

Recruiting workers

With spring training starting, some are thinking about baseball, and with baseball comes free agency. Free agency and hiring employees for your club/course maintenance staff have a similar purpose: recruit and hire the best talent available. The course with the best talent has the best chance to meet or exceed golfer and green committee expectations. A poor or mediocre recruitment and selection process means the course will struggle to succeed, just like small-market baseball teams. Failing to attract the best maintenance staff workers will cause more stress and could mean longer, more frustrating hours throughout the golf season.

There are three prerequisites to a world-class recruitment process.

1. Know what you're looking for. We've all heard the adage "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there." The direct analogy "If you don't know what you're looking for, any candidate will meet the job requirements" is a bit strong. However, the probability of successfully choosing the correct candidate – including the difficult decision to start the process over because no candidate fits the position – is greatly enhanced by knowing exactly what you're looking for, which should be expressed in two forms:

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- Prepare a job description including the job title; a summary of the position including who supervises the position; typical duties and responsibilities including supervisory and management expectations; and the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes required to succeed in the position.

- From the job description, identify and articulate three to five important competencies needed to succeed in the position, which will assist you in recruitment and selection.

2. Recognize attracting the best talent isn't easy, isn't necessarily inexpensive (view the cost as an investment) and is time consuming. But the time and money spent will be returned many times with successful recruitment and selection.

3. Develop a world-class recruitment

and selection process, which can be used over and over. Invest the discipline and time to develop and implement these procedures.

A marketing tool

Successful recruitment attracts a pool of candidates that contains one or more exceptional candidates who will succeed in a position. Thus, the objective of recruiting is threefold.

1. Quantity of applicants. Larger numbers increase the probability of success, so cast a wide net.

2. Quality of applicants. To ensure you don't have large numbers of unqualified candidates, include necessary job requirements that won't discourage qualified candidates from applying.

3. Spillover effects. We usually write recruitment materials as though only potential candidates read them. Not so. Research shows a large percentage of applicants are referred to recruitment materials – want ads, Internet sites, job announcements – by family members, friends and co-workers. Many also read the ad as they peruse other nearby ads. Some are potential golfers at your course. Recruiting is a component of the public face of your club/course.

So, recruitment can be viewed as marketing. When marketing, you're selling your company, brand and products/services. When recruiting, you're selling your club/course as a place to work, your image as an employer and the golf course maintenance position available. You must decide what it is about your club/course that will make you an attractive employer. This identified image will be part of every recruitment. And the recruitment message will be tailored to the position for which you're recruiting. This also will be the primary driver of how you target your recruitment including what labor pools you wish to emphasize.

The following are marketing ideas to consider when crafting a recruitment plan to market your course and position:

- Employees, young and old, want to join a winning team. The attributes of

your club/course that inspire you and other club leaders also can be used to inspire your employees. Your mission, vision and values can help identify the type of person the course needs and attract that person to apply.

- Identify the positive characteristics and attributes of the industry and position. Of these positive characteristics, which will sell or attract potential applicants? As you think about marketing your club/course to potential employees, don't focus on the business or the position from your perspective. Potential employees don't care about your perspective. Put yourself in their position. From their perspective, what's important, what's of interest, what would entice them to be a part of your team? Keep in mind truth in advertising is important. Be positive about what you have to offer without being deceptive. Promote the club/course and the current job offerings without distorting the facts.

- Even recognizing golf course maintenance work is difficult and demanding, there are attributes, such as the physical and interpersonal work environments, that can be emphasized. The work environment is safe, orderly, clean, pleasant, and tools and equipment are in good working condition. A comfortable physical environment is important, but great employers also work hard to be certain the social/emotional atmosphere in the business is upbeat and encourages positive attitudes and cooperation.

- Almost all employees consciously and/or subconsciously are looking for personal growth and development opportunities. This is especially true for the best employees – the ones you want to recruit and hire. Articulate and market personal growth and development opportunities offered at your club/course.

Most approach recruitment as a necessary evil. No wonder recruitment materials are so unappealing. Try a different approach. Envision your course and the winning team you wish to assemble. Describe the course and write about your winning team. Use the ideas and an upbeat frame of mind to write recruitment materials to attract the top free agents to the pool of candidates for your winning team. GCN



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