

OUTLOOK

Association management changes suggest a return to the basics

Five different Green Industry associations have changed their management in the first half of this year. The primary reasons seem to be reevaluation of association goals by association boards, belt tightening in general as members tighten their own belts, and rejection of a 1970's philosophy common to association executives that they know what's best for their members.

Changing association management from multi-management firms to captive, single management was the reason for switches at the American Sod Producers Association and the Professional Lawn Care Association of America.

Multi-management firms have management systems designed more for the firm than the association. Boardmembers often find these systems limiting, expensive, and sometimes demeaning.



By Bruce F. Shank, Executive Editor

Some multi-management firms work better than others, especially when the various associations are related; such as the American Association of Nurserymen and its related groups, National Landscape Association, Wholesale Nursery Growers of America, Garden Centers of America, National Association of Plant Patent Owners, and the Horticultural Research Institute. Sharing resources in this case seems to work.

More aggressive board members disagreeing with their association executives were the cause for three other changes in management; James McLoughlin at the Golf Course Superintendents of America, Frank Smith at the National Golf Foundation, and Allen Smith at the Associated Landscape Contractors of America.

Association executives have a built-in problem dealing with boardmembers who constantly change. On the other hand, today's board member is more interested in member services and balancing the budget than launching image campaigns based upon shows, magazines and fancy headquarters. Today's board member expects his association to operate under the same principles as his own business. He also realizes the long-term solution to industry image is based more in technical and business competence of the membership than things which divert dollars from the real solution, good training. WTT

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