

*Professionalism  
makes us  
all better  
superintendents*

Part of the territory of the Presidency is dealing with different questions of ethics. The ethics question can encompass many different behaviors and situations. In fact

the GCSAA Code of Ethics listed on page 23 of our 1995 Membership Directory lists 12 items that every superintendent member of the FGCSA and GCSAA has agreed to live by. As President, the most common questions I hear refer to items 7, 8, and 9 that are employment-related. The Code, however, covers many areas of professionalism and following them makes us all better superintendents.

When you hear “Code of Ethics” violations discussed most people think of other superintendents soliciting a job that is presently filled. As you should know this is strictly forbidden, and you should not talk to any club unless the position has been vacated or the current superintendent notified. This also pertains to “advising” or “consulting” with a club without first speaking to the superintendent and letting him know the situation.

A general rule to follow is to always call the superintendent before playing or visiting his course. One complaint that I received this year was from a superintendent who lost his job when his course signed a contract with a golf management company.

He was never called before someone visited the course and spoke with the owners. Is this a violation of the Code of Ethics? When a company solicits business at a course behind the superintendent’s back, is that any different than another superintendent coming in and soliciting his services?

Please don’t take this wrong! I am not against management companies that abide by our Code of Ethics. Good management companies have helped our industry by

getting qualified people into clubs that were not being properly run. They have helped clubs that could have been potential time-bombs for the industry. Most of the people that I know who run or work for many of the management companies are very good superintendents. Most of them tell me that they have helped the superintendent at the contracted club.

The “ethics” question arises when a course owner, operator, or board is solicited without the superintendent’s knowledge. I know at our club we receive junk mail addressed to the President from companies who claim to manage our club. Some even call on the phone and, of course, I have never been notified! I have also received mail from mostly out-of-state superintendents who mass mail resumes to clubs probably wanting to move to the “sunny South.” This, also, would seem to violate the Code.

The Code of Ethics touches other phases of our profession as well. Read them if you haven’t, or read them again if it has been a while since you last looked at them. The whole Code just makes good sense to follow. It advocates strong management and business practices. It also stresses professionalism in endorsement and purchasing matters, and in association conduct.

Our industry has been making great strides to earn respect in and out of the golf world. Our actions at a club can set an example that can affect many people. We develop reputations through our sound management techniques and business practices. If someone manages poorly or repeatedly exercises poor judgment, he may put a bad taste in many people’s mouths towards superintendents in general.

To be accorded respect by others, we must first respect ourselves and our profession. Remember, we work in a great industry with a lot of fantastic people. We always need to treat and respect others the way we would like to be treated and respected.

**President’s  
Message**



*Scott Bell*

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