

I received a lot of comments on my last column in the *Florida Green*. I must say, it was great to hear from you.

Many were concerned how others would interpret my comments.

Let me ask you something: If you were in charge of hiring the superintendent at a club, how many do you think you would seriously consider out of those 75 applicants for the job?

I was involved in the hiring process at a club and narrowed the choices down to eight candidates for the

board to consider.

Ironically, only a small percentage of the criteria for selection involved the candidate's ability to grow grass.

I tell many people that "growing grass is the easiest part of my job." I will not go through the litany — we have all seen the list of duties we must perform.

I think the one duty that we often overlook is the ability to communicate with our members and with the board. As a friend says, "We are in the people business."

If you cannot effectively communicate with your members and your greens chairman, you will be in that long line of 75 candidates seeking to fill one vacancy.

Have you ever had a friend leave his job and go to another club where you think he has found the perfect fit? Why do we say the "fit" is perfect?

Is it because of his ability to grow grass or is it his ability to straighten out the members and re-educate them?

Is this ability to communicate innate, or is it something we learn as we go

along... or is it both?

I know of a superintendent who went into a club that nobody wanted to work for because the club never put money back into the golf course, didn't pay decent salaries and generally had all the other qualities that turn professional superintendents off.

Two years later, the club is spending all kinds of money to fix up the course, is paying the superintendent an attractive salary. The job is one of the best in town.

Did this just happen? How many of those 75 candidates are staying current with all the latest environmental information? How many are taking seminars and keeping themselves on top of the latest science and technology in agronomy? How many have taken courses in personnel management or budgeting and fiscal management?

If you were to lay out an educational program for superintendents, do you think we should start emphasizing communication more?

Some of you complained that my last column did not offer any solutions to the problems I raised. I realize that defining the problem is only the first step but it is the first step. At least we are thinking and talking about the issues.

If you are talking about our problems among yourselves, *communicating* your ideas to the board through your external vice president, together we will come up with much better solutions than I could have dreamed up by myself.

Nobody anointed me with special wisdom when you elected me to this office; but you did give me a special vantage point that brings the "big picture" more sharply into focus.

And from where I stand, growing grass is the easiest part of my job... and yours.

Keeping the 'big picture' in focus



Paul Crawford

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