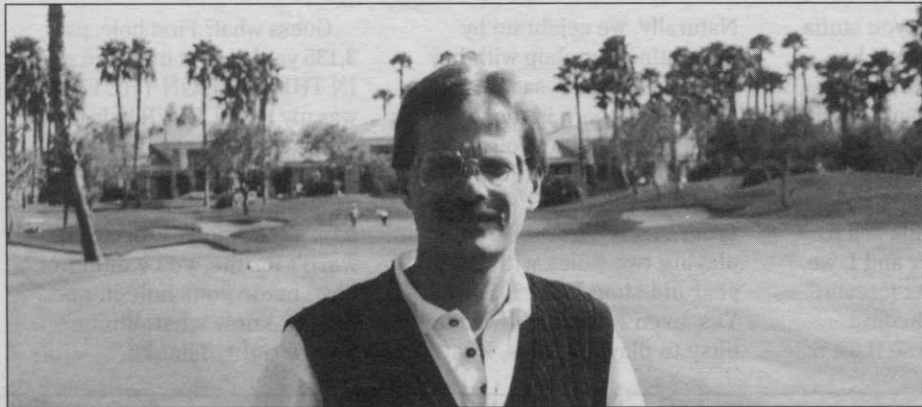


MOVIN' ON UP



KSL Director of Agronomy Eric Schmidt

Head agronomist takes sales route to top

By PETER BLAIS

LA QUINTA, Calif. — Eric Schmidt came at his upper management position with KSL Fairways/KSL Recreation Corp. from a different direction.

Schmidt — who is director of agronomy for the KSL Fairways' 26 mid-priced public courses and head of golf operations purchasing for KSL Recreation's four luxury resort golf facilities — got his start in sales.

In the late 1970s, Schmidt received his bachelor's degree in agronomy and went to work selling for his father's seed distributorship, Indiana Seed Co. "I'm a lot like my Dad," Schmidt said. "We're both very outgoing and I just gravitated to marketing."

After several years in the family business, he moved to California and joined the turf and ornamental sales division of Foster Turf Sod Farms, a subsidiary of defunct Landmark Land Co.

About the time Landmark's financial woes hit the headlines, Schmidt was ready for a move. He wound up in Malaysia with a hydroseeding company. The firm's plans to become a major player in the Asia-Pacific hydroseeding market never materialized and six months later Schmidt returned to his previous job with Landmark, which was then in receivership with the Resolution Trust Corp.

KSL Recreation, which had acquired a dozen public courses from a management company called Fairways, then purchased several former Landmark properties, including Foster Turf, PGA West and LaQuinta Club & Resort. KSL spun off Foster Turf and offered Schmidt his current position.

"I've never been a superintendent at an individual golf course," he said. "But I have overseen the sale of massive amounts of bermudagrass and bentgrass sod."

That knowledge of turf, coupled with his experience in Corporate America, has helped Schmidt succeed in his new position. "Corporate golf," he said, "can provide certain things that equity [membership-owned] clubs can't. Some people want the prestige of an equity club and that might be the way for them to go. But it comes with a price — the insecurity of having 400 bosses who may all want different things."

"In the corporate world, superintendents and upper-level managers have no more than five or six people looking over their shoulders. Management firms stress teamwork and won't tolerate rogue behavior. But you are rated objectively based on your performance. You won't be fired for crossing a member."

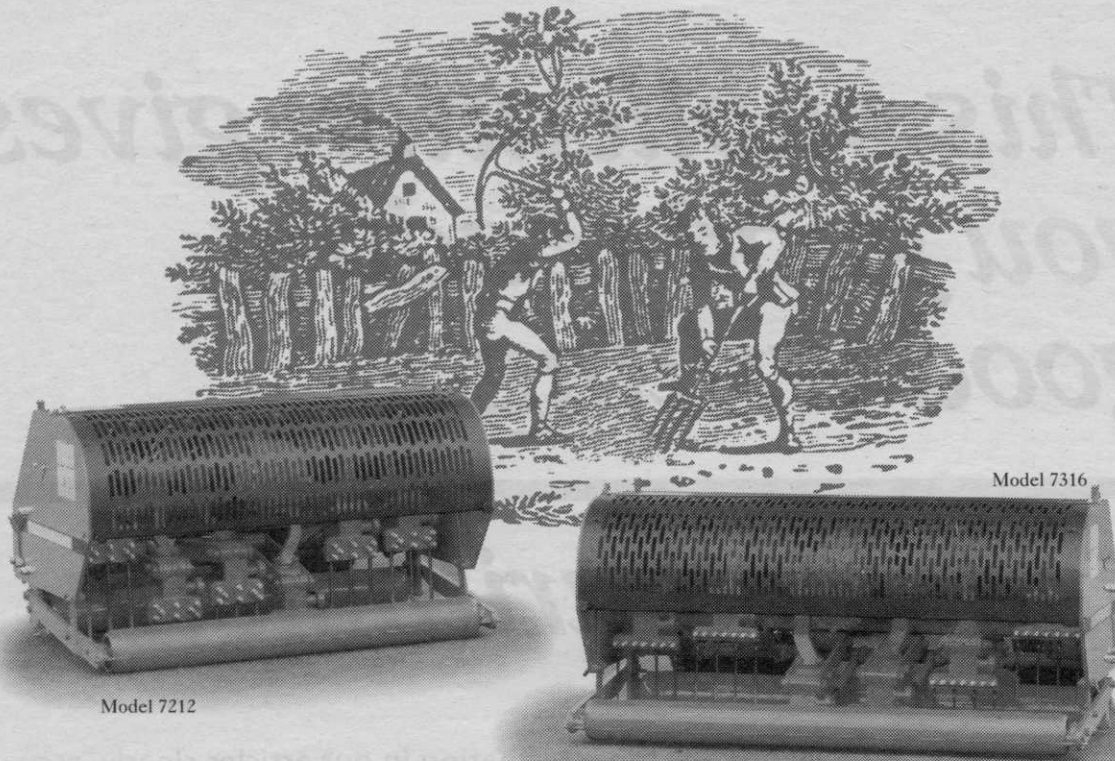
Which isn't to say that superintendents seeking advancement can be rude to customers. Quite the contrary. "We try to establish the KSL culture at all our properties," Schmidt said. "We want our superintendents to interact with our customers and encourage their staff to wave to or speak with patrons when the opportunity presents itself."

In his executive position, Schmidt acts as an intermediary between senior financial and marketing managers and the course superintendents and district superintendents overseeing KSL properties.

"Top executives usually don't have an agronomic background," he explained. "I'm the point person they depend on to translate the technical information into something they can understand."

"In the accounting world, answers are predictable. You add this to this and you always get that. But when you're working on a golf course, and unpredictable things

Continued on next page



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CMAA elects new slate of officers

ORLANDO, Fla. — John A. Jordan), general manager of Cherokee Town and Country Club in Atlanta, was elected president of the Club Managers Association of America (CMAA) at its World Conference on Club Management held here.

Jordan has been serving as the general manager of the Cherokee Town and Country Club since 1967. Prior to this appointment, he was the country club manager of Cherokee.

He joined CMAA in 1965 and was first elected to the board of directors in 1990. During his tenure, Jordan has served on several national committees including the Budget and Finance, Executive, Strategic Planning, Bylaws, Club Management Institute, Chapter Services and

Conference committees.

Willmoore H. Kendall, general manager of Woodmont Country Club in Rockville, Md., was elected vice president of the CMAA.

Paul K. Skelton, vice president, Golf & Club Operations, Desert Troon Companies and Hassayampa Golf Club in Prescott, Ariz., was elected the

association's secretary-treasurer.

Also elected to the board were Dennis R. Ahearn, secretary-general manager of The Country Club of Orlando; Warren L. Arseneaux, general manager of the Poinsett Club in Greenville, S.C.; Henry Waddington, general manager of Piedmont Driving Club in Atlanta; and Gordon Foster Welch, general manager of the Oaks Country Club in Tulsa, Okla.

EPA TO GET TOUGH ON UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has planned an aggressive underground storage tank initiative.

This spring EPA will kick off a national effort to ensure operators of underground tanks are in full compliance with regulations which dic-

tate storage tanks must be upgraded, replaced or closed by December 1998.

EPA officials have indicated they have no intention of extending the December 1998 deadline. Accordingly, the agency will begin an outreach effort to encourage tank operators to take appropriate action.

Schmidt

Continued from previous page

like weather and disease intervene, the results aren't always predictable. One of my main jobs is helping upper management understand that. Sometimes, it's like being a referee and mediating between the two. I'm an Agronomy 101 professor for one side and an Accounting 101 instructor to the other."

Probably because of his background in sales, Schmidt the KSL golf operations purchasing director sees his relationship with vendors as a partnership rather than a battleground.

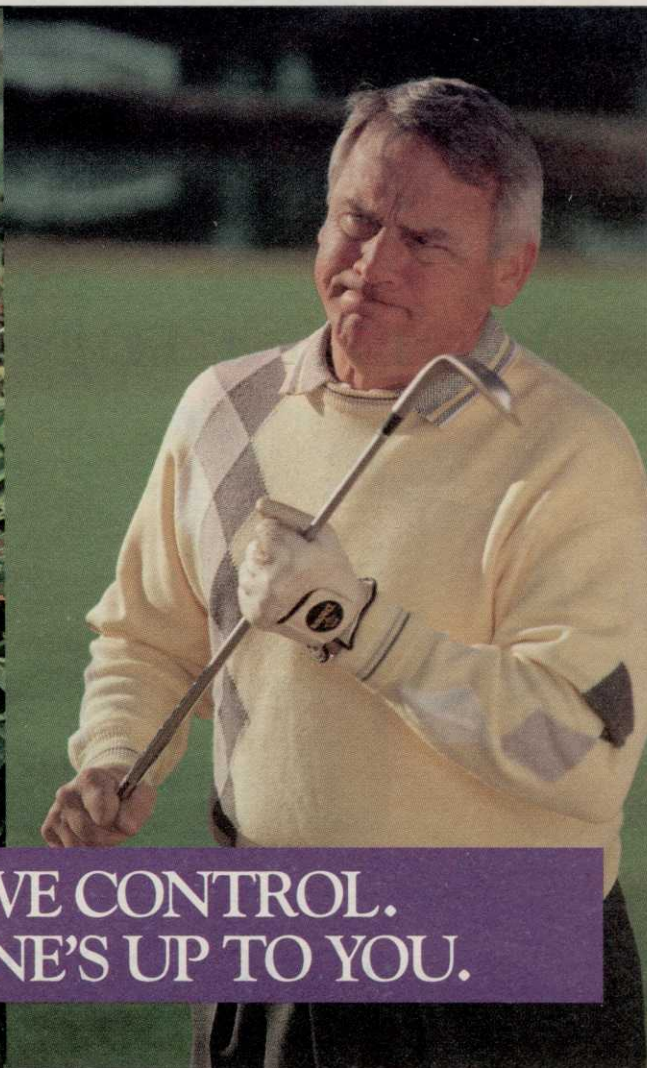
"Vendors can always ask me why I bought a particular product from another supplier and I'll give an honest answer," he said. "For example, a manufacturer may have an exceptional fertilizer product and price it high. But if there are fairly comparable products from other manufacturers at a lower price, then it's hard to justify spending the extra money.

"I come from a sales background and know there is nothing more frustrating than not getting a sale you were expecting. I'm always willing to work with vendors to show them how to modify sales so they can work."

Asked what he liked least and most about his job, Schmidt replied: "I do miss being outside. I get to each property two to three times a year. But you can usually find me in the office 10 hours a day.

"On the other hand, the main part of this job is being a problem solver. That's the best. I don't just show people how to solve agronomic problems, but how to solve administrative problems and go through the right channels to get what it is they are looking for. That's very rewarding."

GOLF COURSE NEWS



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