There comes a time in everyone’s personal development when all the reasons not to have the suitable training or certificate of competence have gone and it comes down to one last, all important matter – action!

When it comes to providing high quality training and offering every candidate a positive learning experience Lowe Maintenance is the place to train. Our team come from a range of industries including a long term military service-spanning twenty three years, to arboriculture and then into education. Educating has been at the heart of what we do since 2004 when Lowe Maintenance Training was established, although we do run an arboricultural service a long side our training side of the business to ensure we are keeping up with the changes in the industry.

Our key aim is to provide positive learning experiences through working closely with people to meet individual needs and requirements, we offer a comprehensive range of courses at affordable prices we strongly believe training doesn’t need to cost the earth and are totally committed to our ethos of providing high quality training.

Our newest member of the team is Demelza she comes from ten years of working in the educational sector although her rural background of living and working in the Yorkshire Dales make her a perfect edition to our team. She comes from a strong farming background but started her career in horticulture which was joked about at the time as being ‘the black sheep of the family’ fancy going into gardening when she was a farmer! Once qualified she worked in the horticultural sector for a number of years before trying her hand at teaching in the FE sector with students from local secondary schools mainly unmotivated and disillusioned young people. This went from strength to strength and whilst teaching she qualified in environmental conservation and gained her City & Guilds (NPTC) certificates of competence in pesticides, chainsaw maintenance, tree felling, tree climbing and aerial rescue and use of a chainsaw from a rope and harness. In her time with us so far not only does she carry out training she has developed our website www.lowe-maintenance.co.uk, our Facebook page Lowe Maintenance Training and she is currently working on twitter@lowe_maintenance so feel free to keep in touch with us.

Our courses aren’t only for those who want or need the certificates we also offer training in the safe use of the equipment or techniques. Access for all is important to us so much so we offer taster sessions to injured military personnel, people who aren’t sure what is involved in the industry and those who would like refreshers.

We have run courses at a number of golf clubs and the main attraction is that we are happy to come to you and also whilst we are carrying out the courses we are working on the site (no time away for the greenkeepers though). We’re also now offering the Level 3 Award in the Safe Use of Aluminium Phosphide for Vertebrate Pest Control. We can’t guarantee a 100% pass rate but we will guarantee you rewarding experiences that can be applied to daily situations.
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It is often said that if golfers knew the reasons why maintenance activities were being carried out by greenkeepers on the golf course, they would be much more tolerant of their activities.

At one golf club where I used to advise, any attempt to improve the course by altering the greens, for example, was met by the members replacing the Chairman of Green.

Every year a new Chairman was appointed and as a result the course condition was never allowed to improve.

You can guess why I don’t visit that club any more!

Greenkeepers use various ways to communicate with golfers – possibly word of mouth as they go about the course or a note posted on the club notice board.

Alternatively, there might be a paragraph in the club’s newsletter or in a report from the Green committee, which may be posted on the members section of the club’s website.

But is this the best way to get the message across? Information needs to be as up to date as possible.

A number of greenkeepers in the UK now have a blog to let members know what is going on at their course.

Richard Jacques’s blog has a paragraph in the monthly newsletter mentioning that the club is closed due to maintenance or who attend course trips to the workshop to see the machinery or who attend course training.

So what are the secrets of success?

Rich says: “If you are going to blog, it is important to do it regularly and to keep it interesting and up to date, with lots of pictures.

However it only takes minutes to download a few pictures which have been taken on the phone during the day and these are easily downloadable onto the blog.

The blog also forms a good record of what is going on at the course and also the effects of the weather on areas of the course.

If specific problems are being addressed to improve the course, they feel as if they are being listened to.”

Even in winter, the blog has to be kept fresh.

If the course is closed or work such as bunker renovation and drainage is being carried out which many of the members don’t ordinarily see, the blog emphasises the unseen work which goes on day by day around the course.

Blogs are not for everyone and, if not kept up to date, visitors will lose interest.

However it only takes minutes to download a few pictures which have been taken on the phone during the day and these are easily downloadable onto the blog.

The greenkeepers I have spoken to think blogging is a worthwhile thing to do, so I say get signed up to WordPress or Blogger and start blogging.

About the author:

Robert Laycock specialises in golf course agronomy and turfgrass research and agronomy for the last 35 years and advises at some of the top UK courses.

He is a Chartered Biologist, independent professional turfgrass Agronomists.

He first began working as an independent professional in golf course agronomy and turfgrass research and agronomy 20 years ago.

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