

Recognition: Go For It!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



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We are employed in an industry that demands managers who have diverse talents and skills. To those outside the profession, an explanation is often needed when introducing yourself as a golf course superintendent. A golf course superintendent — even as the manager of the backbone of a club, the

golf course — often plays second fiddle to other employees at the club who are more visible to the public. A superintendent is often thought of as the person, “that keeps the grass looking good.”

Today’s professional golf course superintendent wears a lot of hats. He or she is

responsible for much more than just growing grass. Superintendents are still first and foremost agronomists, but they are also environmentalists, scientists, strategists, resource managers, educators, business managers and administrators. We in the business realize this, but does our golfing clientele or the general public truly understand the duties of a golf course superintendent?

Although I have not been in the business as long as some of you, I came to a realization very early in my career that John Q. Public will never, and I mean never, fully recognize the complexity of our jobs. They will never understand the devotion that we have

for the profession if we do not seek some recognition on our own. We can not solely rely on others in the industry. The work of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) or the efforts of the United States Golf Association (USGA) is needed but golf course superintendents must also individually promote themselves.

Let me ask you a sincere question. Do you feel you deserve more recognition for the work that you do? If you hesitated or said no, you are more than likely being too humble. Certainly each individual has their own strengths and weaknesses, but each of us is good at what we do and, if you look at the big picture, most golf course superintendents are very deserving of more praise or recognition from others.

There are many avenues that recognition can come from, such as your employer, your golfers, your peers, or the general public. Each one of these is important in its own right. It is also critical to realize that recognition can do much more than just stroke your own ego. Recognition for the job you perform as a golf course superintendent can lead to better job stability for you, quicker advancement and also make the golf course industry as a whole better viewed by those outside the golfing world.

How does one obtain recognition? The answer is not difficult, but it can vary depending on the person. There is no right or wrong answer.

Some superintendents have received

rave reviews for hosting a major tournament or for being employed at a high profile club. This type of high-pressure job is certainly not for everyone but there are other options. You could get involved in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP) for golf courses or the ACSP for schools administered by Audubon International. One could also volunteer and become active in a local, state or national golf course superintendents association.

If writing is your forte, you could pen an article for your club newsletter, a trade journal or even a non-golf-related publication. Public speaking is also a quick way to tell your story to others. Telling your story can also be in the form of a press release written by you and submitted to the local paper, a trade journal or any print media that will publish this type of information. Applying for an Environmental Steward Award presented by the

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GCSAA, or for that matter any contest that can showcase your talents or the efforts made at your facility is another great idea.

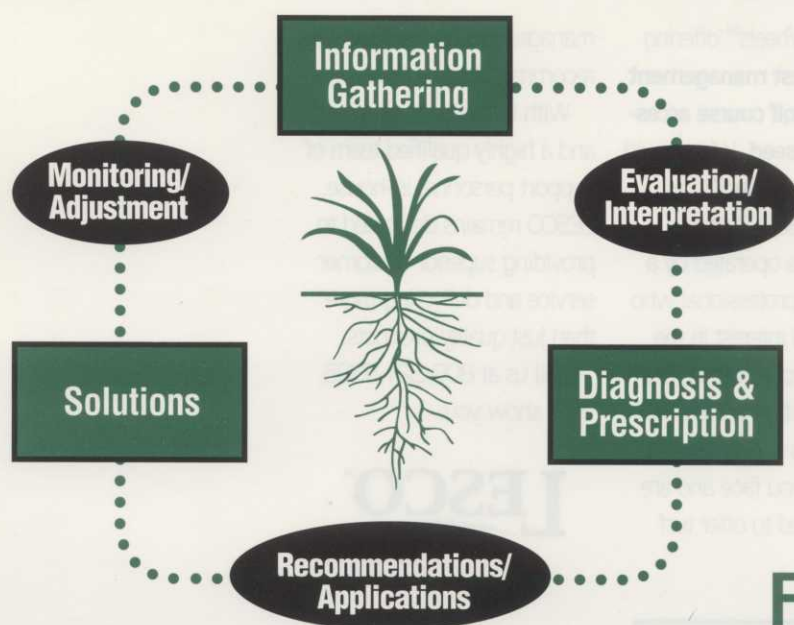
Are you talented on the computer?

Well, how about creating a web page for your club or something related to the profession? One could also get behind a valid cause and assist in a letter-writing campaign or a lobbying effort to persuade a government agency for the benefit of your club and others in the turf industry. Amazingly, recognition can also come from something as simple as inviting your peers or others to your golf course or traveling to see another course.

I could go on and on, but I hope that you now have a better understanding of the multitude of avenues that one could pursue for recognition. Quite simply, recognition is not hard to obtain but like anything worthwhile in life, you must put forth an effort. One must also be willing to come out of their own shell and realize that recognition of your talents by others is not just for your ego but instead it helps the golf course superintendent profession as a whole.

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