doing?
- Whose input do we need to carry out our work?
- Who needs to be consulted on team decisions?
- How will we ensure that everyone on the team has an opportunity to speak and contribute at team meetings?
- When will we meet? What will be the purpose of our meetings?
- How will we share information among employees who work different shifts and in different locations?

Sometimes our communication barriers are so subtle that we don't even realize they are there. One company found this out when they decided to use cross-functional teams to address customer service issues. The people working in the offices had no trouble communicating with each

other by telephone and email. But the employees in the field who worked in trucks had no access to computers and couldn't receive information, meeting agendas, etc. In fact, the only way that messages could be relayed to these employees was by contacting their supervisors and then hoping that the messages would be passed along. This company learned that they had to find ways to include their outside employees in the communication loop before they could even participate in teams.

3. Willingness to Share Decision Making

One of the most challenging adjustments for managers and supervisors as they shift to their new role as team leaders is to learn to share decision making. One of the greatest benefits of teamwork is having the collective thinking power of several people working on problems and coming up with new ideas to improve their work. Unfortunately, this is also one of the most difficult things for team leaders to accept, especially if they have a long history of making decisions independently.

Many owners, managers and supervisors fear that they will lose their power or the respect of their staff if they allow others to participate in decision making. They somehow see allowing others to contribute to decision making as a diminishing of their role and their authority. As a first step, if this does seem difficult, employees can be asked for their input on decisions or encouraged to contribute their suggestions or ideas. It is also unrealistic to expect employees who have never been asked to contribute to decision making before to become instant experts. Effective teams acknowledge that there is a learning curve here and many teams have discovered that it can be very helpful to have everyone on the team learn group decision making techniques. These techniques help people understand how to approach a decision, how to consider options in an objective manner and how to reach consensus while minimizing conflict.

4. Effective Utilization of all Team Resources

One of the major reasons that organizations adopt the team approach is to utilize the strengths and talents of their



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employees. In our complex world, it is becoming increasingly difficult for individuals to know everything there is to know or have the skill to carry out every job function in an organization. Think of a sports team. A baseball team made up of the 25 best pitchers in the world will not win the World Series. A variety of skills are needed – not just pitchers but fielders, batters, catchers and even bench players whose only role is to be ready to come into the game if someone gets hurt.

Good team leaders recognize that a key to success is to find out what each member brings to the team in terms of skills, abilities and knowledge and then to allow the team members to use those skills and abilities when appropriate. This not only adds to productivity but can also be very motivating for staff as well. A team leader who took the time to find out what staff members' talents were discovered that a young field employee was an excellent artist and was thrilled to be asked to help design and draw a poster. One characteristic of effective teams is that all team members are positive, active contributors.

Appreciating all team members' talents is a powerful way to create this positive environment.

The moral: one of the primary reasons to use a team approach is to create synergies which allow organizations and people to achieve much more than they could on their own. Finding out what each member brings to the team in terms of skills and talents and then providing opportunities for them to utilize those talents is a powerful motivator.

5. Willingness to Accept Feedback

Anyone who has taken a Supervisory Development course is well aware that providing feedback to staff is an essential component of a supervisor or manager's job. People need to know what they are doing well so they can continue to do it, and they need to know what they are not doing well so that they can work to improve. This feedback can be given informally during the course of the work day or formally in performance reviews and written or verbal evaluations. Traditionally in organizations, this feedback has

gone one way – from the manager or supervisor to the employee.

One of the most challenging shifts for traditional managers and supervisors is to realize that as team leaders they have to be open to receiving feedback from their teams as well. Now, some managers might immediately assume this means giving staff "carte blanche" to criticize them and undermine their authority. That is definitely not the intent. In fact, if that were to happen, it would probably be a signal that some groundwork needs to be done before the organization is ready for teamwork. What we mean here is that team members and team leaders have to be able to speak with each other honestly and openly. Team members have to be able to give positive feedback to the team leader. If employees appreciate receiving information and being consulted on decisions, they should be able to give that feedback to their team leader. Similarly, if team members find the team meetings boring or feel that they spend too much time listening to the team leader talk and don't have an opportunity to give their ideas, then they should also be able to give this feedback.

This means, as well, that it is a good idea for both team leaders and team members to learn how to provide feedback in a constructive, non-confrontational way. Many organizations which have formal annual performance appraisals for staff now include a segment in the appraisal meeting where employees are asked to provide feedback to the team leader and to provide their suggestions on how things could be improved in the coming year. Rather than creating a negative atmosphere, these companies are finding that doing this not only opens up communication but provides valuable feedback to managers and supervisors which they appreciate receiving.

Conclusion

Whether you have been leading in a team setting for a period of time, whether you have just recently begun working as a team leader, or whether you are still considering adopting a team approach, hopefully, these five tips will provide you with some practical ideas to help your team be successful. ♦

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availability of the supply. The following are the options that we have to address water scarcity.

Option 1. Increase Cost.

Price water higher so that we appreciate its value and are more careful and diligent with its use. This, however, has major negatives, particularly with respect to poorer people and nations. It's also hard to get a buy-in from all groups as there will always be different levels of need and availability.

Option 2. Water Re-use.

Water recycling can reduce fresh water consumption by up to 80% because there are many uses of fresh water that don't require it to be potable (of drinking quality) – cooling, construction, manufacturing and golf course irrigation to name a few. One problem of course is that this option is expensive and is not always available.

Option 3. Desalination.

If the desalination plant is near the coast, the supply is enormous, and with improvements in technology and decreasing costs, this option has a definite future. It does however have high capital costs and represents a negative for the environment.

Option 4. Alternative Plant Selection.

If used in the right location, many native plants can thrive on natural levels of



rainfall and therefore irrigation can be reduced or eliminated. A potential problem here is that some of these plants are often not colourful and with a variety of different plants, irrigation must be used again. Drip (or low volume) irrigation is sweeping the world in popularity, not just in agriculture, but also in other plant applications. Drip irrigation is very successful and dramatically conserves water for most plant material. Unfortunately, it has not been successful on turf.

Option 5. Water Efficient Irrigation.

This can be implemented immediately or in stages. There are significant savings in water and therefore dollars in both ag-

riculture and horticulture with proper design, products, installation, usage and maintenance.

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