

is analyzing the resumes. When looking over a resume of an applicant, some of the things I look for are education, past achievements or awards, memberships in turf-related organizations and, most importantly, work history. When I look at work history, I look at several things. Are the clubs the applicant worked at comparable to my operation? did the person show stability in his employment history, or did he change jobs frequently? Finally, are there any gaps in his employment history? Also, if I have the references of the applicant, I look to see if they have included references from ALL of the previous employers. If one or more previous employers were omitted, I inquire to find out if there was a motive behind the omission or if it was just an oversight.

These are all things that can be discussed in an interview. I feel work history is critical in the discussion. The applicant should have several years of good work experience, preferably as a technician or better. Training an assistant superintendent fresh out of school with little work experience is a task very few of us have the time to do. All the formal education in the world can not prepare an individual for a job in the turfgrass profession unless it is combined with work experience.

When interviewing an applicant for an assistant's job it is critical for the superintendent to be prepared, organized and consistent. A prepared, written interview is extremely helpful especially if more than one person is being interviewed.

A past employer of mine, a superintendent, once put me through a three-hour written prepared interview for an assistant in training position. The questions ranged from agronomic, personnel and ethics to personal and professional goals. Needless to say, the superintendent giving the interview was an extremely organized professional. This interview taught me a lot, and I have adopted some of the questions in my interview process.

A prepared, written interview also allows the interviewer to fairly evaluate all the applicants.

Selecting the right person for the job is essential. Often you spend more time with your assistant than you do with your own family. If the fit is not right, it will

create friction and unneeded stress on all parties involved.

The assistant superintendent must be able to relay his and your desires to all members of the maintenance staff. The assistant must also be mature enough to communicate with the youngest and oldest employee regardless of the assistant's own age. This is why I feel confidence (not arrogance) is a key personality trait of the assistant.

The assistant superintendent must also serve as a role model for the maintenance staff. The staff will look to this individual for guidance. If the assistant has bad habits, they will undoubtedly be picked up by the staff. The assistant should look and act at all times like the maintenance staff has been instructed to do.

If the crew members see the assistant breaking a rule that they have been told to follow, it will most likely result in bad work habits or poor attitudes.

Finding and hiring the right assistant superintendent can make you or break you. The assistant is the heart of the maintenance staff. It is this individual that will serve as an extra set of eyes, ears and a nose for you while he is on the golf course. It is for this reason, and others, that you must inform your assistant of all the activities, goals and plans that you, the superintendent, have. The more educated this person is, the easier it will be for him to do his job. Don't forget — the better he does his job, the better the golf course and you look! The hard work that you go through in hiring, training, educating and allowing the assistant to mature professionally will pay off for the assistant superintendent, superintendent, the membership and the golf course conditioning.

— *Darren Davis*, GCS Olde Florida Golf Club, Everglades Chapter

## From School to Assistant

Becoming an assistant after college is a period of transition when several decisions need to be made. The choices decided upon make a definite impact on one's career.

That first assistant's job a person holds

makes such a lasting impression that careful consideration should be placed on all decisions. Several of the decisions include: a suitable location, the type of organization, the superintendent and one's goals.

The chosen location is a lesser factor with some than with others. It is, however, a concern that should be addressed according to the region, climate and type of turfgrass the assistant is looking to gain experience with.

The type of organization can be a difficult decision to make due to the variety of opportunities available. An assistant should look at public, private and municipal courses along with management groups. When looking at these options, one should focus on its reputation, budget and membership in the past, present and future.

One of the most important choices is a superintendent. This person gives an assistant the proper training to eventually become his equal. A superintendent should be experienced and knowledgeable about the different aspects of the industry. His long and short term goals should be realistic and attainable. He must be aware and willing to spend time training an assistant on the most up-to-date products and trends. He should be consciously aware of the environment and, most importantly, he should be able to clearly communicate his objectives.

The final part of deciding on where an assistant's career will begin lies with the goals he sets. These must be attainable goals in order to become successful. Some goals might include developing strong leadership qualities; fine tuning management skills; and gaining, not expecting, the respect of employees.

Graduating from college can be a fulfilling experience just as beginning a career in the golf business. The novice assistant will look forward to becoming involved in the different affiliations of the industry. This transition of graduating from college to becoming an assistant superintendent can be accomplished by setting high expectations and challenging oneself to become a future superintendent.

*Tim Haskins*, Assistant GCS, Olde Florida Golf Club