

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

potential problems and get better people on board. The bottom line on hiring is to develop and use good interviewing and screening techniques to help find the right people for the job.

2) **Training.** Training the new employee is probably the next most important process. The amount of training required will depend on the type of work and the person's prior experience in similar jobs. It is wise to have written job descriptions for each job your staff performs. This gives the new employee a visible description of what each job entails. It is then up to you or a designated trainer to instruct the new employee on how to perform the job to the department's expectations. Be sure to explain all safety, right-to-know, hazard communication, and any other programs that are in effect for your staff.

3) **Motivation/morale.** Once you get the right person hired and trained, you must be able to motivate him and maintain good employee morale. This is probably the hardest thing to do because what works for one person may not work for another. It is important to find out what makes each employee tick so you can coach them to perform to the best of their abilities.

One of the best morale boosters is to praise your staff members for good work both orally and in writing. Cook-outs, parties, and golf outings at other clubs in your area are also morale boosters.

You can do a simple survey of other clubs to compare wages and benefits. It is a good idea to promote from within whenever possible. Internal promotions encourage employees by rewarding good

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work, and giving everyone an incentive to progress and accomplish more.

You must administer progressive and consistent discipline to all staff members. Inconsistent discipline can cause severe morale problems. Sometimes, just being willing to listen to your staff can work wonders with your staff.

According to many surveys, one of the most common complaint among workers is that nobody listens to them! We just completed an employee survey at our company. We got some very interesting answers. Some were predictable and some were surprising!

4) **Discipline.** Sooner or later you will have to discipline someone on your staff. Good discipline requires the right punishment, criticism, and guidance that will help prevent future mistakes and infractions. Proper reprimanding tips include:

◆ Reprimand an individual in private, never in front of others.

◆ Never reprimand when tempers are high. You might say something you may later regret.

◆ Listen to the employee's point of view. There are always two sides to everything.

◆ Try to end on a high note with encouragement.

◆ Document all reprimands. In labor disputes, the burden of proof is on the employer!

I have touched on a few items that I consider to be the keys to sound staff management. As you manage your golf course, don't forget to have a some "preventative maintenance" programs for your staff just like you do for the turf and the equipment.

As I said, "People are your most important asset!"

Hal Richburg, CGCS

Heathrow CC

Central Florida Chapter

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