

## Administrative Assistants Are Life (and Job!) Savers

There is absolutely no way I could live without an administrative assistant! It is certainly easier to justify the need on larger operations such as multi-course facilities. At Indian River Club our owner expected professionalism — especially due to the Audubon Signature Status that we had obtained — and he actually wanted members or other clubs to call us for information.

Of course guess who they called? The superintendent's office. A live voice is able to provide accurate information and helps the general public or members gain confidence in our operations.

While most people think of a "secretary" as one who just answers the phone, this is not true. While any golf maintenance operations receive way too many



phone calls a day, this person is also my liaison to the crew.

I think more of their time is spent on personnel issues than any other thing. They are always answering questions such as vacation time, sick time, uniform problems, etc. They can also save the superintendent and mechanic a lot of time by ordering supplies, parts, etc., or by following up on lost orders. They are especially

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helpful when calculating payroll and of course at the end of the month when matching invoices and packing slips to statements.

Many superintendents wait until the end of the month when accounting is screaming for the paperwork before pulling them out of the file drawer. These assistants can perform this on a daily or weekly basis, especially if money is tight.

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This also helps with accuracy. My administrative assistant works at least 40-50 hours a week now, and if she did not do this work, then I don't know where I would be!

Earlier in my career I had proposed the idea of an administrative assistant to the owners and they thought it was ridiculous due to the fact we were a small crew of 10-12 and maintaining 18 holes, so they didn't feel administration took that much time (in their eyes). In truth, I was spending more than 20-25 hours per week performing administrative duties, especially considering the amount of paperwork expected of management companies these days. My work week averaged 55-60 hours per week... or more.

This began to get old, especially considering that I could not see the golf course as much as I wanted. I proposed that I would take a person from the crew and work him only 20 hours per week on the course. The other 20 would be dedicated to an office assistant. This person

worked Monday to Friday from 9:00 to 1:30 with a half hour for lunch.

These are perfect hours for a working mother! She only works while the kids are in school. She sees them off in the morning and is home when they arrive from school. I had a waiting list for this position!

I told the owners that we could get the same amount of work done on the course because I could run the operation more efficiently by being able to spend more time on the course. This was very true and now I had a person who could do all the time-consuming little things that I had to do because there was no one to delegate to.

The operation certainly runs better. The crew is happier. The mechanics are real happy, because they do not have to answer the phone or deal with salesmen in the middle of grinding reels.

What is actually happening is that more and more is placed on your department that may have been performed by

other departments in the past. You also begin to find that 20 hours a week for an office assistant never is quite enough. I started off at Indian River Club with 30 hours and it went to 40 very quickly due to the fact we also maintained all the Property Owners Association areas and 22 employees!

My administrative assistant has saved me a great many hours here at Champions Gate due to the fact she was already experienced with golf operations. Starting up a new project is very time consuming and I did not have to train her in what to do. A good, self-motivated administrative assistant is as valuable as any of your technicians. I actually classify this position as a technician position. With today's fast-paced world where everybody wants it now, this position is a must! Leaving a message on a recorder is the thing of the past.

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