**Audubon Int’l thinking big**

BY ANDREW OVERBECK

HARTWELL, Ga. — On the heels of announcing its “Fifty in Five” initiative, Audubon International revealed yet another ambitious plan to expand its programs during its first-ever industry summit here at Cateechee Golf Club Feb. 12. The initiative, titled the Sustainable Communities Campaign, will build on the group’s environmental certification of golf courses.

The new plan will dramatically increase Audubon International’s profile and will require more participation from the golf industry if it is to be successful. “We have become known as that golf environmental group,” said Audubon president Ron Dodson. “We want to think really big and promote the principles of sustainability.”

The goals of the sustainability-focused initiative will be to provide adequate supplies of clean water, to maintain and increase biological diversity and to create livable and equitable communities.

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Hiring decisions
Continued from page 15

"Selection, selection, selection. Employee selection is so crucial that nothing else — not leadership, not team building, not training, not pay incentives, not total quality management — can overcome poor hiring decisions..." The aim of selection (to find the best person for the job) may not have changed. But today's consequences of making a bad hire can be severe.

Key factors to help identify whether candidates will be successful at a job include: the ability or aptitude to do the work; attitude and motivation to utilize their talents to do the work; experience the job requires; education and training for the job; and most importantly, compatibility with the organization.

RESUMES AND EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS

The first thing many employers receive when a job is advertised is a resume or employment application. Resumes are time-consuming to filter through, but they can be effective first screens for candidates. Resumes should be compared against specific selection criteria to see if the candidate has the necessary education, training and experience. It is important to keep in mind, however, that 50 percent of resumes contain fabrications or exaggerations of pay, position and responsibilities.

TESTS

The most important step in developing a hiring process is to do the least expensive, most accurate step first. Most people think this is the interview, but very rarely do they take into account how much time and money is spent interviewing up to three people.

Results of a study done by Michigan State University's School of Business revealed that tests were rated four times more accurate than interviews. In designing your hiring process, you must look at the various tests that are available to you, and select those which will measure the qualities you want the applicant to have, so you can compare them to your criteria and make an accurate hiring decision.

Tests are legal and they have been for many years. There are some exceptions. For example, in Rhode Island you cannot use an honesty test as the sole reason for rejecting an applicant; there must be other considerations. In Massachusetts, you cannot use an honesty test at all, but in the remainder of the states you can.

REFERENCES AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

Many background checks can be conducted. However, the primary purpose of a background check is to reduce your potential liability for negligent hiring lawsuits. It is important to note that background checks will not tell you if an applicant is honest. Too often, companies have relied on credit checks to do this because of their insurance companies' wishes. All you can tell from a credit check is that somebody has been paying their bills, but you can't tell if they stole the money to do it.

Tests, background checks and reference checks must all be put into their proper contexts. They, along with the interview, are tools to give you information. While none of those tools alone will provide you with all of the information you need, collectively they provide you with a piece of the candidate selection puzzle that will help you make a more accurate and informed hiring decision.

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VGM Club, Yamaha
Continued from page 1

sign other car manufacturers.
Yamaha joins a stable of close to 160 vendors who have signed on with VGM, spanning golf course operations from the clubhouse and dining room to the maintenance facility. The company has experienced a great deal of growth in recent months, Ellis said.

"In just the last six months, we've gone to another level. Our membership has grown to over 3,000, and we have 150 to 160 manufacturers," he said.

Ellis said VGM has recently added services such as agronomics consulting and financing for its members. In addition, the company could add several other maintenance-related manufacturers to its stable in the near future.