Reelmaster fairway groomer
- Stands up turf and reduces grain for a cleaner, more uniform cut
- Improves the appearance and playability of fairways by enhancing turf health and providing consistent conditions
- Knocks off morning dew to minimize grass clumping and helps with clipping dispersion
- Available for 7-inch cutting units
- Can be used in conjunction with the company’s powered rear-roller brushes

Toro
Circle 200 on reader service form

1200 hydro rake
- Handles varied course terrain, and grooms bunkers and greens efficiently and smoothly
- Equipped with a standard 3-wheel-drive, 16-hp, Vanguard two-cylinder gasoline engine
- Hydrostatic transmission offers simple control with two foot pedals – forward and reverse
- Swing-away body allows easy access to the engine and drive system for maintenance
- Features a front blade, as well as a standard rear rake, to move aeration cores or sand
- The mid-cultivator is designed to break up compaction of sand bunkers
- Available with a box grader for light surface grading and a spring steel fan rake
- Roller/brush/spiker system helps aerate root zones on greens

John Deere
Circle 202 on reader service form

Caster carts
- Functional and flexible
- Handlebar, easy-glide casters and a floor lock allow easy maneuverability, stability and access
- Built-in grip block secures the cart when used in conjunction with the pallet clamp of a stock-picking vehicle to access product in elevated pick locations
- Second cart features a low profile and a convenient spotting handle for easy movement of a standard 48-inch-by-48-inch pallet
- Carts can be used individually or linked together and pulled in a train

River Group
Circle 203 on reader service form

Hose reels
- Promotes water conservation
- Reduces labor
- Improves safety and efficiency
- Extends the life of the hose
- Cart- and trailer-mounted reels provide quick mobility of hoses
- Underground reel permanently stores the hose underground so it can be quickly retrieved to hand-water drought-stressed areas

Reelcraft
Circle 204 on reader service form

Smart-fit cup and ferrule system
- Flagsticks don’t lean, rotate or walk out of the cup
- Cup sockets and ferrules don’t excessively wear
- Flagsticks drop in and lift out easily without twisting
- Wide-shoulder ferrules fit better and wear less in any cup style

Standard Golf
Circle 201 on reader service form
Allectus G insecticide
- Controls turf pests above and below the surface
- 90 percent or greater control when used as indicated
- One application provides eight to 12 weeks of residual control; two applications per season for season-long control
- Effective on white grubs, billbug larvae, annual bluegrass weevil larvae, mole crickets, chinch bugs, cutworms and sod webworms
- Application of the granular form ranges from 50 to 125 pounds per acre
- Liquid and fertilizer formulations are pending registration

Echo Ultimate fungicide
- 82.5 percent spray-dried chlorothalonil fungicide
- Resusceptible in water
- Packaged in a resealable 5-pound, acre-increment container

Basamid G fumigant
- Eliminates weeds, nematodes, grasses and soil diseases
- Can reseed in as soon as 10 to 12 days
- Contains the active ingredient dazomet, which is activated by the addition of water and breaks down into safe, non-ozone depleting components
- Nonrestricted granular formulation requires no complicated application equipment or tarps, thereby reducing labor costs

Liquid formulation of Heritage fungicide
- Offers enhanced efficacy and application flexibility
- Has a faster and higher uptake into the leaf, coupled with a slightly less rainfast leaf surface residue, which allows more uptake from the roots and subsequently greater delivery of active ingredient into the leaves
- Allows a long application interval of strobilurin fungicides
- Provides as much as 28 days of preventive control of more than 33 disease organisms on turfgrass and ornamental plants
- Available in 10-gallon LinkPak

Precise pesticide
- Slow and consistent pesticide release
- Allows for accurate and predictable results
- Offers time and placement precision
With Reward® aquatic herbicide, it’s easy to have well-maintained ponds that add beauty to your course. Reward controls a wide range of submersed, marginal, and floating weeds, including certain algae species. It works extremely fast, within hours of application. To learn more, call 1-866-SYNGENTA or visit online at syngentaprofessionalproducts.com

Lose the weeds. Keep the wildlife.
Nitamin nitrogen fertilizer
• Ensures a steady release of nitrogen within the soil for extended periods of time
• University and golf course studies show that turf recovery/grow-in is thicker and faster by one to three weeks
• Helps turf develop with dense composition and deep root system
• Keeps turf green for months with fewer applications
• Ideal for new turf establishment, topdressing and divot repair
• Especially effective on high-traffic areas
• Low risk of turf burn
• Binds to the soil, resulting in environmental and nitrogen efficiency benefits
• Effective on a variety of turf species

Georgia-Pacific
Circle 210 on reader service form

EBZ8000 backpack blower
• The 4.6-hp, 72-cc strato-charged, two-cycle engine doesn’t need a catalytic converter
• Air speed is 203 mph
• Weighs 24.9 pounds
• FreeFlow system protects the blower’s mechanics from leaves and other debris
• FreshFlow two-stage air cleaner protects the engine from dust and dirt, preventing overheating and piston seizure
• Air-cooled back pad with lumbar support, extra-wide shoulder straps and left or right hand throttle available for the operator
• Waist belt included

RedMax
Circle 213 on reader service form

TurfBreeze fans
• The TB-30-3 model is a 3-hp fan
• Provides 130 feet of air throw, while maintaining the small fan size
• The TB-36-3 model is marginally less quiet and matches the TB-36Q’s throw and air volume at a cheaper price

TurfBreeze
Circle 212 on reader service form

SGN100 fertilizer
• MU-40 controlled-release nitrogen
• Designed for high-maintenance turfgrass mowed at ½ inch or less
• 90 to 100 SGN sizing allows better penetration into turf canopy
• Covers 10,000 square feet

Howard Johnson’s Enterprises
Circle 211 on reader service form

PondPak aquatic pesticide
• Controls excessive aquatic weeds, algae and nutrient overload
• Comes with Sonar Quick Release aquatic herbicide
• Includes Captain algicide, Revive biological water clarifier, blue pond colorant and a pH test kit
• Available in ½-acre and 1-acre sizes

SePRO
Circle 214 on reader service form
There are many bad projections out there, and what the actual yield per round will be. And they've gotten many developers in trouble. The unfortunate thing is that many times golfers are unwilling to pay the green fees you need to make your project viable.

What mistakes do you see other builders make?
Some builders are succumbing to the fact they need a job so bad they're taking the work for less money than they ever have before. Their margins are so thin they can get into trouble. Most golf course contractors self perform 60 to 80 percent of the work. If you get one of those bad jobs and you didn't have enough margin in that job to begin with, you can get into financial trouble. We haven't done that at Landscapes Unlimited. We have a margin structure that if we can't make a reasonable profit, we won't take the work.

Fortunately, not everybody is dropping their prices. If everyone's bid is within 2 percent to 4 percent you feel pretty good about it, but I've seen so many bids in the last year where somebody might be 15 or 20 percent lower, and we don't have that kind of margin on a job. The problem in this case is that everybody loses. We lose because I didn't get the job, the contractor that got the job is probably going to lose money or maybe go out of business, and at the end of the day if that happens, the owner loses because the project won't get done on time if at all, and they will struggle to get their project open on time.

What's the biggest thing you've learned throughout the years?
Hire the best people you can find — people with a passion for the golf business. Surround yourself with people smarter than you. Hire people that know the parts of the business that maybe you're not as good at or doesn't interest you. My biggest success in business has been the people that I've hired and surrounded myself with.

Is there an aspect of building golf courses that's consistently difficult?
The biggest complication is schedule. We're rarely given enough time to do the project the way it should be done. If you're starting out on a project that should take nine months and you're given six, that project isn't going to be fun. This is a business that we're in because we like it, and if you have to do a project in which you are under then gun from day one, it isn't fun. It all comes down to schedule, and it's the most important thing to the owner.

The owner can't underestimate how valuable it is to hire somebody who's committed to getting your project done when you have to have it done. Carrying costs on a golf course for an extra eight months to a year can cost a project well over a million dollars more than a project that gets done on time. If you're out here in Palm Desert and you're not open by Dec. 1 and you don't open until April 1, you've missed the entire season, and now you have to maintain and water that golf course for another eight months before you have a decent market again, so getting done on time is critical.

What's the key to being a successful builder?
Resiliency, doing quality work, doing the simple things well and doing the things you tell the owner you're going to do. We won't take on a project in which we can't perform. Many times the schedules aren't reachable, so we don't take those jobs. It's important to make sure the owner is happy. Be honest and straightforward with the owner. We lose projects from time to time because we're dreadfully honest to the owner. I've been in business about 28 years, and I'm proud to say that almost all of the clients we've worked for would say good things about us.

What's your favorite golf course you've built?
Well, it's not always just the golf course. It's the experience. It's the people that we've worked with. My favorite is Sutton Bay in Agar, S.D. It's near and dear to me because I was so involved in it's development, finding the partners, decorating the clubhouse. It's a beautiful piece of land. It was a labor of love. Another would be Caves Valley in Baltimore. It's a wonderful golf course, but as wonderful as the course, are the people that we worked with when we built it. It's one of the first big projects we completed. The people there are first class, and they took a chance on a small company. There are so many wonderful people throughout the golf industry and people that have become long-term friends. There aren't a lot of professions in which you can say that you've had a long-term effect on people or that they've had a long-term effect on you. That's why it's such as rewarding business.

What's the biggest change in the industry since you started?
The quality of contractors. Twenty-eight years ago, when I started my company, there were only two or three high-quality contractors — Wadsworth being the largest and the best. Today, because of the support and education by the Golf Course Builders Association of America and the evolution of the industry, there are many good contractors.

Is retirement on the horizon for you?
I'm 55. I've changed what I do on a daily basis. I don't want to run the business day to day and be tied up with the little details of running a business, but I'll never retire. I'll always have some involvement with a course we own or a golf course we're building. You won't ever see me totally hang it up. Even though I'm in California for the winter, I'm tracking 13 projects out here. I still enjoy working every day. I'm calling on clients or one of our courses every day. I'm having too much fun to retire.
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BY THE NUMBERS

The following numbers are based on the Golf Course News 2004 subscriber survey, which had 403 respondents.

The percentage of courses that have a total annual maintenance budget of $1 million or more: 14%

$5,753
The dollar level that must be approved before making scheduled or unscheduled maintenance purchases for those that need one

6,531
The average number of lakes or ponds on a golf course

49
The average number of bunkers on a golf course

The average number of years golf course superintendents have been in the golf course industry: 20 years

The percentage of superintendents who have a total of 18 holes on their golf course: 75%

“Trees in the course are a serious defect, and even when in close proximity prove a detriment.” — C.B. Macdonald, golf course architect, in 1906

“Some superintendents in the North have tried to employ H2B workers and can’t because there are none left. That is going to create problems.” — Steve Mona, c.e.o. of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

“When hiring an assistant superintendent, I will hire attitude over skill any day. I can train skills, but I can’t train attitude, which is very important.” — Walt Wilkinson, superintendent at the public 36-hole Indian Creek Golf Course in Carrollton, Texas

“You could purchase good bunker sand 15 years ago for $18 to $22 a ton, and now it runs around $30 to $40 per ton. I have even seen some courses paying as much as $60 to $65 per ton.” — John McDonald of Jessup, Md.-based McDonald & Sons Construction
First things first

I'm not a big fan of those cliché-ridden management books written by super-wealthy executive types. It seems to me to drop $28 at Barnes & Noble for 300 pages of chest-thumping egoism punctuated by the occasional business success "secret" (e.g., "Hire good people and let them do their jobs" or "Make sure your parents are millionaires before you're born").

But, there is the occasional useful tidbit among all the buzzwords and other leadership tripe. One that stuck with me and has been on top of my mind lately as I'm building a new business, is Stephen Covey's maxim: "First things first." Covey, the author of "The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People" and a zillion other self-help and time-management tomes, makes the deceptively simple point that you should always put the toughest, most important things on the top of your to-do list every day.

In my previous careers, that usually meant personnel issues were first and foremost. Addressing the needs and problems of employees immediately is critical. I've managed staffs as big as 20 people, so I know what it's like for superintendents who seemingly spend the majority of their day dealing with people issues. In short, it stinks.

In my new life, working from a home office as an independent business consultant, my staff issues are much different. As president of Flagstick LLC, I have only four direct reports:

• Executive vice president of finance and chief soccer mom (Mrs. Jones);
• Vice president of fetching daddy a cold one (Michael, age 12);
• Vice president of beating the snot out of daddy at Nintendo (Ryan, age 9); and
• Director of canine affairs (a not-so-bright Airedale terrier called Indy).

As a result of assembling this lean and highly qualified team, I'm able to focus my attention outward, on my clients and customers. Balancing their satisfaction with my financial and operational goals now is first on my list. (That and going fishing a lot more.)

My question to you is: What's first on your list?

It seems that the first waking thought for many superintendents is "What fires will I have to put out today?" It's a natural question in any occupation, but considering the vagaries of Mother Nature and Murphy's Law, it seems to come up more often for those engaged in the art and science of greenkeeping.

But, I'd suggest your first waking thought ought to be, "What can I do today to balance turf health with golfer satisfaction?" The two things aren't mutually exclusive, but sometimes it seems like it. Achieving both is a difficult and elusive task. It's also a transitory thing... a moving target that flits from place to place like a hummingbird in a flower garden.

I can't speak much to the turf side of that equation. The daily habits of my director of canine affairs have pretty much made any attempt to grow a nice lawn at Flagstick's global headquarters a futile effort. But, I have a few ideas about golfer satisfaction you should consider.

OK, let's stipulate golfers are knuckleheads. Their expectations are silly, their demands ridiculous and their tastes in fashion often bizarre. But never forget that they are your knuckleheads. Like it or not, they are your customers. They're also consumers who can afford to demand water stations - that will stick in the mind of Joe and Susie Hacker.

So, I return to my original question: What's first on your list? Given the economy, overbuilding and extreme competition, isn't it time that we make golfer satisfaction our "first thing"?

Just one humble scribbler's opinion:

Speaking of which, this is a good time to speak about what a friend of mine calls "the elephant in the living room." It's his phrase for asking an obvious question to which everyone wants to know the answer. The elephant, in this case, is my rather unexpected presence in a different venue.

I'm delighted that, after six years at another publication, I've been offered the chance to rant, vent, editorialize, antagonize and otherwise open a vein in a brand new place. To me, Golf Course News represents something very important in our industry: a forum for business ideas that attempts to address the interests of today's complete golf business, including superintendents, owners, developers, architects, builders and the guy who parks your car at the club (just kidding). My role with Golf Course News is a perfect complement to the establishment of my new business, so it's a great fit for me. I hope it's also a great fit for this magazine, which continues to improve with every issue. Most importantly, I hope my presence with this magazine serves as an invitation to continue our long strange trip together. I'm loving the journey, and I hope you are too.