

Association Service...

giving back or getting more?

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When a superintendent either volunteers or is asked to serve on the board or on committees of his local or national associations, he/she has several things to consider. Am I willing to invest some of my time to help out? Can I take time away from my job if necessary? Will my employer support my decision?

The first thing a superintendent should do is talk to his/her superiors and tell them of his/her interest and desire to serve or help out. They should candidly assess and discuss how much time this service may require away from routine responsibilities. They should also discuss the potential benefits to the superintendent and the club.

When a superintendent steps up and decides to make a commitment to serve his profession beyond his daily routine, he/she is displaying qualities of leadership that should be encouraged and nurtured by his club. Involvement doesn't mean just missing work. It means that superintendent is being exposed to opportunities to grow and development in both personal and professional areas.

I know my volunteer service in local, state and national associations has helped me overcome the common fear of public speaking, which helps me when I have to make presentations at my club. By being a visible leader in my associations, I am on the leading edge for information sharing and gathering, which helps me learn new and potentially better methods for solving or avoiding problems at my club in all phases of our operation.

Those of us who have volunteered know internally how much we have personally benefited and grown from this

Volunteer Leaders' Qualities	Benefits to Employer
Visualize the future	Strong strategic and long-term planning abilities.
Inspire others	Motivate staff to do its very best work. Inspire teamwork. Earn respect.
Critical thinkers	Identify priorities, solve problems, and translate ideas into action. Define and explore alternative solutions.
Process oriented	Excel at planning, organizing, directing, controlling and monitoring —elements critical to golf course management.
Progressive	Create opportunities. Keep up to date with technology and management practices to produce the highest quality playing conditions. Open to new ideas.
Effective personal skills	Capable of working with different constituencies such as green chair, green committee, board of directors, golfers, etc.
Competent	Manage facility's resources skillfully and within budget.
Passionate	Committed to achieve facility goals.
Strong character	Honest and ethical

Source: Leadership Handbook, 1997, 1995 Compensation and Benefits Report, GCSAA; For the Common Good, <http://ceres.esusda.gov/mission/plans/voldev/vol-5.htm>.

service. In the May/June issue of GCSAA's Leader Board newsletter, there was a great little article that described the leadership qualities that a superintendent can develop in his volunteer service and how they can benefit his/her employer.

Pretty heady stuff, huh? It doesn't mean that everyone who volunteers and serves is going to turn into a clone of Old Tom Morris. We all have different

strengths and weaknesses. It does mean that a club that supports its superintendent who gets involved is likely to have a more effective manager because of it.

The job always comes first. It always should. But superintendents and their clubs should realize that taking advantage of volunteer service can be a win-win situation for everyone.