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Editorial

The Association Crisis

Membership in associations in this industry is much too low. This factor alone greatly limits the influence of industry groups. We work with about 20 associations concerned with vegetation control. Few can boast that they represent 10 percent of their specific discipline.

We are dismayed that otherwise progressive business operators will leave this facet of business undone.

It is a fact of the business—and the neglect goes far beyond “letting George do it.” This industry—concerned with keeping the nation green and environmentally upright via both chemicals and mechanical means—is facing a crisis. Socially, in business, and in civic activity areas, both owner and employee find themselves facing doctors, lawyers, engineers, carpenters, computer operators, druggists, bankers, and the like who resent the fact that they use pesticides in any fashion, and for any reason. Contact with this public is a daily thing.

Because of this and the national hue and cry, the association voice becomes even more important. It can be strengthened only by participation from new members—and money generated from dues.

We've heard about all the members complaints. And we've heard the normal run of reasons for not joining. We won't try to answer these, because we do not believe they prevent associations in the green industry from attracting a more representative membership.

We believe the major reason is failure to sell new prospects on a personal contact basis. The custom businesses in our industry sell their own services by personal contact. They buy, as a rule, from salesmen, and on a personal contact basis.

Most executive-secretary staffs simply cannot go about the country selling association memberships. So, the job doesn't get done. Most organizations limp along with 10 percent or less of their potential.

Crux of solving the problem is selling. We believe that existing members—vitaly interested in their association and their businesses—can do this selling job. They need help with promotion and sales materials. But they can recruit successfully.

The most successful associations we've known have offered such services as insurance, marketing programs, technical aids, legislature leadership, and many others. But such activities have been supported by aggressive membership which represented a big segment of their potential.

If we had any influence in this sector, we'd suggest your mailing your membership check today.