

- Take the time to explain to your supervisor the pros and cons of an issue. Let them become part of the decision making process.

- Listen to what others have to say. Don't always dominate a conversation.

- Be proactive when problems occur. Let people know what occurred, why and what you are doing about it.

- Present yourself in a positive and confident manner. Speak clearly and practice your presentations in front of a mirror or in front of your wife. This is especially helpful if you have a problem with public speaking.

- Dress appropriately for the situation. Coat and tie for board meetings or formal presentations. Clean and conservative apparel for most other situations.

- Prepare typed documents or reports detailing budgets and expense line items. Be specific but brief and to the point. Be accurate. If you can't type, find someone who can. Learn how to use computer word processing programs. Gone are the days of handwritten material.

- Work to improve yourself and your staff. Have training sessions for them and attend seminars or meetings to learn what is going on around you. Keep updated on trends in the industry.

- Ask others for help. Our own egos can get in the way of solving problems. There are others who can help you learn. Call upon your peers, consultants, university personnel or technical representatives to help solve problems. Learn to share ideas, concepts, solutions and problems at chapter meetings and in trade publications.

- Read educational journals and browse the Internet. There are a lot of sources out there to get information. Look and Inquire.

Your "salesmanship" skills result in an image you will project to those you work for and work with. Fine tune your style and technique constantly. And finally, keep yourself approachable and visible.

STEVE PEARSON, CGCS
The Falls C.C.

Resorting to Your Image and Your Visibility

It is a hard thing to promote the superintendent position at a resort course

that doesn't have a membership. When you turn approximately 65,000 rounds per year, you rarely see the same person twice.

So you have to focus on the areas where you can make an impact: dress code, on-course contact with guests, and visibility to the golf operations people, which include the head professional, the area manager, and the staff of rangers, starters, and pro shop.

Superintendent dress code is a fairly simple subject here at Disney because a union contract prohibits us from doing any work that could be done by an hourly employee. So management will generally dress in a nice golf shirt, slacks, and dressy work or smooth-soled golf shoes. The maintenance crew is required to wear a costume that is provided and cleaned by the company. The new hires are also provided with temporary costumes until they receive their permanent sets. Name tags are a must for everyone.

Grooming is a big issue at Disney and everyone is expected to be clean-shaven and meet Disney standards for hair length. Tattoos and earrings are not allowed. Having everyone looking neat and in proper uniform, provides a statement of professionalism that is becoming more and more important in our industry.

Contact with guests is minimal for the maintenance crew. We begin our day between 4 and 5 a.m., depending on what is scheduled for maintenance and if there are any events that day. The first golfers will normally be on the course at 7. The crew usually will not see any golfers during their first assignments but may during their second jobs.

Golf course etiquette is highly stressed. The crew is instructed not to bother the golfers in any way. Obviously, some work goes on during play, such as rough mowing, weed eating, and edging paths. So the crew is trained to read the situation and to respond properly to "the look" that we have all received from time to time. Any complaints that we receive are brought to the attention of the responsible crew member and documented.

Guest contact by the superintendent is what Disney calls a "guest satisfier." It

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shows the golfer that you care how their round is going and that you are available if there are any problems. As you go about your business on the course, it is very easy to approach golfers and make yourself accessible to them.

Once the crew is gone for the day, I will usually make an "afternoon run" and check on the condition of the course. Moisture levels are always a big concern in the afternoon and it is amazing the amount of conversation that a simple soil probe can generate. It is a great way to break the ice, talk a little about conditions, the weather, or even give a basic soil profile lesson.

Golfers will take an interest in what you are doing and what a great opportunity for some basic education. A word of caution, however: It is wise to work backward from 18 and not to follow the same group around; otherwise you will be the one receiving the education, and I think we've all been there before.

Communication with the golf operations staff is critical at any facility. This is where everyone must be working together to make things run smoothly. We have all been caught by surprise when that 8:30 shotgun goes out at 8:00, or when you thought you had arranged for a No. 10 start and instead play went out on No. 1.



Something we do regularly is attend the 5:45 a.m. golf operations staff meeting. At this meeting, either the foreman or the superintendent will confirm the start times, number of players for the first time (we always hope it is a four-some), the tentative numbers for the day, if there are any breaks in play, and if there are any special maintenance items going on that day.

The golf staff supervisor, starter, ranger, and pro shop personnel are all at this meeting so all the bases can be covered at one time. The starter will also call us on the radio when the first group goes out and how many there are. These people can really be an asset on the days when you are fertilizing or topdressing, so it pays to take the time to get to know the golf operations personnel. I'm still amazed at how far a box of donuts at the morning meeting can go.

There are many other ways that the visibility and image of the superintendent can be promoted. The head profes-

sional and his apprentices just finished up a six-week stretch of junior camps at our facility. Each camp was one week long and had approximately 20 to 30 kids. They asked if we could speak with the kids each Wednesday for half an hour and talk about golf course maintenance.

The kids were a great audience. We spoke about greens construction, the price of building a golf course and maintaining it, the price you pay for fast greens, how much a specific piece of equipment cost, what time we get to work, the education required, and so on. Hopefully they will take some of that message with them as they grow as golfers.

We also participated in a trade show at Disney's Wide World of Sports field house this past winter. A USGA specification greens profile was built in a fish tank to show how a green was constructed, and we displayed several pieces of maintenance equipment.

All the Disney superintendents took

turns manning the booth during that week and we gained a lot of positive exposure. Something similar could be done at a member-based club by having an open house at the maintenance facility or by building a similar greens profile display and putting it in a common area for the members and guests to see.

In summary, superintendent visibility and image is something that is in our hands. If we want to improve it at all, it is up to us.

Be proactive. Be involved. Speak with members and guests. Help out other areas if you get a chance and spread the word that we are professionals and know what we are doing.

DAVID DATEMA
Disney's Magnolia GC

The PR Run

One of my favorite superintendent public relations stories comes from recently retired Stanley Carr. Stan worked at the Gulfstream County Club for 30

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