

years so he must have been doing something right.

I first heard his strategy during a conversation he was having with a superintendent who was struggling with his green committee.

The superintendent was bemoaning the fact that he was always on the job, but it didn't seem to make a difference to his superiors. I got the impression that he spent a lot of time in his office taking care of business of course, but he was out of sight and out of mind of the people who mattered the most.

Carr told the person, "Every day I make what I call my 'PR run.' I make time to ride the course especially in season. I make it a point to let the members see me walking greens and making notes even if the notes aren't critical. I greet the members and talk to them and answer any questions they might have. I have seen too many hard-working superintendents lose their jobs simply because they just weren't visible or didn't communicate effectively."

Carr also cultivated relationships with consultants, USGA agronomists and other outside experts. He would invite them for lunch and introduce them to his green committee members. He would have these experts over for a visit when he didn't have problems just to let his members know he was staying on top of the latest information. When he did use them to back up or explain a problem, they weren't perceived as strangers making excuses for a superintendent's mistake.

Carr always dressed the part of a professional superintendent. That meant coat and tie for committee meetings and boots and raincoat for rainy days. He also cultivated his green chairmen's support by making them part of the process and asking them questions even if he already knew the answers.

He told them up front that he couldn't give them a trouble-free golf course every day of the year. Mother nature just didn't work that way. He also told them that he wanted to feel safe in disagreeing with the chairman if he believed his position was in the best interest of the golf

course. By being candid and yet professional, he created a "we" atmosphere, which paid dividends in job satisfaction for 30 years.

Adopting a "PR run" strategy just might give you the visibility and credibility you need to compliment your hard work in the field and in the office.

JOEL JACKSON, CGCS
Florida GCSA

First Impressions

In today's world, with increasing demands and shrinking budgets, a superintendent's image may be more important than ever.

It's that first impression people get when they meet a superintendent or when they visit his maintenance facility. The maintenance building is generally the hub of any operation.

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Most people believe the golf course is the most important to maintain, (which is true) but the “barn” can tell a lot about how the operation is run. This is where the crew meets every morning to receive their assignments throughout the day, eats lunch and receives their training when they are hired.

The maintenance building is where the superintendent, assistants, and mechanics spend a majority of their time, when they are not in the field. It is an area where all the equipment is stored and serviced. Many people — vendors, members, general managers and other superintendents — visit the building during the day.

The first thing someone sees as they enter your maintenance complex, is the landscaping in the entrance and the grounds around your facility. Our jobs are hard enough without having elaborate and extensive landscaping around the shop to maintain.

Limiting the amount of material that

needs maintaining enables you to concentrate on other areas while your site still looks efficient and professional. Eliminating unneeded grass that requires mowing (such as; bahia) reduces time spent in maintenance. By planting cordgrass or other low-maintenance tall grasses, you will increase habitat and decrease maintenance. Around your building, you can plant low-maintenance shrubs, like Walters viburnum. Most native trees, shrubs and tall grasses only need to be watered until established.

Another place people see immediately upon arriving is the front entry into the buildings. It should be neat and clean with very low maintenance material around the building. Placing a bird feeder outside of the entry is a delightful touch, and it enhances conversation with members. Having pictures of your golf courses and site maps on the walls in the front office makes communicating with members more exciting. It is very important to keep the inside of the buildings or-

derly and clean. Everything is a factor to the overall professional image of the superintendent and the entire operation.

We have been very successful with the “Inside Cleaning Program.” With a rotating schedule, every day after lunch someone does a quick 10 to 15 minute clean-up (empty trash, wipe down tables and sweep floor). Then before the crew goes home for the day, the same person spends 30 to 45 minutes finishing the daily clean-up routine (restrooms, mopping, etc.).

One of the most important areas we concentrate on is the equipment. The equipment is paste-waxed when it is first delivered. This protects the paint against the hot climate in the South. Then at the end of each day the equipment is liquid waxed and towel dried, and Armor All is applied to all the plastics and rubber.

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return, it helps your professional image when asking to purchase a \$40,000 piece of equipment. And members are getting that professional appearance that they pay for and deserve on an upscale golf course.

We have recently started cleaning the shop on Monday mornings. It sets a positive atmosphere for the week. Each day all trash is emptied throughout the buildings, shop and fuel island. Every Friday we scrub the floors in the lunchroom, hallways and the shop floor.

Most people reading this article may think, "Man, I don't have that much time" or, "My job is to keep the golf courses clean." From experience, it takes less time to clean each day and week, rather than a massive spring-cleaning or rainy-day cleanup. Like the outside of the building, we made the inside as maintenance-free as possible. Ceramic tile was installed instead of linoleum. This saves money and time each year from waxing the linoleum.

For these reasons and many more, it is important to keep the "hub" well-designed, spotless and extremely organized. It is everyone's responsibility to keep the building in good condition. It portrays a professional image for everyone.

MATTHEW R. TAYLOR
Bonita Bay East

Superintendents with Blue Collars Aren't Invisible

I am a working superintendent at a daily fee course. Part of my day is spent preparing the course for play, mowing or applying chemicals.

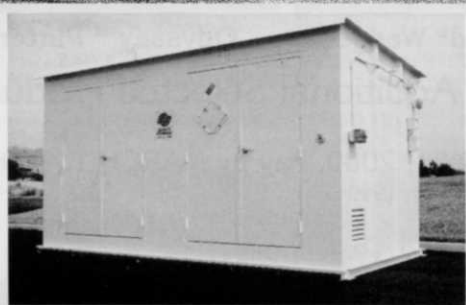
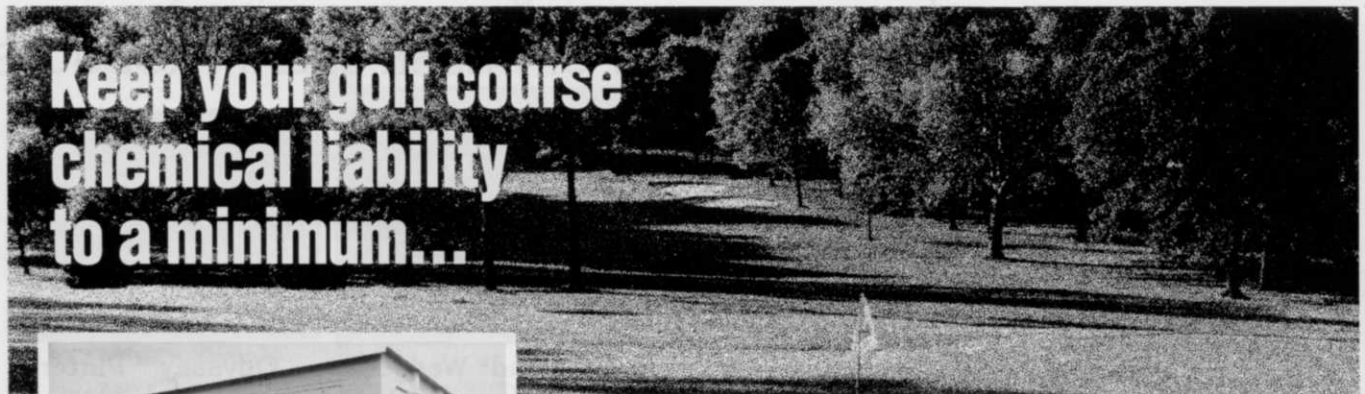
A normal work day at Winter Pines Golf Club is 6 a.m. to 2:30 p. m. with a break at 8:30 a.m. and a half hour for lunch. I usually work three hours on Sunday morning unless a seminar, meeting or golf tournament has been planned in advance.

Since I am a supervisor and also part of the working staff, I have a uni-

form to wear like the rest of the crew while on the clock. Wearing a golf shirt and slacks isn't very practical since I may have to perform any of the jobs on the course. The company provides and pays for the cleaning of everyone's uniform.

Winter Pines is a family-owned and -operated club. Projects, problems and even normal maintenance are normal daily topics of conversation with the owner, Ed McMillin and his son, Jon, who is the president and club manager. They are very hands-on people and are often out in the field working side by side with us on capital projects. So my image and visibility with them are born out of mutual respect for our abilities and commitment to the common success of the course.

Communicating and being visible to members and guests is just as important at a public course as they are at a private club. I usually stop by the clubhouse for either breaks or lunch



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