

Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes

Green Side Up



Joel D. Jackson

Joel D. Jackson, CGCS
Editor

Can you say globalization? Latitudes and longitudes shrink at the click of a computer mouse. I'm sitting in my home/office making hotel and airline reservations on my personal computer. I subscribe to America Online and I'm just a nanosecond away from webbing on the internet. I haven't even scratched the surface of the information highway that passes through my spare bedroom.

All that information won't necessarily help me groom a golf course better than someone who hasn't evolved into the computer age, but maybe I have a better feeling for what is driving the rapid cultural revolution in the global business world.

Streamlining, flattening, downsizing, out-sourcing, empowerment, accountability, performance development plans and leadership pathways are the buzzwords and passwords in the competitive marketplace of today. This is especially true for all corporate golf operations, and remember all you private clubs it is the world of many of your members.

We recognize that the role of the superintendent has changed over the past decade, and I'm here to tell you the pace of change is accelerating. It is not enough to be technically proficient in managing turf. In fact the word "manage" may be on an evolutionary dead end branch of the business tree.

We are increasingly called upon to be facilitators, coaches, leaders and communicators. Issues of loss prevention, environmental integrity, social awareness in areas of ADA, OSHA, and diversity propel us helter-skelter through a litigious society.

Amid all the clamor of rapid change and competition remains the demand

and expectation for the best possible playing conditions on the golf course.

And guess what? Mother nature doesn't care about nanoseconds, microchips and organizational initiatives! Spring will come when its good and ready, and maybe when your not! Turfgrass will recover and flourish when the conditions are ripe for growth. Not because we will it, but because the sunshine, water, soil temperatures and nutrients are present in the correct amounts at the appointed time.

What can be changed is how we deal with people internal and external to our operations. Breaking down old barriers and finding new ways to partner and cooperate for the success of the whole entity not just maintenance.

It will take hard work and soul searching to identify, measure, and solve old problems. Traditional mindsets will be assaulted and people will be moved out of comfort zones into the tumult of the competition for survival, personal and organizational.

Forces at work in this high-tech, fast paced world don't always realize that their meteoric flights are adjusted to the natural rhythms of the planet. It is the nature of man to explore the possibilities and we cannot remain immune to trying new things.

We are being asked to change old attitudes. However, those pursuing the cultural revolution must remember that nature can "cop an attitude" of its own and will have the final say and dictate a certain success rate based on its own terms.

Mankind is often reminded that nature must be respected and dealt with in all human endeavors.

Can you say NASA space shuttle and woodpecker?