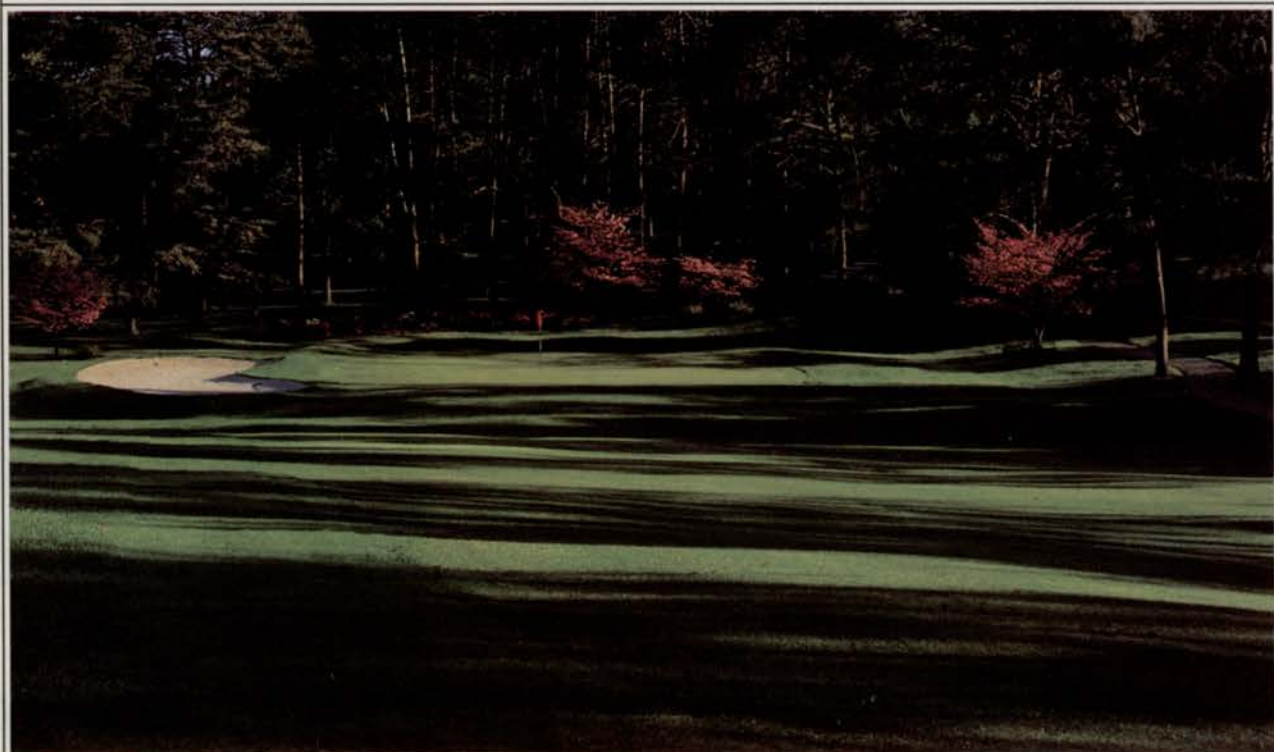
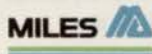


TO GET LEAF SPOT CONTROL LIKE THIS, YOU'D  
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# Small businessman's needs are met by D.C.-based group

## NFIB is indeed a national voice for small businesses in the U.S.

■ The National Federation of Independent Businesses, a Washington-based organization for the small businessman, is "an unheralded alliance of little guys," describes *U.S. News & World Report* magazine.

William Thornton Jr. of Thornton Industries, Maineville, Ohio, outlined in a letter to *LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT* benefits of belonging to the NFIB.

"Your editorial 'The plight of the small businessman' (Dec., 1991) was right on track. You are absolutely right that the number of landscape and lawn care companies, like all small businesses in this

country, is increasing. Small business is where most of the new jobs are created. The small and independent business is the growing part of our economy.

"You are right about small business men and women working long hours. And because of their limited time, they should be involved in the events that enable them to do more than they could on their own. It is important to be involved in events like the PLCAA Legislative Day or the recent ALCA/AAN Legislative Conference, and make these contacts with our legislators.

"Recently, NFIB has worked hard on such issues as these:

- parental leave,
- civil rights,
- unemployment compensation benefits extensions,

"NFIB is indeed a voice for small busi-



**Thornton: there's help for small companies at the NFIB.**

ness in Washington, D.C. and all 50 state capitals. The NFIB position is that of small business owners because it is only determined by regular votes of its members."

Typical new member dues in the NFIB is \$100, which includes a subscription to *Independent Business* magazine. For more information, phone (202) 554-9000 or write: NFIB, 600 Maryland Ave. SW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20024.

# Career tracking for valuable employees

## When your employees track their progress, everyone wins.

by E.T. Wandtke

■ Have you ever lost good workers to another organization, after they have been with you for a couple of years?

If so, did you consider why they left?

Over the years, I have heard many reasons why seasoned green industry employees have left their company. However, I still don't think the owner realized the true reason why the employee left.

Boredom...a change...unhappiness...not enough money—these are but a few reasons why employees leave an organization. But there *is* a way to stop this from happening!

**Symptoms vs. reasons**—To prevent this scenario, you must follow a few simple steps.

**1) Job description.** First, those "reasons" that employees leave are not truly reasons but symptoms of a lack of planning. What do I mean? Simple: you must anticipate what your employee's future needs will be, and make sure you find a way to meet these needs if you value that

employee. And the easiest way to start employee planning is to make sure you have a job description for each employee.

The job description should provide the employee with a blueprint to becoming successful in the company. List the skills the employee will need to do or to develop to do the job. Once a clear job description has been laid out, the employee now has something to shoot for.

**2) Career path.** Once you have established employee job descriptions, you must develop a career path for the employee to follow to reach supervisory and management positions. List the skills which you see as necessary for a supervisor or manager in your company. List the duties he or she is expected to perform and the responsibilities he or she will have. The key here is to tell employees exactly what skills and qualities you would like to see in an ideal manager.

**3) Employee development.** Now that you have developed a job description and a career path, listing the skills that are necessary to be acquired along the way, you are halfway toward developing a complete employee planning program.

The *employee* must:

a) Learn what is expected and the skills required. Often, this means only reading the job description.

b) Work to develop those skills which he or she does not possess. Skills necessary for advancement take time to master, but knowing what is required is half the battle.

c) Seek help if unable to master some of the tasks/skills required.

The *employer* has two additional responsibilities beyond creating a job description and developing a career path.

a) Recognize the skills that certain employees are lacking. This might seem obvious, but often when I ask, "Why won't Jim be a good manager?" I get: "I don't know" as an answer.

b) Provide a means for the employee to acquire the necessary skills. For example, I suggested one of my clients begin doing nightscaping, but the client's employees weren't trained to do this. It was then his responsibility to make sure there was a means by which these employees could be trained.

**Summary**—If more companies establish plans for employee development strategies, there will be less turnover in the green industry.

One thing I often hear is that a certain company might not need that many managers. My response is easy: if you have that many capable bodies, maybe you should be expanding and not trying to limit your internal growth.

# The fight against yellow nutsedge begins here.



## Only Basagran<sup>®</sup> T/O ends it here.

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An over-the-top application is all it takes to win the fight against yellow nutsedge and broadleaf weeds. (A second



application is recommended when re-growth occurs.) And while it's tough on weeds, it's easy on virtually all varieties of established turf.

Basagran T/O is also labeled for directed sprays in ornamental varieties.

For more information on how to control yellow nutsedge and broadleaf weeds with Basagran T/O, call **Toll Free 1-800-878-8060.**

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So when you control insects and mites with Mavrik, you can rest easy. And so can the neighborhood.



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# MAVRIK

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◀ Have park signs convey a clear, simple meaning.

## Designing, specifying signs for use in public parks

by Dr. Arthur H. Mittelstaedt, Jr.

**Playground signs are most effective when they command attention and are easily understood.**

■ To be effective, a sign is a control device and should meet five basic requirements:

- 1) fulfill a need;
- 2) command attention;
- 3) convey a clear, simple meaning;
- 4) command the respect of users; and
- 5) give adequate time for proper response.

To ensure that these requirements are met, the critical factors are design, location, operation/maintenance and standardization. The following recommendations should be considered in sign design:

**Text**—The statements on a sign should comply with the following guidelines:

- 1) Use simple, easily understood statements.
- 2) Bold print is a must.
- 3) Use short sentences.

- 4) Use short words.
- 5) Avoid excess words.
- 6) Limit fancy lettering.

**Symbols**—A pictograph is simply a symbol which is part of a recognized or accepted system of symbols, like handicapped and no smoking pictographs. Symbols are perceived faster than words and are especially effective with children, and where there are language, social and cultural barriers.

The following guidelines are important considerations:

- 1) The symbol should never be used alone where it might not communicate the full danger. Explanations are required.

### Signage colors, three levels



- 2) The symbol should not be complex.
- 3) Each symbol should be so unique that it will not be confused with another symbol, particularly precaution or prohibition pictographs.
- 4) The symbol must be competently drawn and executed.
- 5) The symbol must be used in the proper sign shape and proper colors must be used.
- 6) The symbol and words should be in close proximity to one another.
- 7) The symbol should express the full nature of the precautions or prohibitions involved.
- 8) The symbol should accompany the proper word choice: "danger" has a greater effect than "warning" or "caution."
- 9) The symbol could be used in conjunction with the three precaution words. Effective warnings in level of seriousness would be:

Danger: high voltage

Warning: submerged obstacles

Caution: sharp edges

**Colors**—The universally-recognized colors on signage are:

- red = danger
- orange = warning
- yellow = caution

The suggested colors are within the color tolerance limits specified by the United States Department of Transportation Color Tolerance Charts and the ANSI Standard Z535.1 ("American National Safety Color Code").

On instruction signs, lettering can be black. If a safety notice message, it can be green. If it is an information message such as "hospital" or "doctor," it can be the color light blue. If it is emergency aid service or equipment, it can be red. The standards should be further consulted for other colors.

**Shape**—The universally-recognized shapes are the square for use of the permission or prohibition symbol; the diamond for caution; the octagon for stop, along with the square with the horizontal bar (do not enter). Other shapes have also been standardized.

The specification for signs should follow the CSI format. The adjacent specification is an example of park signage being used in Nassau County, New York.

—The author is board chairman of the Recreation Safety Institute, P.O. Box 392, Ronkonkoma, NY 11779. Phone number at the institute is (516) 563-4806.



# A sample signage spec sheet

■ Here is how the Nassau County Parks Department specifies its signage:

## PLAY AREA ENTRY SIGN

**1. Description**—Under this item, the contractor shall furnish and install sign panels and sign supports in accordance with the plans and specifications.

**2. Materials**—All materials shall be of the best or top grade product for each particular item required herein.

Sign panels for both A & B signs shall be .125 (1/8) inch aluminum sheets cut to the dimensions specified.

Sign panels shall be painted with white ScotchCal on surfaces dry and cleaned free from all dirt, grit, grease and other foreign substances.

Sign panels shall have painted letters, Nazadar screen processing, #59-144, medium green synthetic gloss enamel available from (name of supplier, address, phone number), or approved equal, on a white background. Letter size shall be helvetica bold upper case or otherwise sized as per plans.

## Posts

The posts shall be 4x4-inch 100 percent recycled plastic lumber as manufactured by (name of supplier, address, phone number), or approved equal. Color to be gray. Height and length shall be as shown on the drawings.

The posts in footings or on the ground shall be treated with an approved bitumastic coating.

## Footings

Footings shall have a minimum depth of three feet and a minimum diameter of 12 inches, or as shown on the footing schedule, or as directed by the engineer. All concrete shall conform to item #18 Class B Concrete for Structures, but shall be included in the price bid for each item.

## Construction

The work shall be accomplished in a workmanlike manner.

All signs shall be level and plumb and withstand outdoor elements.

## Hardware

Bolts, nuts, washers and all other hardware shall be hot-dipped galvanized, tamper-proof steel.

## Text

### 1. PLAY STRUCTURES

- No climbing down if anyone is in the way
- No bumping another climber

- No jumping off play structure
- No one-handed climbing
- No pushing, shoving or crowding

### 2. SWINGS

- No standing on swings
- No swinging with more than one person at a time
- No swinging with one hand
- No swinging empty swings
- No jumping off or baling out
- No walking or sanding near to a moving swing
- No twisting chains

### 3. SLIDES

- No head first
- No two together
- No sliding on back
- No standing or climbing on side
- No kneeling on slide
- No jumping
- No dangling arms or legs
- No sliding backwards or spinning around
- No sliding askew
- No dragging feet

### 4. SPRAY/PLAY AREA

- No running
- No pushing or crowding
- No blocking spray
- No sitting or standing on or over spray nozzles
- No climbing
- Do not drink the water

### 5. SAND BOX/SPACES

- No glass or sharp objects
- No throwing
- No eating in area
- No removing sand

### 6. ROCKING SHOVELING/MOVING DEVICES

- No pulling or pushing
- No doubling up
- No standing near
- No placing feet or hands near moving parts
- No standing or sitting on handles or foot rests

**3. Method of measurement**—The quantity to be paid for under this item shall be per each unit or sign for Sign Type A and each unit or sign for Sign Type B and other designated sign types, including posts, hardware, excavation, grading, backfill, concrete footings and painting, furnished and installed in accordance with the plans, specifications and directions of the engineer.

**4. Basis of payment**—The unit price bid for each unit or sign shall include the cost of furnishing, lettering, installing concrete footings and all other work including labor materials, equipment and all incidentals necessary to complete the work.

— Dr. Millestaedt



Kids want to play, not read. Let the symbols do the talking.

Photo courtesy of Landscape Structures, Delano, Minn.

# Cooperation builds new athletic fields

**Voters in Rockford, Mich. approved a \$40 million bond issue for a new school and athletic facilities—built correctly this time.**

■ It helps to have friends in the right places—namely, on the school board—if you're in charge of school athletic fields.

In Rockford, Mich. (pop. 3,400), school board president James Bogart is an agronomist with the nearby firm of Turfgrass Inc. It's no coincidence that, within two years, this growing school system about 10 miles northeast of Grand Rapids will have a new high school and also:

- ✓ a 5,000-seat football stadium,
- ✓ varsity and practice baseball/softball fields,
- ✓ track and field facilities,
- ✓ a soccer practice field,
- ✓ two football practice fields, and
- ✓ eight tennis courts.

The district will have the new school and sports complex because voters smiled favorably on a \$40 million bond issue in November, 1989.

Playing key roles in the development of this ambitious project are Bogart and site planner/landscape architect Mark Wrona of the architectural firm Greiner, Inc., Grand Rapids. They've helped nurture and maintain cooperation among board members, designers and contractors concerning construction of the athletic fields, say co-workers.

Bogart insists passage of the bond issue was critical. He says the district had been growing by 250 to 300 new students a year. There was no more room in the schools.

Building a new school was one issue, but Rockford District residents also indicated by survey that they wanted more students to have the opportunity to compete. They wanted a more comprehensive school intramural program.

School leaders began addressing these wishes.

"The Rockford School Board determined early in the construction process that our new athletic complex would be done properly using modified soils, proper irrigation and adequate drainage," recalls Bogart.

Previously-built ball fields in the district, he says, suffer from three problems:

- poor construction and design,
- built on heavy clay soil without drainage,



**James Bogart says school board was committed to the best fields the school could afford.**

- and poor maintenance. (Is *that* all?)

So, starting from the ground up, school officials learned that topsoil at the 80-acre new school site contains 44.6% sand, 26.7% silt and 28.7% clay, adequate for the lawn in front of the school, but not good for sports fields.

The soil would have to be modified to make a good foundation for sports turf.

Coincidentally, test borings at the building site discovered existing sands in both fine and coarse texture. Samples were sent to Michigan State University for analysis. Yes, the report back from MSU said, the coarse sand is an excellent sand to use in an 80/20 sand/peat mixture for sports fields.

Securing the cooperation of site planners, architects and contractors, the sand



**New Rockford High Stadium being built into slope for beauty, cost savings.**