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LitterKat 

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LitterKat is outfitted with Dual On-Board vibrators in the collection baskets, quickly and easily redistributing infill while the electric actuator allows for an infinite level of height adjustment. The brushed aluminum collection baskets are designed for easy removal and emptying.

The structural parts are equipped with a durable, long-lasting powder coat finish. All this sits on forged aluminum wheels. And don't forget the tow-behind magnet for pickup of unwanted ferrous objects. The powerful 6-foot wide unit pulls objects from deep in the surface into the magnet — keeping your surface safe and ready for action.



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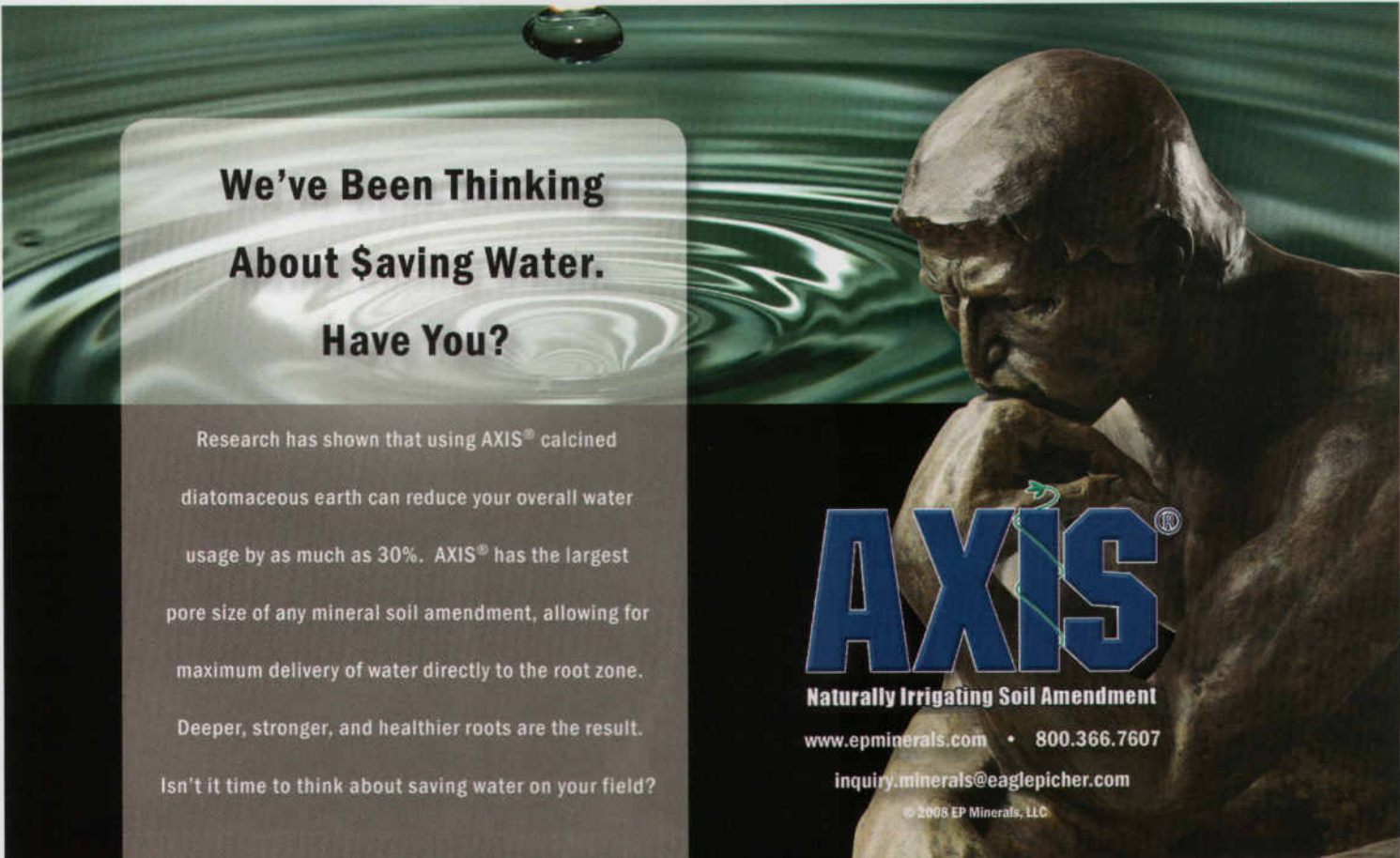
It was no surprise to find out that the vast majority of changes have come about because of budgetary pressure and not the result of altruism.

to not mow. The first area was too small to get a riding mower in and in order to save time and labor they planted the fine fescue blend hoping to start a new aesthetic for areas like this.

• Installed Flexi-pave instead of concrete or blacktop on two small pads and one sidewalk. Flexi-pave is a recycled tire product that works like cement but allows water through. Bought an Electric Toro Workman as a work cart for our athletic fields. Randall believes healthy turf is more environmentally friendly than thin sparse turf so he is trying to gradually improve the overall turf canopy especially on his fields. The thicker and denser the turf, the less bare ground there is, and that means less evaporation of water and cooler turf in the summer. Recycling and purchasing every recycled product they can. Examples include old concrete as fill, tree branches, leaves, paper, metal, cardboard, plastics, and recycled bike racks, etc.)

In our next article we'll meet a passionate turf manager who has developed an incredible plan to meet and address green issues on the campus where he works. ■

Kevin I. Meredith, CSFM is turf manager for the National Soccer Hall of Fame, Oneonta, NY.



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Five tips to readying your résumé

Your résumé is your calling card. It should provide enough information about you to persuade the prospective employer to invite you for an interview. That's it. The total purpose of your résumé is to get your foot in the door for an interview, where you can sell yourself to the interviewer. To make your résumé a most effective tool for your job search, consider these tips:

1. Customize your résumé for the position to which you are applying. The easiest way to do this is in the "Objective," which should be at the top of your first page. For example, let's say your objective is "To be employed by a sports facility that is committed to providing the highest quality fields for its athletes." You find out through the STMA Career Center that a position becomes available at a soccer complex. Then you would change your objective to "... be employed at a **soccer** complex that is committed ..."

2. Use white space. It is okay to have your résumé go to two pages. Two pages are standard, especially if you have any experience. Do not use small type and all available space to present your résumé on one page. You want the prospective employer to read it, so make it easy to read. Be sure to also use an easy to read type style, too. There are hundreds of fun fonts available, but don't use them on your résumé. Again, you want the prospective employer to spend time reading about you, not trying to figure out the words.

3. When describing your previous job responsibilities write in an active voice, showing how your work provided value, and use bullets. For example, don't say, "I was responsible for mowing the football field prior to weekend

games." Instead, say, "Improved football field conditions by implementing a consistent mowing program."

4. Do include your community and professional organizational involvement, but do not include personal information, such as marital status, number of children, religious affiliation or other information that is not relevant to the job.

5. Think about what qualifies you for the job and include it in your résumé, typically under a heading called "Summary of Qualifications." This section can change to meet the requirements that the employer is seeking. It can also be more global and highlight the overall qualities that make you a top sports turf manager and a desirable employee. For example, you might list:

- Certified Sports Field Manager, the credential that validates experience and knowledge, and the commitment to continuing education
- Highly experienced in field renovation
- Strong team management skills
- Bilingual in English and Spanish

Don't confuse the "Qualifications" with your "Accomplishments," which should be another section that highlights the noteworthy activities that you successfully completed. ■

Thanks to STMA Headquarters for this article.



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Tin can image courtesy of istockphoto.com.

Getting the message across

By Diane Stafford

I told him what I wanted, but he didn't hear a thing I said.

I left three phone messages but haven't heard back. I don't know what they want.

Every time I try to talk to him, he acts like he has to run somewhere else.

Any of those comments sound familiar?

To quote from "Cool Hand Luke": "What we have here is a failure to communicate."

It takes effective communication to make business run smoothly, but sometimes the message doesn't get through. Whether you're a boss managing a crew, a business owner trying to reach a client, or someone trying to talk to a supervisor, there's a good chance you've hit communication barriers.

We're not talking about language barriers. We're talking about everyday relationships that have static on their communication lines.

There are two parts to any communication: The message sent, and the message received. The sender needs to be clear and direct. The recipient needs to listen. Ideally, the exchange ends when there's mutual understanding.

But this is the real world. People are busy. It's hard to take time to hash out every directive or announcement. But, when the "I told him what I want but he didn't hear a thing I said" scenario drives you nuts it's time for a meeting of the minds.

If what seems to you like clear directions aren't being followed, ask your worker in for a chat. Say something like this: "I feel like you're sometimes

not hearing what I'm saying. For example, when I asked you to (insert the specific, recent failure-to-communicate incident here), that didn't happen. Can you help me understand why we weren't communicating?"

Putting the message in terms of "I feel" or "I need you to" instead of starting out with a "You blew it" tirade can work wonders. Ask the employee to ask you questions if he doesn't understand something. Ask him to tell you if he has personal issues that get in the way of carrying out your directions. Then listen. Communication is a two-way street. Once you hear his side, it's easier to know whether disciplinary steps are the right thing to do.

What about the "I left three phone messages but haven't heard back" situation?

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*There must already be a national sports turf manager from your facility or commercial member from your company before you may sign up in the Associate category.

"I know I am a better sports turf manager because of this association. As sports turf managers, we take the challenge seriously to make our fields the best possible for the next game. The resources I have access to through STMA helps me do it."

— Bob Campbell, CSFM
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FACILITY & OPERATIONS

Try another means of communication. Most people have preferred communication styles. Some would rather talk on the phone. Others find it easier to respond to an email. Still others won't move off the dime without good old face-to-face contact.

Let's say you've just laid sod, hash mark to hash mark, on the middle of the high school football field when you read in the newspaper that the "Tiny Tot Cheerleaders" are scheduled to hold a

camp this weekend on your field. Your work was scheduled in advance. How could the mix-up have happened?

Your district site manager is on vacation. Your voice mail message to the high school cheerleader sponsor hasn't been returned. Don't assume she's ignoring you. Try another communication medium, like email, and reframe your message, perhaps in another voice mail as well. Explain in detail the reason why the camp can't be held on the field. Say

that it's time for solutions, not blame, and offer to help locate an alternative field. Empathizing with the sponsor who's preparing for an onslaught of a hundred 4- to 8-year olds may help her empathize with you and ease what could potentially be an explosive encounter.

And then there's the "Every time I try to talk to him, he acts like he has to run somewhere else" syndrome.

Some people have a bad habit: They don't devote their attention to someone who's speaking to them. Listening is a conscious discipline that some people haven't mastered. Others pull rank and don't give subordinates the same attention they'd give their superiors. It's rude, but what can you do about it?

Here's a technique that may bridge the communication gap when you're trying to talk to someone who's clearly distracted: "Joe, it looks like you're busy with something else. When would be a good time for me to talk to you?"

That approach lets Joe know that he's not paying attention. It puts the ball in his court to say when he'll be ready to listen. Some people will apologize and devote full attention. Others will agree it's not a good time and tell you when it will be.

It's no secret that there are hidden agendas behind some orders. Some seemingly simple declarations have double meanings. What we hear often depends on the background and the context into which we insert them. Also, the words others hear aren't always as clear to them as we think they were when we said them.

Clear communication requires effort. When the effort takes more energy than it's worth, it's time to reassess the work relationship. Sometimes, as Donald Trump showed us, the clearest message is, "You're fired." That may be the end solution for some employees. But for people you can't fire, the only solution sometimes is finding the time to invest in a different way of communicating.

[Editor's note: This is the first in a series of six articles in the new Ewing Professional Development Series. STMA and Ewing Irrigation have partnered in this series to bring professional development and career issues to the forefront.] ■

Diane Stafford is the workplace and careers columnist at The Kansas City Star. Diane keeps up with the latest workplace news on her blog at www.workspacekc.typepad.com.



Work on the Super Bowl crew!

The Toro Company is again sponsoring its annual Toro Super Bowl Sports Turf Training Program. In January 2009, one lucky student will travel to Tampa Bay to help the grounds crew prepare the field for the Super Bowl.

To be considered for the program, students must submit the application form and a 500-word typed essay describing where they see themselves professionally in five years and what they hope to accomplish during that time. The student must be enrolled in their second year of a two-year turf program or in their junior year of a four-year turf program, and must be available to work from January 25 – February 2, 2009. Entries must be postmarked by November 15, 2008 and the winner will be announced on December 15, 2008. Application forms and complete rules are available online at www.torosports.com/superbowl.

John Mascaro's Photo Quiz

Can you identify this sports turf problem?



Problem: Brown spots
Turfgrass Area: Stadium football field
Location: Jacksonville, FL
Grass Variety: 419 bermudagrass



Answer to John Mascaro's Photo Quiz on Page 25

John Mascaro is President
of Turf-Tec International

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Amending a sick field? Start with **blood work**

By Joel Simmons

As with any sick patient understanding what is wrong and getting a complete diagnosis is essential if real health is going to be achieved. This axiom works not only with human health but also soil and plant health and at no time in recent history have we seen the cost of health care or plant care skyrocket like we are seeing today.

The never ending increase in basic fertility costs has put a tremendous strain on every turf manager's budget, and is forcing unparalleled changes in

the way our industry goes to business. At the same time demands for quality, environmental pressures and use are all up. These demands are forcing us all to find ways to reduce inputs while trying to maintain our jobs, the quality of our fields, and the safety the public expects.

Many of these demands are sending turf managers back to school to rethink old practices and tune up their knowledge of the basics; one of the most important is the basic soil test.

For more than 25 years I have studied soil tests. This year more than