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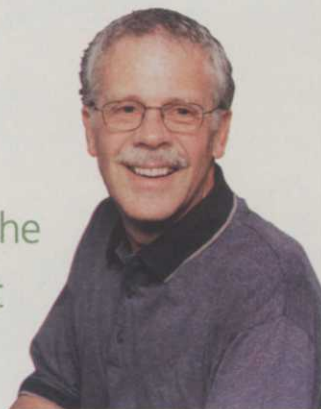
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"Keep in mind that no team ever won all the marbles with 'stars' alone. It's the bull pen that usually makes the difference." —BH

Where are the 'good' ones?

Time and experience have taught me a lot about solving tough people problems — I don't have all the answers. I do know that no single formula works consistently in all situations, and I have had some experiences (successful and unsuccessful) that lead me to conclude there are specific, positive things that you can do to make success through people possible, or even probable.

Woody & Bear knew the trick

I'll admit there are times when building a team seems fairly simple. As an Ohio State Buckeye fan, I recall the way Woody Hayes said it: "You win with people." It was that simple. Find the right people, teach them what they need to know, hold out a "carrot" like a Rose Bowl trip and get out of the way. Paul "Bear" Bryant, legendary coach at the University of Alabama, felt the same: "Find some talent, show them how to make the first touchdown and back off — the rest is simple."

Is it really the same for us? As a manager and management trainer for many years, I've come to realize that, while Woody's and Bear's level of competition was higher and more intense, and while winning or losing was determined in an afternoon, the principal determinants of success in sports apply equally to other endeavors like business.

But what is it specifically that leads to success? We've told ourselves for years that when the "right" people are trained to proficiency and well directed, given encouragement and positive feedback that miraculous things begin to happen. This is even truer when an incentive (pot of gold) is placed at the end of the rainbow (task completion)—sometimes.

Do we clearly understand why more landscape and lawn care industry managers and leaders (and even coaches) don't win consistently? Do we know why some teams just can't lose — even in the face of tough competition? Is the answer really just "great talent?"

Ask George Steinbrenner if buying great players is enough to win. The answer is NO. Great players, like great employees, make it easier. But in today's service industry world, staffing with 100% champs isn't realistic.

How we can win

Winning through people requires a clear, two-part approach. We must:

bill's 'magnificent seven'

7 WAYS TO BUILD A POWERHOUSE

ORGANIZATION

These basic requirements can make your job as manager, leader or owner much easier:

1. Make a clear definition of your business identity, goals and values.
2. Develop a practical philosophy of leadership.
3. Identify the "leadership style" that will work best for you.
4. Commit yourself to balancing people/task relationships.
5. Develop a comprehensive human resource strategy.
6. Make an accurate assessment of the positive and negative elements of your employees' working environment.
7. Use your management power sources intelligently.

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Keep in mind that no team ever won all the marbles with "stars" alone. It's the bull pen that usually makes the difference.

As a landscape or lawn care manager, you must work both sides of the street simultaneously. Don't let up in your efforts to upgrade staff where necessary, while also doing your best with the people you can get or currently have on staff. Both are critical parts of an effective people plan.

'Good' people are gone?

Having said all that, our commonly accepted reason for failing with people remains: "There just aren't enough good people these days." The implication is: Good people (the kind we want and need to win) were there, but no more. We're left to conclude that "good people" have vanished from the scene. They are gone! I hear it daily. And to complicate things, we've talked ourselves into believing

that we cannot win the game or reach our objectives with anything less than perfect employees.

That's silly. We succeed all the time with less talent and the right attitude. So seek out and learn to attract the very best people you can, but under no circumstances should you ever give up because recruiting suffers.

If you accept my premise, the solution to some of our people problems lies in rebuilding our industry image. In a later column, I'll talk about how to win with the people you can attract, because winning with imperfect or less than totally desirable employees is a critical part of any strategy that succeeds consistently.

But for now, consider what I call the "magnificent seven" in the sidebar on the preceding page.

The author is a seasoned trainer with broad experience in industrial/retail sales and technical training, as well as more than 14 years developing people in the lawn care service business. He is director of training and development for Scotts Lawn Service in Marysville, OH.

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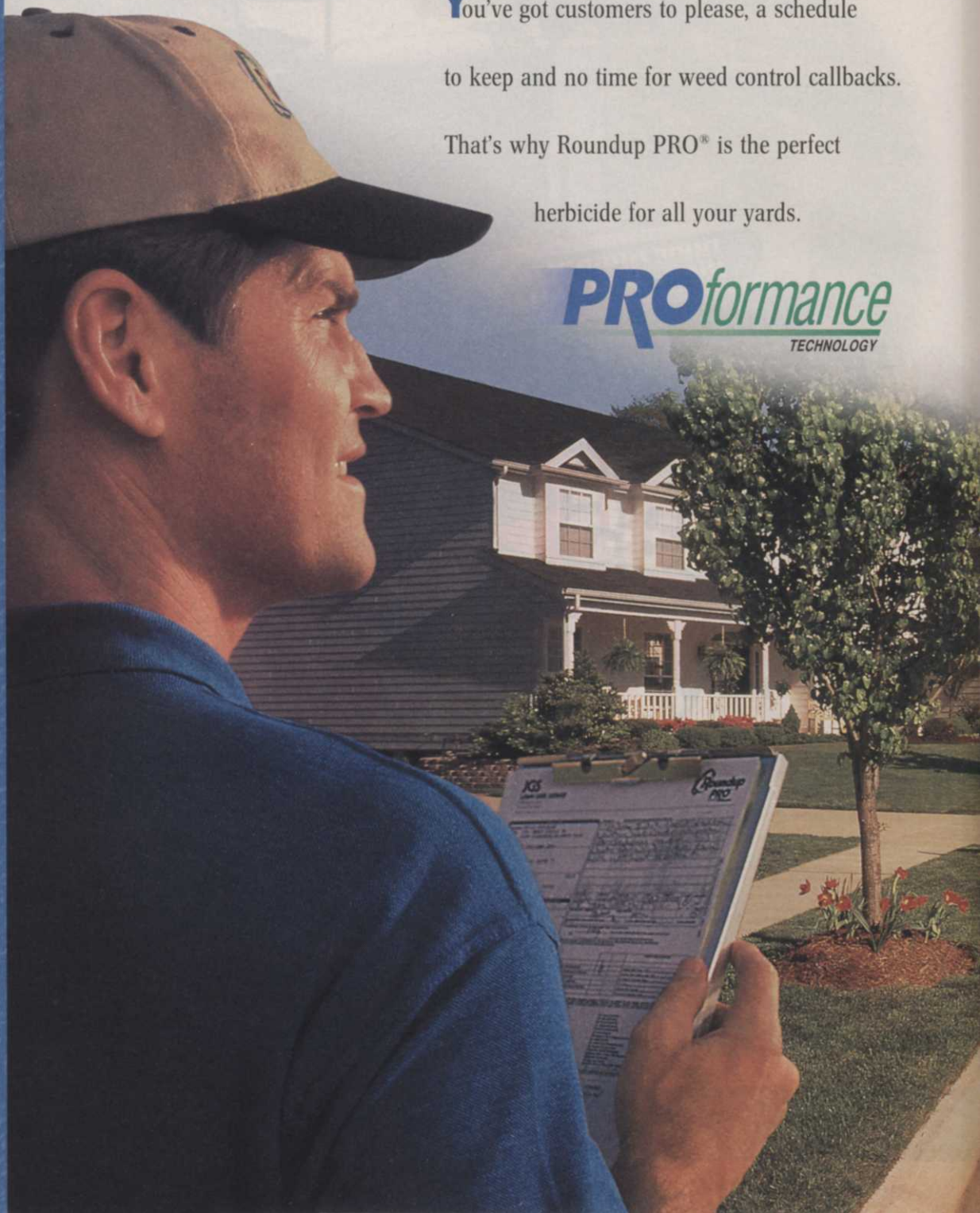
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Scotts seeks distribution pact

The Scotts Co., Marysville, OH, has been talking with Landmark Seed Co. about distribution of Scotts' professional turfgrass seed products through a national network. Scotts said it expects to sign a contract with LandMark by Oct. 1.

WALP's new address

The Washington Association of Landscape Professionals has relocated. Contact WALP at its new address: 1723 100th Place SE, Suite C, Everett, WA 98208-3800. The new telephone number is 425/385-3333, or log on to www.walp.org

[CLIPPINGS]

Eastern landscape pros: 'Send us rain!'

As Hurricane Dennis spun in Atlantic and threatened the Eastern seaboard, landscape and lawn care pros in that area didn't know whether to fear it or welcome it — so desperate were they for rain.

Hardest hit by this summer's drought were the Northeast and the Mid-Atlantic states. Landscapes from Virginia, north into New England and west into parts of the Midwest suffered. The lack of rain forced communities in many Eastern cities to restrict water use for much of the summer.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture in August reported that the drought affected about 20% of the country. By comparison, the 1988 drought reached 35% of the country, while the drought at the height of the Dust Bowl in 1934 covered two-thirds of the country.

"Right now (mid-August) we're pretty much shut down," said Craig Martin, Green Lawn Care, Cumberland, MD. "We had been fairly busy with insecticide applications, but we're waiting for some rain now. The last decent ground moisture we had was about mid-April."

Martin said he expects some of his clients' lawns to show drought damage, but he wouldn't speculate on how much. "Lawns are pretty resilient, and a lot of them will probably come back," he said.

Vincent Tummino, Lawn Doctor, Sayerville, NJ, said the drought resulted in some minor cancellations in his business, but nothing unexpected in light of the conditions. "Most people realized that weather was the biggest factor," he said.

Because of the dry conditions, damage caused by chinch bugs and sod webworms became more apparent, too, he added.

Some landscape managers reported that they curtailed (or stopped) commercial mowing in mid-summer because the turf had stopped growing.

Others said they are considering delaying some of the plant care tasks they normally do in the late summer until later in the season—maybe even spring, depending on early fall rains.

Some explaining to do

"This drought will have an effect for many years to come," said Dan A. Cheslock of Mountaineer Lawn Care Inc. of Morgantown, WV. Clients need to be educated *now* that parched plants of all sizes will require replacement, he cautions, adding that landscape managers can expect this scenario to play out over a lengthy period.

"Three years down the road, it's going to be tough to tell people that their trees are dead because of a 1999 drought," Cheslock said. "People may

LM's CD-Rom links to Internet

CLEVELAND — It's coming. *Landscape Management's* new Internet-linked CD-ROM will be mailed later this year, just in time for viewing on those slow, cold winter days. This new product combines suppliers' landscape and lawn care product videos with photographs and product specifications in one central source you can use again and again. Watch the equipment you need in action. Then, it's easy to click through directly to the supplier's internet site for more information.

It's the first time this *Landscape Management* product will be mailed with our reformatted and expanded GreenBook 2000. Watch for the new and expanded product listings, helpful yellow-page format, updated industry resources, Web listings and technical information sheets. For more information, contact LM at _____.



develop the inference that you killed their tree."

On the plus side, Mountaineer plans to pick up additional clients from among the do-it-yourselfer ranks. "We look for a good season in 2000 because people will look at all the weeds in their lawns and say, 'I need help,' and a lot of lawns are in rough shape."

The deep-root tree feeding that Cheslock typically offers in late summer and early fall is in peril due to soil so dry that it defies penetration. "You can dig down two to three feet and just hit powder," he said.

On the lawns, a regular fall application is going to be a really tough sell unless there's some hurricane-like rainfall — and soon, he said. "If we haven't had any rain by mid-September, we'll hold

off on the renovating until the spring, even though we prefer the fall."

Landscape managers in some areas are being advised that replacement of damaged plant specimens and any new installations be delayed until the parched ground itself recovers.

"I would say wait until spring because the water table is so low," said Frank Elefante of Nielsen-Elefante Nurseries in Lincoln Park, NJ. "The downward pull from the dryness is so acute that the water goes right through and doesn't soak in — the plantings won't survive."

Elefante observes that this summer's oppressive heat has added additional stress. "You have a lot of plants that are scorched," he reported.

— James E. Guyette

Textron acquiring OmniQuip

Textron Inc., Port Washington, WI, is merging with OmniQuip International Inc. OmniQuip builds light construction equipment, including skid steer loaders. The agreement provides for an all-cash tender offer of \$477 million by Textron for all of OmniQuip's outstanding shares of common stock and is expected to close by Sept. 24.

Western Productions' varieties

Western Productions Inc., Woodburn, OR, reports that its Westlawn WP 200 and Westlawn RSII perennial ryegrasses are in good supply with stable prices, as are its turf-type tall fescue varieties WPEZE and Good-En. Average quantities of blue-grasses, Gateway and WP888, are available. Prices are slightly higher for Gateway as well as for Kenicott creeping red fescue. LM inadvertently omitted these varieties in its August seed report.

[CLIPPINGS]

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