

INDUSTRY

Customer service easy as counting, says ALCA speaker

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Creating good customer service is as easy as 1-2-3-4-5-6-7, says Richard Akerman, president of Northwest Landscape Industries.

Akerman, speaking before the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA), listed the seven "basics of customer service" that all industry professionals can benefit from.

1. The secret to winning customers is to reward them. Be prompt, kind, agreeable, complimentary, polite, make recommenda-

tions and deliver more than you promised.

2. Forget about selling. Concentrate on helping customers decide what's best for them.

3. Remember that the greatest customer you'll ever win is you, because the best sales person is the true believer.

4. The only two things people really buy are good feelings and solutions to problems.

5. Remember that when in contact with a customer, you are the company.

6. Providing excellent

LANDSCAPING

Construction downswing helps free up labor force

ORLANDO, Fla. — Mike Stewart of Ground Control Environmental Services says that competition for college graduates is strong in the landscape market. "We all recruit," says Stewart. "In the past, there were 10 jobs for every graduate. But the downswing in construction has helped."

"Over the last several years, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the good times," he notes. But, he adds, in his area the landscape construction boom is over, and more design/build companies are doing more full-service maintenance, especially among corporate clientele.

Promotion from within is "without a doubt," a tenet of Stewart's business management. "I would say half the staff has been promoted from within the organization. Quite a few of the supervisors who started out as laborers showed some aptitude.

"One was a carpenter from Trinidad. We didn't identify him as anyone spe-

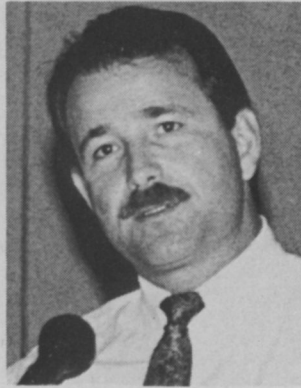
cial. He was dependable, and now he runs one of the crews."

Do low wages keep people away from landscaping? "I think it's a combination of that and the business," Stewart admits. "It's weekend work, it's a lot of late work. It's not a nine-to-five job."

What frustrates Stewart are the times at which he establishes his prices based on proper horticultural treatments—such as applications of pre- and post-emergence control products—and finds companies bidding at prices that are lower than Stewart's chemical costs.

"I try to explain to the contract administrator that my chemical costs are more than what (the competitor) is charging," says Stewart. "He's going to cut the lawn; that's all he's going to do."

"And the sad thing about it is that you probably won't see a difference for the first year. But long term, you're going to have problems with evergreens, crabgrass, broadleaves." □



Akerman: to sell, you must truly believe in company.

service isn't enough. You need to subtly remind the customer that you're doing so.

7. To win new customers, ask the golden question: what is their unmet want? To keep current customers, ask them, "how are we doing?" □

Next month:

- Top 50 landscapers
- Warm-season insect control
- Making your job safer
- Right-of-way landscaping

EVENTS

MARCH

13-14: Reinders Brothers Turf Conference, Equipment Show and Service Clinic, Waukesha (Wisc.) Expo Center. Contact: Ed Devinger, Reinders Brothers, (414) 786-3301.

14-15: California Interior Plantscape Association Council conference and trade fair, Sequoia Athletic Club, Buena Park, Calif. Contact: Hartley Bennett, CIPAC Seminar Coordinator, P.O. Box 414, Wickensburg, AZ 85358; (602) 684-7308.

17-20: Public Golf Manage-

ACADEMIA

WTA will open research center

OCONOMOWOC, Wisc. — The O.J. Noer Research Center will soon become a reality at the University of Wisconsin.

Don Roskopf, president of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association, said at the association's annual conference that ground-breaking took place in October.

"Dreams do come true," said Monroe Miller, superintendent of Black Hawk Country Club. According to Miller, \$100,000 of the \$300,000 cost has been raised.

The 27-room facility includes two conference rooms and pesticide and soil research facilities.

The deed for the completed center will be given to the university.

The Bruce Co. of Wisconsin is playing a large part in constructing and landscaping the center. Industry contributors include the Reinders Bros. and Spring Valley Turf Products. Grass seed was supplied by Kellogg Seed, Old Seed and Northrup King.

Fund-raising continues. □

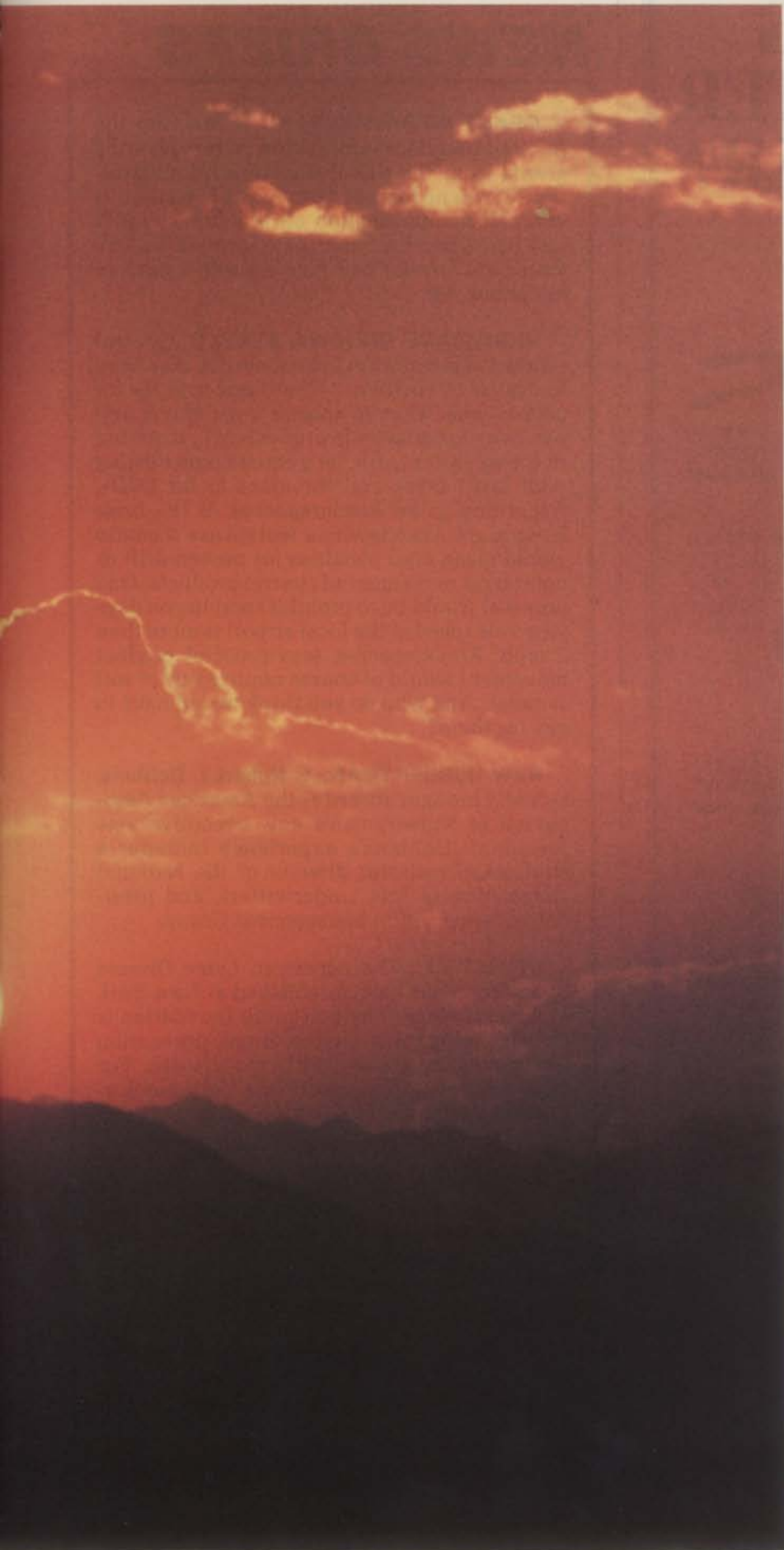
ment Association, National Forum on Public Golf Management, Hyatt Regency-DFW Hotel, Dallas. Contact: PGMA, 8030 Cedar Ave., Suite 228, Minneapolis, MN 55425; (612) 854-7272.

27-28: University of California Cooperative Extension Entomology Conference, UC-Riverside. Contact: (714) 787-3718.

27-28: Yard Waste Management Conference, Albany (N.Y.) Hilton Hotel. Contact: Cary Oshins, 466 Hollister Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853; (607) 255-9587.



©1990 CIBA-GEIGY Corporation, Turf and Ornamental Products, Box 18300, Greensboro, NC 27419. Always read and follow label directions.



THERE ARE
TWO THINGS YOU
CAN COUNT
ON WITHOUT FAIL.
OURS IS THE
ONE WITH
THE CONVENIENT
HANDLE.

There are certain things you take for granted.

Like the sun rising each and every day.

And the fact that Subdue[®], applied preventively every 10-21 days, virtually eliminates the threat of Pythium.

And while the handle certainly makes Subdue easier to grab onto, it's also worth noting that, unlike the sun, Subdue comes in both liquid and granules.

For details, contact your turf products distributor.



LOOKING FOR A BETTER SOD CUTTER?

Turfco Gives You Two



Turfco introduces the newest idea in sod cutters: a choice. Choose the Turfco Pro or Pro Lite. Both have been redesigned for smoother running, simpler operation and lower maintenance costs. Now you can fit the machine to the job, instead of the other way around.

Turfco has shown our dedication to quality, customers' needs and innovative design by building rugged turf maintenance products that have been the better choice since 1953.

See the entire family of high quality Turfco products at your local Turfco dealer, or call 612 / 785-1000 for the dealer nearest you. Fax number 612 / 785-0556.

TURFCO
Simply Better.

Circle No. 148 on Reader Inquiry Card

NEWS BRIEFS

GRANT INFORMATION II... Remember the number to call for information on tree planting grants from the Small Business Administration? It was no longer in service by presstime. If you call for information on the grants, you'll just be referred to your state forester. So call your state forester and save yourself a game of telephone tag.

NIGHTMARE ON IOWA STREET...Control product applicators in Iowa some day may have to deal with "drifters." That's our new tag for people who want to impose regulations and penalties for miniscule product drift. It started in the ag sector (sure, let's equate crop dusting with lawn care), and threatens to hit LCOs. According to **Ed Rinderspacher** of the Iowa Lawn Care Association, a worst-case scenario would mean civil penalties for proven drift or non-target movement of control products. One proposal would be to prohibit spraying on days when air speed at the local airport is more than 7 mph. Rinderspacher says proof of product movement would of course require turf or soil samples. And who do you think would have to pay for them?

NEW NURSERYMAN...is **Robert J. Dolibois**, recently brought aboard as the American Association of Nurserymen's new executive vice president. Dolibois's experience includes a stint as an assistant director of the National Association of Life Underwriters, and president of Association Management Group.

LYME TIME...The American Lyme Disease Foundation has been established at New York Medical College. The non-profit foundation is for advancing research, treatment, prevention and public awareness of Lyme disease. For more information, contact New York Medical College, Valhalla, N.Y. by phoning (914) 993 4529; (914) 993-4536.

BOOK MONEY FOR KIDS...More than \$25,000 in post-secondary scholarships is to become available for the dependents of small business owners in the U.S. and Canada. "We know that education is essential in today's knowledge-based society," says Dan Sautner of Padgett Business Services, Athens, Ga. Padgett, a network of more than 130 franchises providing accounting and tax services to small businesses, is sponsoring the scholarships. For more information, call (404) 548-1040 in the U.S. or (416) 890-5777 in Canada.

HOW TO MAKE THE GRADE IN TURF.

THE A-TEAM FROM NK MEDALIST.[®]

AMIGO,
ARRIBA
AND ARID
TALL
FESCUES.

We've blended three of the best improved tall fescues available and named them the A-TEAM. The



name says it all about the high grade of performance you can expect.

Arriba and Amigo are dwarf varieties that have ranked at or near the top in low-maintenance, color, texture and other key categories in the National Turf Evaluation Program (NTEP) Tall Fescue Trials. Arid, a semi-dwarf, finished the most recent NTEP Trials ranked #1 in overall turf quality. And all three varieties are already making the grade in actual use. These NK exclusives



are available individually or in the A-TEAM blend. Contact your NK Medalist Turf Distributor, or call 1-800-545-6093.



NK Medalist headquarters: Minneapolis, MN. Branches in: Tangent, OR, Sun Prairie, WI, Bound Brook, NJ, Chattanooga, TN.

It Stopped Just To Have Its P

You're witnessing a rare sight. Toro's Reelmaster® 450-D actually standing still. A rare sight because the Reelmaster 450-D is so dependable that it goes and goes and goes. Giving you the high capacity mowing and precise even cutting you've been looking for.



Each cutting unit is connected to a universal joint, so it can float freely in any direction, following the contour of the turf for an even, uniform cut. Or can be locked in a fixed position.

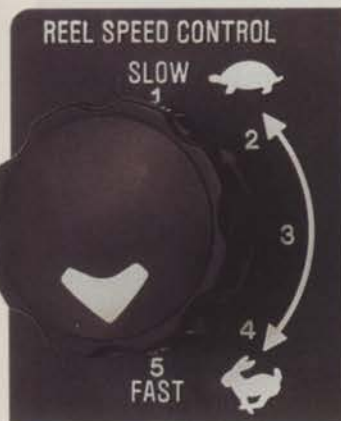


The Toro 450-D gives you protection against hydraulic fluid leaks. Wherever possible, hoses have been replaced with strong steel lines and O-ring seals protect connections. A hydraulic warning system flashes an alarm when the fluid level drops. For easy servicing, test ports for the hydraulic system are right on the side of the machine.



The Reelmaster 450-D can be customized with these accessories: ROPS, Cab, 5- and 7-bladed reels, rollers and thatching reels.

Long Enough Picture Taken.



Toro's exclusive variable clip control allows you to calibrate reel speed and mowing speed to give you the highest quality of cut in varying course conditions. Combine that with faster mowing speeds, up to 7.5 mph and 12.5 mph transport speed, and you're going to witness an increase in productivity. All controls are in easy reach of the operator to provide greater comfort.

The 450-D is designed with its weight evenly distributed around a center-mount 50 hp engine for better balance. This means more up-hill climbing ability than other machines and better traction.



Compared to tractor gang mowers, the Toro 450-D weighs less and is equipped with wide 31-inch tires that spread the weight for the lowest PSI, further minimizing turf marking.



For faster, easier mowing with more beautiful results, call your local Toro distributor for a demonstration of the Reelmaster 450-D or contact Toro at the address below. A machine built from the ground up with proven Toro design experience. And that translates into the kind of productivity no one can argue with.



The Professionals
That Keep You Cutting

"Toro", and "Reelmaster" are registered trademarks of The Toro Company. ©1988 The Toro Company.

THE BEST ISN'T ALWAYS
THE BEST KNOWN



Not everyone knows the GRAZER name, but those who do also know GRAZER is today's best value in mowing products. Features such as fingertip control hydrostatic drive, a true zero turning radius, tilt back deck and exceptional weight distribution make GRAZER the name to look for. Write or call for more information today.

GRAZER

GRAZER DIVISION, M&W GEAR COMPANY
ROUTE 47 SOUTH, GIBSON CITY, ILLINOIS 60936
PHONE: 217-784-4281

Circle No. 116 on Reader Inquiry Card

You've Paid Your Dues. Now Pay Yourself.

A ServiceMaster LawnCare Franchise lets you be your own boss and get the payback you deserve. As the industry leader, we offer all the training and support you need. So you're on your own, but with a lot of company behind you. If you're overdue for a promotion, call toll-free at 1-800-228-2814.

Partners in the ServiceMaster Quality Service Network—

ServiceMASTER. TERMINIX. merry maids.
AMERICAN HOME SHIELD®

Circle No. 140 on Reader Inquiry Card

ATHLETIC TURF

Foxboro to natural grass

Installation of a new heated sand-based grass field in Foxboro Stadium, home of the New England Patriots' NFL team, has begun. The natural surface will replace the seven-year-old artificial SuperTurf surface.

"This is a great commitment on behalf of Victor Kiam and the Patriots organization to install a proven natural turf field," says Patriot CEO Sam Jankovich. "This is in the best interest of Patriot players and other players around the NFL. In addition, such a surface is conducive to a better brand of football.

The surface is designed and installed by Randall & Blake Environmental Contractors of Littleton, Colo., which built the Denver Broncos' practice fields in 1989.

The grass surface should be completely installed by May 1, and the field should be ready to play by June 1, according to Dan R. Almond of Randall & Blake.

Mark Altman of Altman & Altman is being retained as turf consultant.

Spring institute grows

California Polytechnic University in Pomona has expanded its eight-year-old spring institute and trade show to include a grounds operations conference.

The Sports Turf Institute and Grounds Operations Conference will be held March 19 this year. Educational sessions are slated for morning hours, followed by lunch and trade show and equipment sessions after noon.

"The new program will offer the latest information on maintaining trees, groundcovers and turf on tight institutional budgets," says conference chairman Dr. Kent Kurtz. "It will stress the basics, such as irrigation, fertilization, pest control, plant selection, water conservation, planning and pruning."

For more information, call Cal Poly's Horticulture Department at (714) 869-2219.

To join STMA

To receive information on services offered by the Sports Turf Managers Association, write: STMA, P.O. Box 98056, Las Vegas, NV 89193 (702) 739-8052. **LM**

Here's proof that Typar Pro Landscape Fabric is easier to install.



We cut this piece of Typar® Pro Landscape Fabric to show what you can't do with the others.

Like cut quick slits for plants to pass through. Or fast curves that follow landscaped contours.

Typar is easily cut, lightweight and less bulky. So it's faster and cheaper for you to install.

And it's surprisingly tougher. With rugged polypropylene fibers that resist tearing, even under stones, gravel, patios and sidewalks. Typar is also porous, so air, water and nutrients can pass right through. Your landscaping projects



look healthy as well as handsome.

So save time and labor while you control weeds, drainage, soil erosion, and heaving of walks and patios.

Get Typar Pro Landscape Fabric. And start cutting corners the easy way.



GREEMAY
a member of The InterTech Group, Inc.

Now, More Than Ever, T



In this age of environmental concern, it's nice to know that there's an effective way to protect your turfgrass, trees and ornamentals against damaging pests without compromising the environment: CHIPCO® SEVIMOL® brand carbaryl insecticide. You see, not only does CHIPCO® SEVIMOL® control your worst turf enemies, it also protects trees and ornamentals against 86 troublesome insects.

Chipco®

As with any crop protection chemical, always read and follow instructions on the label. CHIPCO and SEVIMOL are registered trademarks of Rhone-Poulenc.