

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Gil Landry



Change has come to the world of associations according to Michael Skinner, Ph.D. In an article entitled, "Winning



Associations Find a Way," which appeared in the quarterly newsletter of the Olson Management Group called *Outreach*, Skinner notes associations are merging, expanding, downsizing, and becoming extinct.

Let's see how the Sports Turf Manager's Association (STMA) compares with Skinner's findings. You might find, as I did, this information is somewhat applicable to your personal performance as well. Skinner suggests the best associations have the following characteristics:

They have and use an updated strategic plan. STMA's plan includes such goals as regional institutes, an annual conference and trade show, working with the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) to create construction and maintenance standards for recreational facilities, and the development of a professional certification program.

The best associations are member-driven. Membership provides energy through active committees; staff helps supply focus. STMA has more than a dozen committees including member services, chapter relations, finance, communications, etc.

Image of the industry is of special concern. STMA has worked hard through this magazine and other national publications to enhance the image of sports turf management. Our code of ethics fosters professional image-building.

Well-run associations are politically active. The best associations have members involved in the political process. Lobbyists can be effective; however, members contracting legislators is equally effective. STMA's

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involvement in the field standards issue with ASTM is a good example of a political process driven by members.

It is necessary to constantly work on updating membership services. The best associations constantly revise services to reflect membership needs. Practically every activity of STMA address this issue. In addition to those services already mentioned, we're producing a membership directory, developing technical materials, fostering chapter involvement, etc.

The best associations provide service to their community. This means associations give back to those communities supporting their membership. STMA provides awards and scholarships annually at the national and local level in support of its communities.

Well-run associations are leaders for change. The association communicates well with its members and constantly works to provide better services. STMA formally communicates with its members through a bi-monthly newsletter, this magazine, and national publications and chapter newsletters. In 1992, STMA Public Relations Committee produced more than 30 technical articles, and is working to develop a technical resource committee that can help solve problems for members.

Winning associations set standards for the entire industry. The best associations help police their respective industry and set ethical and performance standards for its membership and the public. STMA's activity with ASTM and its interest in developing a professional certification program are good examples.

Finally, the best-run associations exemplify a well-run service business and act as role models for the membership. In 1992, the STMA Board of Directors worked hard to develop trust with its members and the industry. That process continues in 1993, and is already producing desirable results.

Skinner summarizes his observation with this: "Winners find a way; losers find a reason." He also points out it is easy to find a reason to justify the loss, but success takes time, effort, and courage.

Skinner concluded his article by asking, "Are you willing to find a way?" STMA is. The best measure of STMA's efforts are found in the fact that after some tough years and changes in management in 1992, we are retaining a significantly higher percentage of our members than most associations. STMA may have stumbled, but we're back on our feet—and with our members' courage, effort, and time on our side, we are finding a way to succeed.