**Teaching an old dog new service tricks**

**By VINCE ALFONSO**

How many of you remember the early TV game show, *Name That Tune*? I realize I am dating myself but I remember: I loved that show. I was amazed at how those people could hear only one or two notes of a song and then — BINGO — they "Named That Tune".

And I'm sure that, as amazing as it was to me, it was no big deal to them. If asked how they did it, I'm sure they would have said, "It just comes natural to me. I hear a tune and I never forget it."

When it comes to customer service, a lot of people are like that. It just comes naturally to them. They see a customer step one foot inside the door of their shop and their instincts take over. They seem to know just what to say, how to say it and when to say it. They really know how to make a customer feel acknowledged, valued, appreciated and welcome. And, of course, that translates into a happy customer, which almost always turns into more sales. As owners and managers of golf courses, charged with the responsibility of hiring and training our staff, we often have to hire sales people whose credentials meet all of our criteria, including having

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**Carefree’s Miller credits fellow superintendents for successful career**

**By PETER BLAIR**

CAREFREE, Ariz. — Ed Miller likens his job to the director of player personnel for an NFL football team, an apt analogy in light of the just-completed Super Bowl. "I look for the best talent when recruiting superintendents and then give them the authority to do their job," said the director of golf operations for Carefree Resorts, operators of The Boulders in Carefree, Ariz., The Lodge at Ventana Canyon in Tucson, Ariz., and Carmel (Calif.) Valley Ranch.

"One of the greatest challenges in this industry is recruiting the right person for that position. The superintendent’s job is demanding, challenging, but not very well understood."

Miller knows whereof he speaks, having spent many years as a course superintendent before becoming the man responsible for Carefree’s multi-million-dollar golf operations.

Miller was a junior at the University of Wisconsin when he began his golf career at nine-hole Walnut Grove Golf Course in Cochrane, Wis. He did a little bit of everything, working on the construction crew, serving as equipment manager, acting as a grow-in superintendent and occasionally tending bar. He spent two years at Walnut Grove while earning his bachelor’s degree in business administration.

"It was fascinating and stimulating work," he recalled. "But I knew if I wanted a career in this business, I had to accelerate the process. That’s a choice I had to make."

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