The Florida Green

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On the Cover: *15th hole. Camp Creek G.C., WaterSound, FL. Photo by Joel Jackson*

FOREWORDS

Realistic Optimism

Gary Myers, CGCS
President

Another year has passed and it's is a good year to have behind us. The economists predicted that the economy would pick up in 2010. It did pick up, just not at the pace we hoped for. I'm beginning to look at the economy forecast like a typical Florida summer day, it might rain, might not. In 2011 the economy might improve, might not. Golf rounds and revenues might pick up, might not. However, I am more optimistic than pessimistic and believe that the economy and golf revenues will improve in 2011.

Over the past couple of years, we have been asked to do more with less. With revenues down, maintenance cost reductions have been the target . We cut labor hours, expenses and prolonged equipment life. For certain, when we were asked or told to make those cuts, we were not told that we could also lower playing conditions expectations. Golfers that are paying the rates we are charging expect quality conditions and it's our responsibility to provide them. Even if golfers did not expect them, our pride would not let conditions slip. Here are some suggestions for dealing with cost cutting.

Have an open mind and look at the big picture. With revenues down, clubs must reduce expenses in order to remain profitable. Look at your operation and determine where you can save and don't be inflexible.

Communicate. Make sure you communicate with everyone on what you are doing. Let your leaders know about reductions and what the ramifications will be. Communicate with your staff to let them know why you are making particular decisions. Communicate with the other departments. Make sure your finance team knows your cost cutting measures. This includes detailing short term or long term sustaining reductions. You may decide to skip a fertilizer application, an aerification, and a topdressing application. These would be examples of short term reductions, but are not sustainable over the long term. You need to explain why. Remember, the people asking for cost reductions may not understand the effects of skipping maintenance practices

Be pro-active. It is better for you to look for and implement cost cutting measures than to be told what to cut. At staff meetings you hear what is going on within your club. If revenues are down, it is obviously time to look at reducing cost. While speaking with a group of Club Managers recently, I was asked if it was better for the General Manager to tell the Superintendent what to cut or give them a number or percentage to cut. I obviously told them that it is better to give the Superintendent the flexibility to determine where they can reduce cost. By being pro-active, you control your reductions rather than being told what to reduce.

Remind. You may be wondering why I stuck this word in there. It also pertains to communication but, I put it in its own category. You will need to remind your leaders that you are making cost reductions and doing more with less and when the economy picks up and revenues increase, you need those dollars back into your operating budgets. Don't let them forget that you made those reductions for the short term. In order to maintain quality conditions going forward, you'll need to restore many of those reductions. I also pointed this out to that group of Club Managers at their summit meeting.

I hope all of you had a Safe and Happy Holiday Season and here is to 2011 being a prosperous and profitable year for all of us.