

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

Professional Recognition



This month, Dr. Gil Landry, president of the Sports Turf Managers Association, discusses professionalism in his monthly column. Among the issues he covers, Landry mentions the need to recognize professionalism and excellence through "success" stories. His timing couldn't be more perfect.

In this issue, we offer two such stories. The first chronicles the work of Murray Cook and his fine crew at West Palm Beach Municipal Stadium. The facility is the 1992 Professional Diamond of the Year Award winner.

Excellence seems to follow Cook, although he prefers to credit his crews for his success. But he has a sound track record of producing excellent fields, and, in 1990, he was named *sportsTURF* Man of the Year.

His secret is simple. He combines education, experience and a thoroughly professional, no-excuses attitude to get the job done. His crews either share that attitude or work elsewhere.

The second story is that of Stephen Guise, turf track superintendent at Santa Anita Park in Arcadia, CA. Guise is a long way from his native Rhode Island, but at Santa Anita he's right at home. Like Cook, he has combined education, experience and professionalism to make a good thing even better. Also like Cook, he prefers to credit his crew.

One of the most impressive elements of the Guise story are the measures he took to restore grounds crew moral and, in the process, professionalism. Guise recognized the problem. He knew he couldn't succeed on his own, and he *did something about it*. He gave his crews a "look." He relocated his office to their building. He led by example. Now *that's* professional.

In these days of staff and budget cuts, when everybody is being asked to do more—with less—we would do well to review and digest the examples set by Guise and Cook. They go out of their way to recognize work well done. That's not to say constructive criticism isn't vital to management—indeed, critical analysis of past problems keeps us from repeating mistakes. Most managers are decent critics. Yet how many fall short when it comes to praising and supporting employees, and promoting professionalism within their ranks?

Recognizing good work is simple, basic management—so simple and basic that many otherwise professional managers seem to forget it. Reprimands and discipline are key, if sometimes unpleasant, elements of professional management, but they alone do not a manager make.

Show me a manager who does nothing but set and enforce policy, while browbeating employees, and I'll show you an *amateur*. Show me a manager like Guise or Cook, who balances criticism with praise, and I'll show you a *professional*.

Matthew Trulio

EVENTS

CALENDAR

MARCH

23 Sports Turf Institute & Grounds Operations Conference. California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA. Contact: Dr. Kent Kurtz (909) 869-2219.

24 Automatic Rain Turf Day. Alameda County Fairground, Pleasanton, CA. Contact: Pam Grady (415) 323-5161

30-31 34th Annual Turfgrass And Landscape Institute. Buena Park, CA. Contact: KPR Associates (619) 723-0255.

APRIL

12-13 47th Annual Turfgrass Conference. Tifton, GA. Contact: (912) 386-3353.

MAY

10-12 Lecture, "Trees from the Inside Out," by Dr. Alex Shigo. Bellevue Conference Center, Bellevue, WA, (May 10) and Clackamas Community College, Portland, OR (May 12). Contact: John Kirkland (503) 254-0482.

11-13 Lecture, "Modern Arboriculture in Practice," by Dr. Alex Shigo. Bellevue Conference Center, Bellevue, WA, (May 11) and Clackamas Community College, Portland, OR, (May 13). Contact: John Kirkland (503) 254-0482.

14 Workshop, "A Closer Look At Trees," by Dr. Alex Shigo. Clackamas Community College, Portland, OR. Contact: John Kirkland (503) 254-0482.

JULY

8 University of Georgia Turfgrass Field Day. Georgia Station, Griffin, GA. Contact: Georgia Turfgrass Association (404) 975-4123 or Extension Conference Office (912) 681-5189.

Send announcements on your events two months in advance to: editor, *sportsTURF* magazine, 68-860 Perez Road, Suite J, Cathedral City, CA, 92234. Fax (619) 770-8019.