

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 round-table 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-



Photo by Mike Bailey

Matt Quinn, senior assistant at Boca Rio CC, left, explains elevation details of the construction of a new ladies' tee to junior assistant Steve Jacaruso. Crew member Pierre Duuelsaint is in background.

ticipate as a key worker on the staff that involves more than just the simple task of "mowing grass." This person, however, must not consider themselves too good to hop on a mower and mow grass, when no one else is there and the job must still get done.

I have designed a work schedule where the Junior Assistant manages on Saturdays with the belief (and the hope) that little has gone wrong from just Friday afternoon and the Senior Assistant manages on Sunday so that if disease or whatever is developing, the more qualified individual of the two manages the latter day where the problems could be more severe.

Now mind you, Junior has on occasion overlooked an issue on Saturday that Senior will detect on Sunday, and let me tell you, Senior will show Junior their

mistakes, because ultimately Senior should not have allowed Junior to even allow the mistake to occur in the first place.

This style of management allows the Senior to be responsible for people in a key way. If the Junior Assistant is not working out, it will fall upon the Senior to figure out a way to make it work...or else.

Probably Senior is not trying hard enough to cooperate and put the effort out to make it happen, because we will not accept the excuse that "Junior just is not working out and I think we need to find a replacement."

This type of platoon management also creates a stronger management team during three-day holiday weekends and when the management staff goes on vacation. I am actually sitting by the pool at

Grand Cypress as I write this article with complete confidence that my assistant duo is competently managing the operation with virtually no problems.

Nothing should occur to overwhelm them, primarily because Senior has been on the payroll for nearly three years. He worked his way up the ladder from the Junior Assistant position just three months ago, yet I feel completely confident with his new Senior's position.

Recognizing the scarcity of new superintendent's positions that an assistant might actually be hired for, Senior appreciates the need to be fully competent before going out into the real world. Of course, I correct their youthful mistakes. They are only human. Once these issues become clearly recognizable, these common mistakes should not happen. When they ultimately become a superintendent these mistakes could be severe enough to actually jeopardize their first head superintendent position.

Therefore, an appreciation of the correct way to perform their job becomes priceless. It does not necessarily indicate my way is right or wrong but more so that they recognize their mistake for something that should have perhaps not occurred (mistake) or something that they now look back upon and realize they could have done it better.

The more involved both become, the more both respect they have for their jobs. The Junior begins to feel the pressure of "actually being in charge" and greatly respects what senior does and how he conduct himself. When Senior moves onward, Junior will now have more

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responsibility and he “better do it right” because he had enough time to watch from the catbird’s seat.

When it’s time for the change, you can usually view the obvious. Senior becomes complacent, everything seems too easy and “I can do it all!” Not really. I’m exaggerating. If I wait that long for their respective personalities to surface, I’ve waited too long to start pursuing a head position for Senior.

That is a key here. The superintendent must know that individual well enough to know when it’s time for him to move on.

Sometimes, jobs are simply not available and they must be patient. It’s even good to watch them pursue some opportunities on their own and feel the aggravation of the real world. As good as they might think they are, they might not be that marketable. After a few rejections, they might appreciate what management is trying to do to help with professional contacts.

When everything works out and Senior lands that new job, the individual has tremendous pride. The crew is usually complimentary and supportive of their career move. Junior then moves up to a new position, and the crew respects the process. The management switch is not a major ordeal.

All too often, the assistant superintendent’s departure can be a major blow to the department. With this concept, no one strikes out. Everyone hits a home run, and everyone comes out a winner.

Mike Bailey

Boca Rio G.C.

Palm Beach Chapter

Employee of the Month, Year Program

Last December, the Board of Governors of Boca Woods Country Club approved and initiated a program called “Employee of the Month” and “Employee of the Year” award for our full-time hourly employees.

Each month an employee is chosen as

“Employee of the Month.” He/she is nominated by their department head. Four employees are nominated each month from the four major departments in our club. The Personnel Committee reviews the recommendations of the department heads and selects the monthly winners of this award.

The department head makes their recommendations based on the employee’s attendance record, appearance, attitude, work ethic, initiative, safety awareness and record.

The award to the employee for being chosen “Employee of the Month” will be a special parking space and badge denoting the award. He/she will also receive remuneration in the amount of \$50 and a picture in the *Focus*, (Boca Woods’ monthly news letter), with the department head. When the award is given out, the crew puts the winner on a chair and he then gives a short speech which is then followed by major applause.

Each December, one employee will be chosen from the pool of monthly winners to be “Employee of the Year.” The award to the employee selected “Employee of the Year” will be a special parking space and badge denoting the award, and a remuneration in the amount of \$250.

Since the awards’ inception last January, it has really made a positive difference in attitude with the crew. They look forward each month to the new winner, hoping they will be the one.

John Gallagher

Boca Woods C.C.

Palm Beach Chapter

Managing Your Most Important Asset

Have you ever been asked, “What is the most difficult or challenging part of your job?” What would your answer be? Getting rid of those pesky mole crickets! The thin turf on No. 8 green caused by those pretty oak trees 20 yards from the green! The nematodes on the front nine fairways! Keeping up-to-date and in compliance with all the governmental regulations?

These are all great answers, but I firmly believe that managing people is the most challenging aspect of our profession or any profession. I have been a golf course superintendent for 17 years. If you compare managing the staff now versus 17 years ago, the job has gotten more complex with lawsuits resulting from wrongful terminations, harassment and discrimination charges, ADA regulations, and even from *not* hiring someone!

No matter how large your budget, how much new equipment you have, or how great the course design, if you don’t have a properly trained and motivated staff, you will have a difficult time getting the course in top playing condition. Once you have a properly trained staff, you have conquered the biggest challenge in managing the course. How can this be accomplished?

I don’t know of any secret formulas or techniques. Usually, some common sense can be very helpful. I try to use the golden rule: “Do unto others as you have them do unto you.” This practice has helped me tremendously in managing staffs at three different country clubs.

Building a good staff can be broken down into the following areas: Hiring, training, motivation and morale, and discipline.

1) **Hiring:** The hiring process is probably the most important step because if you get the right person for the job, the other areas of staff management should be easier. When needing to hire new staff, I have found the best source for applicants comes from your present staff.

They usually know someone who is looking for a job. They will usually give you prospects they want to work with and meet your criteria. Other methods include newspaper ads, employment services and walk-in applicants.

No matter how you get your applicants, it is imperative that you do a good job in the interview process. By asking the right questions, you can narrow down the list of prospects. Then by using your judgment based on the interview results you can make a more intelligent final decision.

Drug testing and background checks are also becoming integral parts of the hiring process. They can help weed out