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All professionals involved in growing and planting trees should be aware that 2013 will reveal their first sight of the draft BS 8545: From Nursery to Independence in the Landscape. It will be published by the British Standards Institution (BSI). The very words “British” and “standards” are a dream marketing combination because they create an instant perception of quality, calibre and class that is difficult to match.

A cornerstone of the BSI brand is that each standard is prepared by industry experts who volunteer their time to write content and attend meetings, with no public recognition. The same applies to all those industry professionals who consume business and personal time to comment without charge, all for the greater benefit of their profession.

This is an ethical approach that has worked well because there is no overt promotional benefit to any individual companies. Disappointingly, that all changed in 2012, when BSI issued a license for an individual company to reproduce a concise guide to BS 3998 (2010) Tree Work – Recommendations.

Of course, to have the precise name of a British standard on the same front cover as your logo, along with the benefits of internet searches ranking your company high up the profiles, is an enviable business coup and to be applauded from that perspective. However, it is doubtful whether all those professionals who donated their time would have been quite so enthusiastic if they had known that a single commercial enterprise would reap such benefits from their gratuity.

Having succeeded once, no doubt the BSI marketing team, with an eye ever on the till, will be rubbing their hands with glee at the prospects for BS 8545. Similarly, astute entrepreneurs will be lining up to put in their bids for a slice of the best promotional cake around right now. There will be deals to be made in 2013 and the great British standard New Year Sale is now on.

