



John Walsh
Editor

Knowing your worth

It's as simple as this: Golf course conditions affect revenue, and superintendents are responsible for course conditions, therefore, superintendents are extremely valuable to a golf facility. For most of you, I'm preaching to the choir, but how many owners, managers and club members aren't in this choir? Superintendents compete daily to prove their value, and sometimes they need to proclaim their worth, especially during difficult financial times.

Getting owners and members to clearly understand your value starts with developing positive professional relationships with your employers and employees. Generally, building solid relationships will help you resolve conflict and guide you through difficult times.

But you can't talk about value with out talking about success; and success means different things to different people, so you need to know what your employers want and how to give it to them. It's a matter of being No. 1 in their eyes.

As you're well aware, members/golfers view success differently, and it's difficult to make all of them happy because they all want different things. Member/golfer expectations continue to rise, but budgets don't rise along with them. Because of those factors, your career can be built and judged on the narrowest of margins. Never forget it takes many years to build a reputation and a few minutes to ruin it.

Golf is the main revenue generator for a golf club, and you're responsible for that main revenue generator, yet club managers often receive annual bonuses at clubs that are successful. Are you receiving the credit you deserve for that overall success?

Well, you can influence the bottom line and how your employers view your contribution and value to the facility. It's important to know your facility's financials and use them to your advantage. Take ownership of the revenues to which you contribute.

So what are you doing beyond the norm to remain valuable other than attending seminars and networking with peers? One general example is focusing on the business management aspect of your job. During a seminar at the Carolinas GCSA Conference and Show in November, Tommy Witt, CGCS, director of golf course operations at Northmoor

Country Club in Highland Park, Ill., presented many ways for superintendents to maintain and enhance their value. Some include:

1. Use photography to your advantage because it's a powerful and valuable tool. "Carrying a camera was the best thing I've ever done," Witt says. Photos sell your value to employers in so many ways. Even the most difficult people can't argue with photos.

2. Create the right business image. How do you make yourself memorable without compromising your integrity? Have principles, and live by them. Make it a point to be accountable.

3. Develop a public relations program and tell your story – internally and externally. Nobody will know it if you don't tell it. Invite action to gain visibility and recognition. Influence what people think of you.

4. Improve your communication skills. There are different audiences (young, old, male, female, ethnic) who prefer different modes of communication, so you might have to communicate differently with each. "The top three superintendent jobs in the Chicago area changed because of communication or a lack thereof," Witt says.

5. Be visible and approachable on the golf course.

6. Create a "play golf with the superintendent" sign-up sheet. This can encourage members to get to know you more and provides you the opportunity to find out what members think about the course.

The list goes on. This space doesn't.

You've heard it many times before, but as I travel to various conferences throughout the country, I hear many top-notch superintendents continue to repeat it: You need to further develop your business acumen and people skills in addition to your agronomy knowledge. In this day and age, superintendents need multiple skills to succeed and be valued, just like any other businessman.

You play an important role in generating revenue at golf facilities, and you have a huge financial impact on the bottom line. Make sure the powers that be realize that, too. GCN

John Walsh

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Serving the Business of Golf Course Management

Vol. 19 No. 1

Editorial Offices:

GIE Media, Inc.
4012 Bridge Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44113
Phone: (216) 961-4130
Fax: (216) 961-0364

Cindy Code
Editorial director
ccode@gie.net

John Walsh
Editor
jwalsh@gie.net

Heather Wood
Web editor
hwood@gie.net

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG
terrybuchen@earthlink.net

Pat Jones
psjhawk@cox.net

Kevin Ross, CGCS
kjross@vail.net

David Wolff
dgwolff@charter.net

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG
Golf Agronomy International

Raymond Davies, CGCS
CourseCo

Kevin Downing, CGCS
BallenIsles Country Club

Tim Hiers, CGCS
The Old Collier Golf Club

Laurence Hirsh
Golf Property Analysts

Ted Horton, CGCS
Ted Horton Consulting

Michael Hurdzan, Ph.D.
Hurdzan/Fry Golf Course Design

Pat Jones
Flagstick LLC

Jim McLoughlin
TMG Golf

Kevin Ross, CGCS
Country Club of the Rockies

Matt Rostal
Interlachen Country Club

Golf Course News is published 10 times per year by GIE Media, Inc., which also publishes: *Lawn & Landscape*, *Commercial Dealer*, *Interior Landscape Business*, *Snow Magazine*, *Pest Control Technology* and *Recycling Today* magazines. GIE Media is a leader in custom publishing, book publishing, database marketing, conferences and special events.

We would like to hear from you. Please post any comments you have about this column on our message board, which is at www.golfcoursenews.com/messageboard.

