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portunities to call on me.

Anyone I just described (I have seen it all before) will probably not be in the industry very long anyhow. However, think about what I just described. If a salesperson does follow all the rules, is extremely knowledgeable, has a good personality and serves you well, should you not consider a long term relationship with this person and give them the respect of their position in your operation. Any person who can be a salesperson in the competitive golf industry for several years and maintain their clients and reputation has earned my respect and the privilege to help our operation.

There are a few exceptions to the rule. Sometimes there may be a product that is so important to the operation — and one company has the monopoly to sell it — that there may not be a choice as to whom you deal with in a salesperson, good or bad. When this occurs with a bad one, I will usually call the president of the company explaining that I will no

longer deal with his field representative and will make all my orders direct from the company itself.

At this time, be truthful about your reservations about that person and also be discreet. It is not professional to talk to other people not directly involved in the situation about your conflict with an individual. Life is too short and the industry too closely knit. Your reputation is also at stake.

JOE HUBBARD, CGCS

Good Vendors Can Be Excellent Resources

Vendors, just like superintendents, come in all shapes and sizes, and with a wide variety of experience and knowledge. A quality supplier can offer solutions to the challenges facing superintendents and be an excellent resource to him/her and their staffs.

It is an exceptional supplier will offer advice similar to Kris Kringle's in the

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movie, "A Miracle on 34th Street." Kringle, while working for Macy's department store, said Macy's "doesn't have what you want, but Gimbel's store does!" In other words, "If I don't have a product to solve your problem, I will steer you in the right direction."

A vendor can be a wealth of Information for many reasons:

- Trained by a manufacturer on product usage
- Access to manufacturers reps and research data
- Background in the turf business
- Shared experiences of others in addressing similar issues
- Knowledge of a wide variety of products

Most of the problems facing a golf course manager are not unique to the business. A quality vendor can share the successes of other golf course managers who have dealt with similar problems. As a territory manager I see 80 customers and, as we know, most of them want to see their peers succeed and are happy to share information.

Truly professional suppliers will try to understand the unique problems of your course and your needs. They can help by providing proper training related to the products they sell to you and your staff. They can offer assistance on how to best use the tools they supply. Not just ensure that you use their products but that you use the products efficiently to achieve the best bang for your buck.

Often a problem on the course really can't be addressed by something a vendor has to sell. Correct cultural practices are the most important ingredient in healthy turfgrass growth — things like spiking and topdressing to reduce algae pressure or raising the height of cut for overcoming decline symptoms are important factors in turf health.

When faced with these problems do your vendors offer these solutions or do they try to sell you an unproven product with no good Southeastern United States university research on the product's application on the turfgrass you manage?

For golf course superintendents the amount of information available out

there can be overwhelming. Recognizing how a particular vendor and their product can help you is important. You must use the resources employers entrust to you in the most efficient manner possible. Knowing who can help you best accomplish that goal is essential.

I have been fortunate to see the super-

intendent/supplier relationship from both positions. My impression of this relationship is if I, as a vendor, can help a fellow superintendent succeed, then our company will succeed. We will all benefit by working together.

*BILL LANTHIER, CGCS, TERRITORY
MANAGER
Golf Ventures, Inc.*

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