



Crew members at the Olde Florida Golf Club use video tapes

Photo by Darren Davis

tor reading the owner's manual.

The videos provide a thorough method of training that is both visual and audible.

How many times have you given instructions for a task to an employee and have the individual give you a blank stare and a head shake assuring you he understands, and then find out later he had no clue of what you were talking about?

Or how many times have you taken the time and sincere effort to go in to the field to train an employee on a job and spend a good amount of time explaining the correct method for accomplishing the task, only to realize that afternoon you forgot one major point! What if that major point was watching out for hydraulic leaks and you now have dead strips on all your back nine greens?

These are some of the reasons that I use VHS video tapes religiously to train and educate employees. The use of video allows me to thoroughly educate an employee first in the office, and then go through a hands-on demonstration in the field.

I have found that a good video ensures that vital points are not missed in the training process. Before any of my employees get on a piece of large equipment, a triplex, or a walking greens or tee mower, they first sit down and view the video on the assigned task and take a written test to confirm they understood the training completely.

When using video tapes, I have found it helpful to have written material in front of the employee, such as a workbook, to accompany the video. This workbook would give an employee or supervisor a space to make notes on course policies or any changes.

After the employees view the video tape, they are then asked to complete a short written examination. After this exam is graded, and I am confident the employee learned the material, their signature is required on a sign off sheet that is stored in our files.

Employees can only perform their job to your standards if they fully understand what is expected of them. A well-trained employee is able to do their job effectively and will feel rewarded by a job well done.

If employees are not thoroughly trained and told what is expected of them, the job that they perform will most likely be unacceptable. An employee who continually performs unacceptable work will probably be continually disciplined and will never feel a sense of accomplishment. The employee's morale then goes down, decreasing productivity. No training method will ever be foolproof, but I have found videos to be a valuable tool in the training process.

Darren Davis
Olde Florida GC.
Everglades Chapter

The Point System Monitors Attendance

The human resource issue has become a time-consuming process for any industry. Whether a company is large or small, the liability to administer all employment issues in a consistent manner according to the law is an absolute must.

Having over 400 employees necessitates us to have a Human Resource Department. They assist all of our managers in the following areas: hiring, orientation, benefits, policies and procedures, training and progressive discipline. Their primary concern is that all of the areas just mentioned are administered in a consistent manner. Consistency plays a huge role in not only treating all employees the same, but also setting the precedence when legal issues take place.

One of our biggest problems in the past has been attendance. The resort has adopted a point program to deal with this problem. The following is a brief overview of our policy:

The late/absent program is to record tardiness and absences. Points are assigned for each tardy or absence from scheduled work time according to the following schedule.

Tardiness:	Points
Employee notified supervisor in advance	0.5
Did not notify supervisor in advance	1
Tardiness exceeds more than 1 hour after scheduled shift	1.5
Absence:	Points
Reported to work but left early (excludes emergencies)	1
Notified supervisor of absence 1 hour prior to scheduled shift	2
Failed to notify supervisor of absence 1 hour prior to scheduled shift	2.5
Failed to call or report for work at all, or called in to notify supervisor of tardiness and then fails to report to work	6
2. 5-4 points within a 12-month period:	
Oral warning	
4. 5-6 points within a 12-month period:	
Written warning	
6. 5-8 points within a 12-month period:	
Suspension one day without pay	

and final warning

Two suspensions within six months and the employee is fired. One complete month with perfect attendance results in one point subtracted from total points accumulated.

If an employee has sick time available, then no points will be assessed. Employees accrue .92 hours per week for a total of 48 hours per year. Employees do not receive sick pay during their probation period of 6 months and thus receive points during this time.

The bottom line is that if you don't have a problem with tardiness or absenteeism, you will not need a point program like the one at Grand Cypress.

Tom Alex

Grand Cypress G.C.

Central Florida Chapter

Team Building to Improve Employee Involvement

We are working on developing improved employee involvement as a team member in a professional environment.

Staff members are on a job-rotating program so that all staff members are knowledgeable in all areas of operations. Staff supervisors participate in the rotating program to supplement employee training.

There is a monthly staff meeting to keep employees informed. It is a roundtable discussion and everyone is encouraged to offer their views, problems, and solutions.

Employees are eligible for an "Employee of the Month" award given by the club. Also, for the golf operations department, there is a tardiness incentive program designed to reduce tardiness in the mornings and equipment down time.

We take the positive approach in training the staff, compliment the jobs well done, and supply as much educational and safety information as possible.

Tom Trammell, CGCS

MetroWest C.C.

Central Florida Chapter

Junior's on Deck— Training the Assistant

Most everyone involved in the game of golf now appreciates the work scope of a golf course superintendent. True, "Greenskeepers" just mowed grass, but as the business evolved more into a science, the yearning desire to just sit on a tractor and mow grass has long faded away like a memory. Nowadays, the work scope of a superintendent has become so managerial, even the assistant seldom "gets to just mow grass," and that is the point of this article:

Let's evaluate the work scope of an assistant golf course superintendent.

Most assistants are technically trained, college educated and striving ultimately to move upward and become a superintendent themselves.

There are very few career assistants. There is nothing wrong with being a career assistant. The industry should not frown upon this career niche. Yet, most assistants graduating from college are pursuing an ultimate superintendent's position.

By default, we are viewing the assistant's position as being relatively short term. Now, let's view this situation from the superintendent's perspective. We have already agreed the superintendent's daily work scope is intense. Now, couple that with the training of an assistant and the inevitable departure of that assistant. One can quickly see a managerial inefficiency that should frustrate upper management or owner of the organization.

In the last 10 years, I've had the pleasure and pride to be associated with three assistants that have ultimately moved onward to become very competent superintendents. The only drawback is — yes, I have lost three very competent assistants! Do I have the time to be a post-graduate training school — no!

I have, however, developed over the past few years, an in-house Junior/Senior Assistant training program that has proved to be management efficient, and cost effective yet rewarding to the recipient — the assistants.

Management will first ask: "Why do you have two assistants for just an 18 hole golf course?"

Let us now analyze the difference between the Junior Assistant and the Senior Assistant.

The Junior Assistant must be patient and possess all the true qualities to ultimately become a superintendent. The key word here is "patient." If they are not patient and their respective colleges instilled into them that they will or should become a superintendent within a year of graduation, then my system simply will not work for them.

So far, I have found Junior Assistants that are patient, and truly respect the total work scope of a superintendent and they want to take it gradually. In the long run, they will be exposed to so many issues that a university does not address.

Give me three to four years and I can equal their formal training with something that one can never put a price tag on — and that is on-the-job field-training."

The Junior Assistant will sit in the cat bird's seat watching everything the Senior Assistant does — good or bad. The Senior Assistant is responsible for the training of the Junior Assistant.

Obviously the superintendent is there to instruct both.

However, when Junior makes a mistake, Senior must bear some of the responsibility for the error — much like the rest of the world, it all flows down hill.

By the time people have worked through this program, they have just about seen it all: agronomics, budgets, staff management, peer pressure, and most importantly — politics. Generally, the formal training of college only addresses the first issue, agronomics, and it is already assumed that you understand the science of horticulture to get to these job opportunities.

Can you start to see how much the world has to offer and how a company can profit by having a Junior Assistant on the payroll? The employee will obviously be loyal and be far more effective than "just a regular worker on the staff."

Junior Assistants will participate in the applications of all pesticides, cultural renovation projects, and generally par-