Environmental Summit
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Peter Douglas, executive director of the Calif. Coastal Commission, speaks to the golf industry

Golf Advisory Boards serve as liaisons between government, developers and players

The Public Arena
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Supers combat stress, burnout
Poor delegation skills a cause

Survey says: Architects don't agree on very much

As distribution shrinks, firms go factory-direct

New Congress might result in mixed golf bag

Supers combat stress, burnout
Poor delegation skills a cause

By J. BARRY MOTES
SAN FRANCISCO — A failure to delegate work and soaring expectations are the leading causes of stress among golf course superintendents, according to a psychologist who has worked closely with the subject for several years.

"Golf course superintendents tend to be perfectionists and think, 'If I don't do it, it won't be right,' " said Dr. Bree Hayes, who has led stress management seminars for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GC-SAA). Hayes will lead another such seminar during the GC-SAA Show and

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Survey says: Architects don't agree on very much

By MARK LESLIE
The diversity of golf course architects is matched only by their opinions on such topics as the availability of financing, designing courses with less irrigated acreage, and whether "minimalism" has returned to design.

In an exclusive Golf Course News survey of the country's 200-odd architects, respondents shared some up-close insights into a world that spans irrigation technology, corporate finance and turfgrass research.

The most disparate answers came from the questions on minimalism, whether money spent to build courses is declining, and whether clients are finding it easier to get financial

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As distribution shrinks, firms go factory-direct

By HAL PHILLIPS
An increasing number of industry firms are marketing their products directly to golf courses, as the spectrum of distribution lines continues to narrow. Industry observers agree that, as the golf market continues to mature, more and more companies will abandon traditional lines of distribution for the factory-direct approach.

The service-oriented, two-step nature of golf purchasing will never disappear: "You don't just get a Toro Greensmower in a crate," said Chuck Champion, general sales manager of Overland Park, Kan.-based Kalo, Inc., a manufacturer of wet-fertilizer products, which don't necessarily require that level of service, are relationship with the distributor."

"Magnesium is magnesium is magnesium is magnesium," said Kathy Driggs of the Club Managers Association. "The laws and regulations we'll be looking at should be far less onerous than before."

Added Kathy Driggs of the Club Managers Association. "The laws and regulations we'll be looking at should be far less onerous than before."
Factory direct
Continued from page 1

"The chemical side is a commodity-driven business. There, we see more or less a 'price battle'/'War,' and we'll continue to see it."

In addition to embarking on a factory-direct campaign with Kala-Cup, Frazier and his firm, which used to own a distributorship in Kansas, Frazier has witnessed the consolidation of distribution first-hand. Modern has acquired seven competitors over the past five years.

Though they come at the issue from two different perspectives, Champion and Frazier agree that, as the golf market matures and consolidates, distribution lines will continue to become more exclusive—forcing firms to take their products directly to golf course purchasing agents: superintendents and managers.

"Now that I'm also in the ag market, I can see golf is about 10 years behind," said Champion. "It's commodity-driven. It's still a service-oriented process, so you'll always need some two-step distribution. But if you're opening a carton of wetting agent, you don't need that level of service. Those types of products will become increasingly direct marketing-oriented."

"In the ag business today, that's the way it is. A lot of larger companies are saying, 'Forget the distributor, we'll do it ourselves.' Pretty soon, everything will be available to the superintendent by catalogue."

Manufacturers are looking for new ways to deliver their products cheaper. If they can eliminate the distributor, they can pass the savings on to their customers.

While this phenomenon is gaining prominence in the chemical sector, it's well beyond that stage in other markets, such as accessories.

"It has to do with profitability," said Mike Neal of Fore Par in Huntington Beach, Calif. "I see it all the time: Superintendent says, 'I can get it from this guy for $5 less.' Well, there's the distributor salesmen right over there—that's where the $20 is."

"Personally, I sort of lament it happening in that direction. But we're seeing more and more of it, aren't we?"

Frazier explained that some firms are forced to go factory direct because of the distributor's profitability, or lack thereof. Many of those distributors purchased during the recent consolidation were too price-conscious, Frazier said, and it cost them.

"In today's market, distributors who sell on price alone won't survive because their margins will continue to erode and that lower margin won't support the overhead," he said. "If they add value, they get a higher price. And that 2 or 3 percent makes it possible to cover overhead and make a profit."

"More and more distributors can't add that value, can't cover the overhead and can't make a

profit. That's why so many have gone out of business, which explains why more companies are forced to go factory direct—because there are fewer and fewer distributors."

More than 20 U.S. firms made automobiles early in this century. Now there are three... That should tell you something about what's happening in the golf course industry, where companies strive to heat their direct competition, corner a segment of the market, then expand into other markets in search of market efficiencies.

"You have to be big to survive in this business," said Frazier. "Five years ago we did $8 million in sales. We did $38 million in 1994 and will do $45 this year. But I'm telling you: If we didn't do $34 or $35 we wouldn't be breaking even."

"We're aware there's been a lot of consolidation," said Dave Heegard, vice president of the ProTurf Division at O.M. Scott. "Some of the bigger agents, like the Terras, have purchased a lot of the smaller independents. There are fewer distributors out there. No doubt about it."

Heegard can afford to view the situation with a measure of dispassion because Scott has been marketing directly to superintendents since it first entered the golf market 28 years ago. Scott employs 62 sales representatives and 11 managers who call on golf courses across the United States, said Heegard, while a separate group of manufacturer reps visit all the courses in Canada. Yet even Heegard will admit, "One of the weaknesses of the direct marketing approach is getting the product close to the customer."

Frazier noted that UPS and Federal Express make the job of factory-direct sales far easier. "They make it when you don't," he said. "If you can keep it up, you can create that perception of local presence, and perception is everything."

Life is GREAT! for a rapidly growing number of golf course superintendents all over North America and Asia... according to those fortunate enough to own one (or two) of the new MH-400's from Ty-Crop.

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For more information on the MH-400 your nearest dealer, or a free demonstration, please call:

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