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 **RHÔNE-POULENC**

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WHERE IS YOUR COMPANY?

A strong position statement will set your company apart from the rest.

by Rudd McGary, Ph.D.

Positioning has been an important concept in advertising since the mid-1970s. To successfully position your company in the consumer's mind, you need to articulate exactly what that position will be—and you don't need boatloads of advertising dollars to make it work.

The most visible aspect of positioning is the position statement. Famous positioning statements include, "It's The Real Thing" (Coca-Cola), and "Less Filling, Tastes Great" (Miller Brewing Co.). Each is a one-line explanation of how a company wants to position its product.

The position your company takes will make an impact on it internally and externally. It helps the company focus on what it does and how it does it. It should be part of your company's larger mission statement.

What's the cost

Some companies spend millions of dollars to find that magic combination

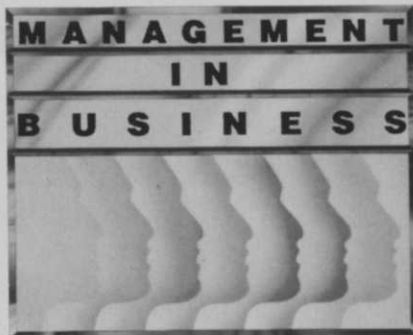
It is important to articulate a position.

of words that will stick in the customer's mind and influence them to purchase its product.

One green industry company that has used advertising to position itself nationally is ChemLawn, Inc. Its positioning statement used to be "Making America Green, One Lawn at a Time." Today, it's "We Care and It Shows." Both are designed to set the company apart in the customer's mind.

Though most green industry companies don't enjoy the deep advertising budget of a company like ChemLawn, positioning within your market is still possible.

A strong position is one that makes



you stand out in the minds of the consumer. Potential positions in the green industry include:

Professional service. Consumers want professional service from the moment they call you until they pay their bill.

Courtesy. A position statement like "Beautiful Lawns With a Smile" implies courteous service.

Responsibility. The customer wants to know what to do when mistakes are made. For example, the position statement "The People Who Work to Make Sure You're Satisfied," says that you'll do whatever it takes to make the customer happy.

Fair Price. This seems to be the most common green industry position, probably because every consumer wants a fair price. remember, you're more likely to distinguish your company with a position that isn't easily duplicated.

Safety. A position statement concerning the environment is effective in many areas. However, research has shown that consumers aren't willing to pay more for it.

All of these areas offer potential for a green industry company. The key is to choose an area that is both important to the consumer and offers a competitive edge.

Some position statements don't work for that reason. For example, a common position in the green industry is to offer a guarantee. Originally the concept worked well, but now

that it's part of nearly every company's position, its effectiveness is diluted. Unless your position statement differentiates you, it isn't working.

A good position statement has benefits within your organization as well. Employees often have an incomplete picture of the company for which they work. A position statement may shed some light on what they do and how they're to do it.

Employees generally work better together when they understand the company's position. It gives a basis for dealing with customers and helps set up all the advertising and sales efforts.

Companies that don't have significant advertising budgets need to rely on exposure to get position across. That means exploiting the times you're in contact with the customer, be it through Yellow Pages advertising, mailings, or during any office-to-customer communication.

In time, a strong position will begin to differentiate your company. **LM**



Rudd McGary, Ph.D., is a senior consultant with All-Green Management Associates in Columbus, Ohio

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Now there's a way to make all your spraying applications easier and safer. The New TeeJet[®] Lawn Spray Gun, with its interchangeable shower head-type nozzles *and* a spot-spray wand, helps you match the tool to the task.

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The TeeJet Lawn Spray Gun is the only lawn care gun with a trigger guard. It protects the applicator and the environment from accidental discharge.

So change the way you spray. Change to the TeeJet Lawn Spray Gun.



Leasing equipment offers advantages

When Tony Fox decided to get back into the landscaping business after seven years absence, he knew he wanted the best equipment available. But he also wanted to "test the waters" before committing himself to a large capital investment.

"There's a lot of commercial and residential construction going on in the Pacific Northwest," says the Vancouver, Wash. contractor. "But I wanted to be sure of the stability of the economy before making a lot of capital outlays."

Fox diligently shopped around for a skid-steer loader—the workhorse for his new company—Special Dig and Construction. "I put between 50 and 60 hours on every machine I demo'ed," he says. Finally he found the loader that best fit his needs and the flexible financing to help him get his business off on a fresh start, a model with tracks, one-yard bucket, forks and backhoe attachment.

"Case Power and Equipment of Portland, Ore., gave me a 90-day lease. They would have given me a six-month lease, but after 90 days I felt confident enough to roll the lease over into a straight purchase."

Innovation needed

Fox's experience illustrates the demand for innovative financing in the heavy equipment industry, says Phil Cote, Case Credit Corp. vice president for marketing and planning. One of the biggest challenges equipment financing companies face is responding faster to changing customer needs.

"Our customers' needs are changing faster in a more competitive marketplace," Cote says. "That's why we give dealers a great deal of flexibility in setting up financing arrangements."

One of the most important decisions facing a contractor who must upgrade or replace heavy machinery is the choice of a financing program. For example, lease financing can mean lower payments and shorter trade-in cycles; it's a way to fix costs and cash flow based on the operator's individual needs. "There's nothing wrong with paying only for what you use. And in this day and age, who can afford to needlessly tie up working capital?" Cote asks.

Money at work

Dick Krueger of Krueger's Associated Landscape, Hillsboro, Ore., agrees. "Leasing lets me keep my money



Flexible financing of heavy equipment may offer the landscaper lower payments, shorter trade-in cycles, and a way to fix costs and cash flow.

working for me. My business is exclusively commercial contracts and keeping my assets liquid gives me more bonding capacity to get bids."

But leasing is not the answer for every contractor.

"The decision to lease or buy is a very personal one and should be made in terms of one's unique financial situation," Cote says. "The majority of businesses that fail go under because of cash flow problems. A contractor must ask how important it is to have a title or deed to a piece of equipment in meeting contractual needs."

Lower payments are possible under a lease arrangement because the customer is not required to have equity in the equipment. "You can only pay a portion of the selling price, which is determined according to depreciation," Cote says. "Say the current retail value of a machine is \$10,000 and you only need it for two seasons of work. At the end of two years, you would still owe \$5,000 under a traditional four-year contract. With a lease however, you pay \$5,000 on the value of the machine during

the period of use."

Investment recovery

Usually contractors expect to recover some of their investment by trading in an old machine when it's been paid for. "That can backfire if the used equipment market softens and you don't get as much money back as you were counting on," Cote notes. "With leasing, you in essence receive the credit you would get on a trade-in up front."

Full-service financing is an integral part of the heavy equipment business. It benefits landscape contractors and others by making the use of new equipment more affordable.

"That's why we're currently reviewing all current finance programs and contracts in an effort to stay competitive," Cote says. Much of the input for new financing options comes from dealers.

"What influenced my decision was first, who had the better machine," says Fox. "After that however, it was which dealer offered the better support system."

LM

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QUICKIE-QUIZ

Proper calibration of spray equipment

Comparison of Pumps				
Type	Operating Range	Maximum Pressure	Materials Handled	Durability
Roller	300-1000 rpm	350 psi	wide range w/ proper rollers	spraying pressure decreases with wear, but worn rollers are easily replaced
Piston	100-600 rpm	1000 psi	any	long life
Centrifugal	1200-3500 rpm	200 psi	any	long life
Diaphragm	200-12,000 rpm	100 psi	any	long life
Gear	500-1800 rpm	100 psi	oil emulsions & nonabrasives not for wettable powders except when gears are of nylon	limited life under adverse conditions, spraying pressure & capacity decreases with wear
Flexible impeller	500-1500 rpm	50 psi	wettable pow- ders, mild abrasives	moderate
Sliding vane rotary	500-600 rpm	125 rsi	limited to oil and oil emul- sions	spraying pressure and capacity decreases w/wear

- Which of the following are important factors in the calibration of a sprayer?
 - discharge rate per nozzle
 - ground speed of the sprayer
 - nozzle spacing and boom length
 - recommended application rate
 - all of the above
- One way to achieve uniform coverage would be to:
 - use a higher rate of product
 - spray the area more than once
 - adjust the height of the boom
 - spray against the wind
- To spray 17 to 19 inches from the ground, what series of spray nozzle is recommended?:
 - 80 degree series
 - 73 degree series
 - 65 degree series
- As the orifices of the sprayer nozzle tips become worn, the spray pattern:
 - usually remains the same
 - is modified and more material is released
 - is modified and less material is released
- The lower the pump pressure, the _____ spray delivered.
 - more
 - less
 - faster
 - slower
- Which is not an accepted method of changing a sprayer's delivery rate?
 - adjusting the speed of the sprayer
 - changing pump pressure
 - altering the discs or nozzle sizes
 - moving the boom closer to the surface
- To reduce the risk of drifting, you should:
 - use more narrow angle nozzles
 - use more wider angle nozzles
 - increase ground speed
 - reduce ground speed
- What percentage of overlap is best for most uniform coverage?
 - 25 percent
 - 35 percent
 - 50 percent
 - 75 percent
- Nozzles on heavily used equipment should be replaced:
 - annually
 - twice a year
 - monthly
 - after each application
- Allowing for factors such as wind and irregular terrain, there should not be more than a _____ percent error in application.
 - one
 - five
 - 10
 - 15

Answers: 1) d; 2) c; 3) a; 4) b; 5) b; 6) d; 7) a; 8) d; 9) a; 10) b

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**We test the soil before
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We realize that the markets you serve have different turf, climate, and soil conditions. You tell us your specialized needs and problems, we'll provide soil testing when

needed, and then work with you to prepare an individual solution. It's easy on your part, thorough on ours.

All DOTS products are designed to meet the highest industry standards in uniformity and performance. In-house quality control means that each order delivered to you complies with our rigid specifications, assuring you the quality you expect.

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RESEARCH UPDATE

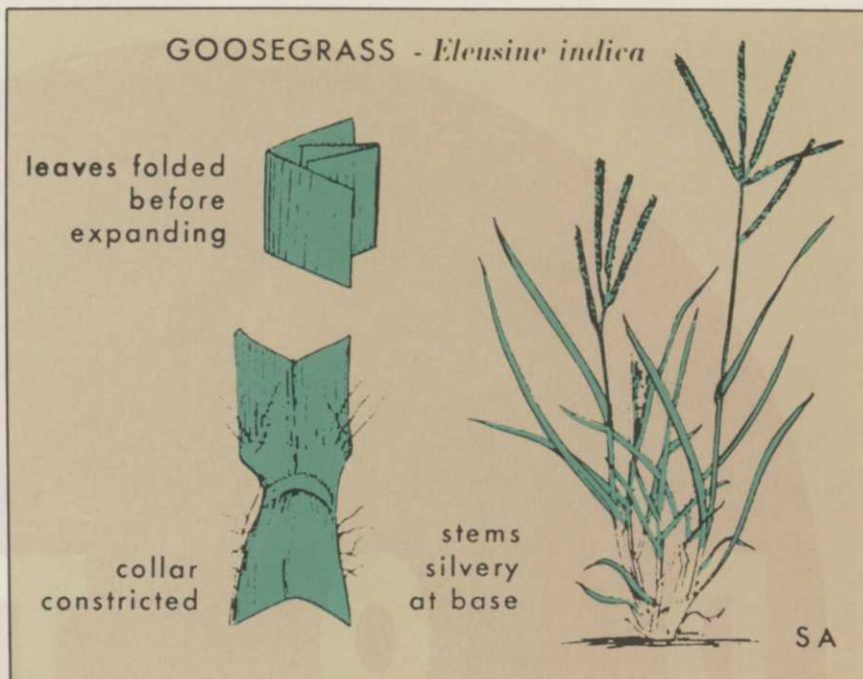
Tenacious goosegrass subject of study

Researchers at Clemson University are studying the genetic structure of goosegrass to solve the mystery of the species' remarkable resistance to common herbicides.

"We're taking a genetics approach to characterize resistance in the population rather than in the individual plant," says horticulturist Vance Baird. "We're trying to define susceptible plants and resistant plants through DNA techniques."

According to Baird, DNA identification is more specific than any visual determination made by the naked eye.

Goosegrass presents major problems to farmers and turf professionals throughout the Southeast. According to Ted Whitwell, a Clemson weed scientist, cotton farmers in South Carolina already spend about \$25 per acre for herbicides. Goosegrass' resistance costs them an extra \$10 to \$15 per acre.



Ancestral clues

Clemson researchers are investigating

Insights into goosegrass herbicide resistance may lie in its DNA structure.

if the resistant plants are the same or if they exhibit differences. According to Baird, if all the plants have the same resistance, it's safe to assume that they probably evolved from a common ancestor. Plants with different resistance capabilities, says Baird, indicate that the resistance phenomenon has arisen more than once. Genetic analysis distinguishes between the two possibilities, and allows scientists to eliminate one and focus on the other. Since farmers use like cultural and herbicide control practices, Clemson researchers believe the findings can apply anywhere.

only the resistant ones were left; but they were there all along," says Baird.

Another possibility is that there were no resistant plants, but that a recent genetic mutation has converted a susceptible plant into a resistant one. With continued use of the herbicide, their numbers are showing up large enough to detect them.

The one-year research program is funded by the USDA's Southern Regional Impact Pesticide Assessment Program. **LM**

Herbicides of choice

The herbicides commonly used to control goosegrass—which Clemson lists as Treflan, Prowl and Balan—belong to the dinitroaniline family of herbicides. They are widely used on row crops, turf and ornamentals. The products attack a specific protein in the grass, and it is that protein which gives researchers a starting point.

One possibility is that the resistance has existed since the plant's origin, but no one has been spraying herbicides to allow those few individual plants to survive and become a significant part of the natural population of goosegrass.

"The herbicide eventually killed off all the susceptible ones until



Vance Baird

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