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THE PROFESSIONAL'S CHOICE ON TURF.

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HANG TEN



◀ **Hornung: Follow maintenance and construction standards.**

▼ **Fik: Balance player needs with turf agronomic needs.**



is not going to accept much more water unless you aerify it. If it rains, the water just sits there."

The answer lies in compromise.

"We tell the coaches we will not roll the field under certain conditions," says Fik. "Luckily, an indoor practice facility makes the decision easy to deal with."

Fik says the field hockey coaches also like a short turf height, from 3/4 to 7/8 inches, which gives him the willies.

"Depending on the type of grass, that's difficult to do; you could be inviting weed and disease problems," says Fik. "So we overseed at certain times of the year to get it down to that height."

"We also bought a Jacobsen Tri-King reel mower. Marriott and the two colleges each kicked in a third of the cost for the mower." To thin the turf, Fik's crew makes two passes with a Jacobsen sweeper and try to refrain from watering for three days.

Fik believes player safety is closely related to proper drainage. Identify the problem drainage areas, and work with the athletic department to outline a budget for a gradual repair program.

On expectations— Donald Sauvigne, director of building and grounds services at Columbia University says the future of sports turf management "is going to be based on how well we manage the expectations of others. In order to manage everyone's expectations, we have to educate them, and understand what their expectations are."

"The dilemma facing higher education is that nobody wants to hear our financial problems, but we've been meeting people's growing expectations for years, and we've become victims of our

own success."

To best react to the enrollment crisis, which is likely to put a dent in field budgets, Sauvigne says every turf manager needs to understand and subscribe to the objectives of the university it serves.

"Understand the place of sports turf and the mission of the school when it comes to athletics. The turf manager is a member of the team in helping support those expectations."

Pro sports— "The future of sports turf has never been brighter," says Jim Hornung, head

SPORTS TURF: CUSTOMER-DRIVEN

1. Know expectations of players, coaches, athletic departments and fans.

2. Maximize financial and personnel resources to meet expectations.

3. Reconcile differences and communicate.

—Don Sauvigne, Columbia University

groundskeeper at Pilot Field, Buffalo, N.Y. He points to expanding interest in women's sports and the growing interest in soccer as factors.

Hornung says it's essential that we meet at least minimal construction and maintenance standards.

"We need to know what the soils are going to do, how they're going to play," says Hornung. "It's no different than what the golf course superintendents have been doing for years. They have a standard and they live by it."

Why do manufacturers fight? asks Hornung. "It's always Product A vs. Product B vs. Product C." Hornung would like manufacturers to work together more to solve common industry turf care problems.

"There are many tools we can use to meet expected maintenance standards. One aerifier or one sprayer may not be enough. There are no saviors in the equipment world."

"We all must give 100 percent and then some," urges Hornung, for two reasons: safety and aesthetics.

He suggests field managers present their budgets a little differently to make the sale.

"Talk in cents per square foot rather than thousands of dollars for the entire field," suggests Hornung, to soften the blow of asking for big bucks.

—Terry McIver

MODULAR SOD FOR THE PROS

Dr. Henry Indyk, turfgrass consultant with Turfcon, notes that Turfcon's ITM system, patented in March of 1993, is a natural turf system that uses transportable turf. Modules measuring 48x40x6 inches were used for practice tee areas at the U.S. Open at Baltusrol.

Indyk believes the stadium of the future will be an indoor facility with natural turf. The turf will be grown on a single unit module that slides from the domed stadium into an adjacent greenhouse. The stadium can be used for other events, and the turf is cared for in the greenhouse.

Arthur Milberger, president of Milberger Turf Farms supervised the installation of modular sod in the Super Dome in New Orleans for World Cup soccer matches July 1, 1991. The modules contain deep cut sod, 5-1/2 inches deep, and have no sides.

Hybrid bermudagrass seems to provide the best playing surface, after testing by Dr. James Beard. Ball-bounce and Clegg impactor studies on the modules and a turf-tray containing hybrid bermudagrass ranked tops in all tests.

Zoysiagrass ranked second due to inconsistent ball-bounce, and rough playing surface, as judged by players.

Bluegrass was the best looking surface, but ranked worst in playing conditions.

"Our future is very promising," says Milberger, "through the research of (Drs.) Trey Rogers and Henry Indyk."

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First, look for weedy areas

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A Vulnerable
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The best time to apply your postemergence herbicide is early —when you first see weeds emerge. This is when weeds are the most vulnerable to herbicides. You'll get better results from your application, and you'll reduce the need for treating hardened weeds later.

before applying herbicide. That way, you can use spot treatments instead of broadcast applications (a practice recommended by the



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rate of herbicide for the weed you want to control. You'll get better results from your application, and reduce the chances you'll have to re-apply.

And it's important to select a

postemergence herbicide that does the job the first time you apply it. For stubborn broadleaf weeds,

Careful scouting helps you get effective weed control using less herbicide.



herbicides often miss, giving you excellent results from your application. Confront® herbicide is also a good choice. Confront gets to the roots to keep weeds from coming back. It's very effective on

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Successful business: it's about selling, not about landscaping

Can you visualize the mega-deal? That's the first step toward actually selling the deal of your dreams.



Joel Lerner: 'The more contacts and recontacts you make, the more you will sell.'

■ Joel Lerner, who has done enough selling to know, says that confidence, a positive attitude and honesty are the keys to selling landscape services.

"You're not selling a service or product," Lerner says. "You are selling yourself. You must *expect* to succeed. Positive attitudes beget positive responses."

Lerner, owner of Lerner Environmental Design in Chevy Chase, Md. made these revelations during a presentation at the Professional Grounds Management Society's annual conference last year.

As he noted, confidence is a key to successful selling. And "education, field experience and marketing blend together to give you the confidence to sell."

Rejection, though, is an integral part of selling. "You must turn every failure into a positive experience," he notes. "If you don't get a commitment, stay in touch anyway. Call your files all the time."

Here are some basic tips he offered the audience:

- Pound the pavement; personal visits are the best.

- Be friendly, professional and positive.
- Be honest. Clients hate surprises.

The first contact—Selling begins with the first consultation, Lerner believes. And at the first meeting, you should try and convince the prospective customer that "landscaping is the only home improvement that increases as it matures."

From that point, you should sell everything you're offering to the homeowner or other prospective customer.

"My cardinal rule is that if you spend time with a client, you should charge a fee," Lerner advises. "Act independent, charge a fee for your services and consultation."

"You don't need to act desperate for money, either."

He also believes that you should never mention price until it's brought up by the prospective client. "When you *do* have to quote a price, test the waters," he adds. "Throw out a ballpark figure and watch the property owner's response. Read the person; adjust the figures and get a fair amount of what the market will bear."

Pricing—Lerner warns against quoting a low price right off the bat.

"You don't know what you can get until you try," he says. "It's impossible to crank up prices, but it's not impossible to lower them. And many times, when you *do* lower your original bid, it gets you the job."

"Low prices don't produce loyalty. I hear everyone talking about the lowballers, but I don't hear talk about the highballers—and they're the ones making the money."

Your service is too valuable to make price the issue, he contends. "Price is simply the vehicle through which great things are accomplished."

If a client cannot afford your original

package, find out what is affordable. If the client tells you that one of your competitors is selling for less, you have to be prepared to explain why your price is more—perhaps because you offer better quality services, guarantees, quality products or dependability.

Closing the sale—In his book "Joel M. Lerner's Landscape Professional's Marketing and Sales Source Book," the author emphasizes that you should not forget to ask the prospect to buy. "It has been reported that more than 50 percent of all sales are lost because the customer was never asked to buy," he writes.

"If you don't ask, the answer is an automatic 'no,'" he contends.

(You can reach Joel M. Lerner Environmental Design by writing P.O. Box 15121, Chevy Chase, MD 20825-5121 or by phoning (301) 495-4747.)

—Jerry Roche

LEARNER'S GUIDELINES TO SUCCESSFUL MARKETING:

- 1) Sell yourself.
- 2) Visualize success.
- 3) Pound the pavement: the more contacts you make, the more you will sell.
- 4) Work hard: all "breaks" are self-made.
- 5) Don't let your ego get in the way: customers are not dependent on you, you are dependent on them.
- 6) Don't act desperate.
- 7) Don't make promises you can't keep.
- 8) Use visuals to get the client thinking and active.
- 9) Focus on value, not price.
- 10) Make money on everything you provide, including consultations.

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MOTIVATION: key to PRODUCTIVITY



Helms: 'Other people may be 100% responsible for what they do to you. But you are 100% responsible for the way you react.'

■ You can put a carrot in front of employees and lure them. You can take a stick and whomp their behind. But that's not motivation, according to Larry Helms of Western Training Systems, Medford, Ore.

"You can't motivate anyone to do what they don't want to do," Helms told an Associated Landscape Contractors of America audience at its annual conference last year. "You've got to know the button to push. Just because you are stimulated in a certain way doesn't mean everyone else is stimulated by the same things."

The more team building you can do, the more productive your employees will be, Helms said. He cited the six keys to motivation:

1) Ask for it. Describe how the job is being done now, and how you want it to be. Then ask the employee to do it that way.

2) Use lots of positive reinforcement and personalize it. Don't take acceptable work for granted. Praise them every time they improve. Find out what works with each of your people and use it.

3) Build relationships. You shouldn't be buddy-buddy, but treat people like real, live human beings. They'll respond best when you show you respect their individuality and trust their intentions.

4) Understand your employees' point of view. Listen to your people and ask for their opinion before giving directions or offering advice. Listen first, and listen with an open mind.

5) Model the behavior you want to get back. Show employees by your actions that the job matters, that quality is important, and deadlines are real.

6) Refuse to accept poor performance. When you demonstrate that standards matter, that, in itself, is motivational.

When asked what makes them happier and most productive on the job, most employees say, first and foremost, appreciation for their efforts. (Other factors, in order of importance, are: "being in on things," help on personal problems, job security, high wages, interesting work, promotion, and loyalty of supervisor.)

Thus, recognition plays perhaps the most important role in motivating employees. It makes people "feel like they're winners," Helms observes.

He says that you, as a manager, should recognize individuals as well as groups, people as well as achievements. The recognition should be sincere, timely and individualized.

Job loading—Another key is to avoid "vertical job loading," the practice of giving one employee the same type of job all

"If you rule with an iron fist, you get either malicious obedience or gleeful insubordination," this expert says.

THE MOST IMPORTANT WORDS

*The six most important words:
"I admit I made a mistake."*

*The five most important words:
"You did a good job."*

*The four most important words:
"What is your opinion?"*

*The three most important words:
"Will you please...?"*

*The two most important words:
"Thank you."*

*The most important word:
"We"*

*The least important word:
"I"*

the time.

"The more 'vertical job loading,' the less satisfaction, productivity and stability," Helms notes. "Give the employees some variety."

He also suggests that you improve team effectiveness through regular staff meetings, regular supervisory meetings, idea boxes and a regular, updated exam policy.

Finally, a positive mental attitude on the part of the manager will likely rub off on employees, Helms concludes. "Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve."

—Jerry Roche

WHY PEOPLE QUIT:

Limited advancement opportunities.....	47%
Lack of recognition.....	26%
Unhappiness with management.....	15%
Boredom.....	6%
Inadequate salary.....	6%

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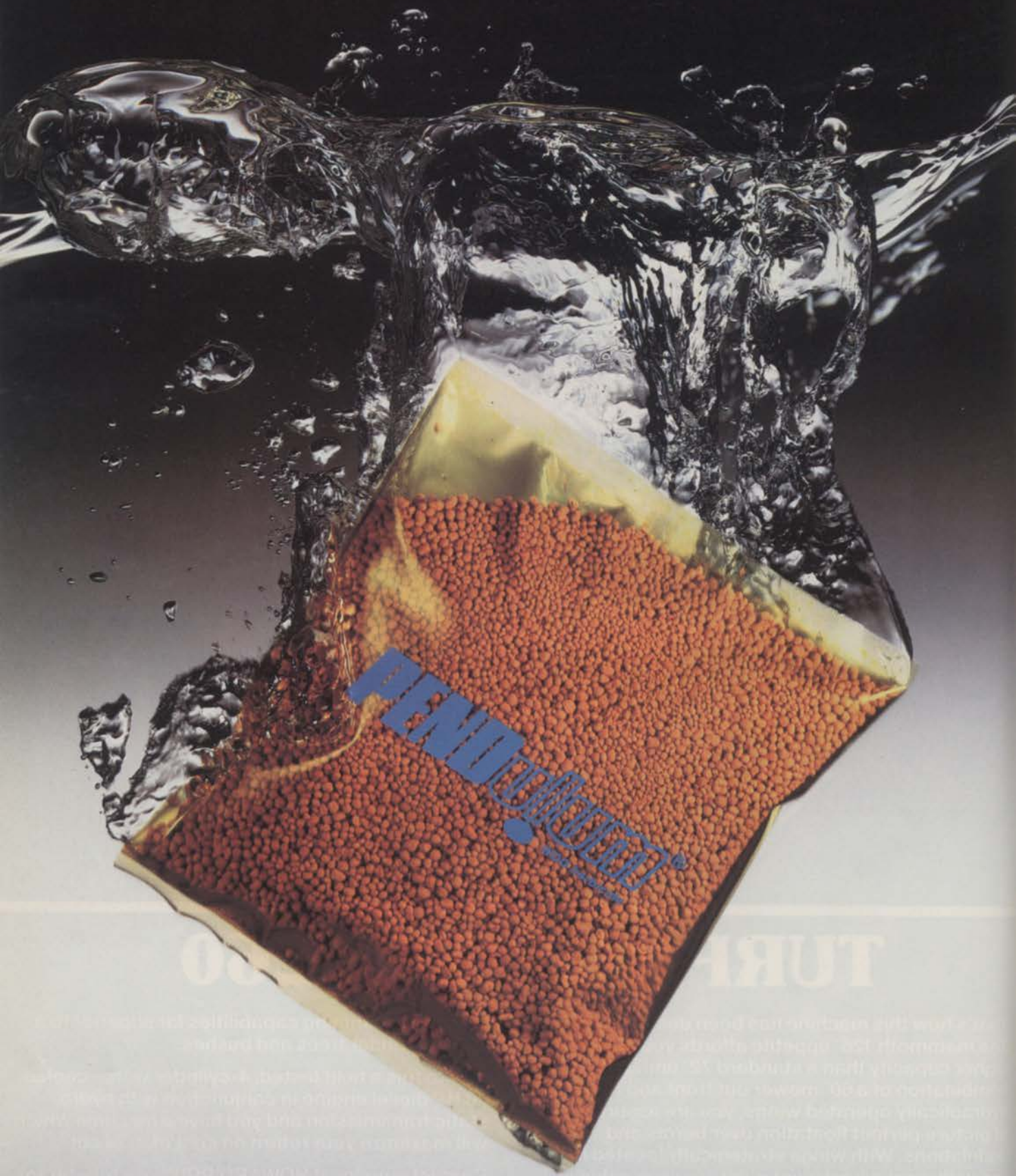
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