

Communications, of any type, are probably one of the most important but least used, tools a superintendent has at his disposal to turn his ideas to the board and membership into improvements on the course.

If one were to cross-examine the most successful superintendents in the country it would undoubtedly be found that an efficient communications network has helped immensely towards their success.

Golf course management communications can be broken down into three major categories. They are:

- I. Essential or mandatory
 1. Annual budget
 2. Annual report
 3. Board of directors meeting
 4. Greens committee and chairman meetings
 5. Long-range planning
- II. Inter-club relations
 1. Pro-superintendent-manager relations
 2. Employee relations
- III. Personal public relations
 1. Local and national press
 2. Member participation
 3. Monthly club newsletter

In one shape or form, all clubs will, or should have some type of written budget to guide the year's projected operating expenses and capital improvements. The degree of detail in this budget will depend on the planning qualities of the superintendent, how much elaboration it will take to assume passage of the entire budget and the sophistication of the board of directors.

Basically, a budget should consist of the following headings:

- I. Introductory remarks
- II. Annual report
- III. Proposed budget totals (with comparative totals of present and past budgets)
- IV. Proposed labor breakdown
- V. Proposed budget breakdown (with adequate explanations of each item, as to why they have risen, dropped, or stayed constant, and their particular need)
- VI. Capital expenditures
 1. Capital equipment
 2. Capital improvements (fully explain the why's and monetary calculations of these items; exact research on equipment and improvements will help justify these expenditures)

Superintendent's Blueprint For Club Diplomacy

Make Yourself Available

by Richard M. Bator
Country Club of Pittsfield
Pittsfield, Mass.

VII. Special capital expenditure requests

No matter how well a budget is put together, its effectiveness is not generated to its fullest potential unless it is presented to the board in person. Each board member should have a copy of the budget at the presentation meeting for future reference and question purposes.

Annual report: An annual report, listing all major and minor improvements, along with explanations of any particular problems that were encountered during the year, is a must at the end of each season. Besides submitting copies to the board, I also insert a copy into my final newsletter of the year, which is sent out to each member. These accomplishments will also serve as an excellent justification for the following year's budget proposals.

Board of director meetings: There is really no need to attend all monthly board meetings, but several appearances are a must in order that a harmonious rapport be established between the superintendent and his superiors. Spacing your appearances at key times of the season, along with the budget proposal

presentation, gives an excellent opportunity for all concerned to air their views on what's actually progressing or regressing under your supervision. If there is a need for special funding during the season, a special presentation should be made.

Greens committee and chairman meetings: Good relations with one's chairman and committee is essential. During the height of the season, weekly or bi-weekly informal get-togethers seem to serve the best interests. In this way a chairman is kept abreast of any particular problems on the course and will be better-equipped to convey solutions to the board or members.

After all, one of the major duties of a chairman is to act as a liaison between the membership and superintendent, or we would be swamped with numerous and chaotic situations. The regularity of seeing your chairman and committee again depends on your club's particular needs; taking into consideration the personalities involved, the availability of your chairman, and understanding of all those involved.

Long-range planning: When initially taking a new position, an extensive long-range plan should be formulated. It should contain improvements on all areas under your jurisdiction, along with pro and con explanations, time required to complete these improvements and the estimated capital it will take for their start and completion.

Pro-superintendent-manager relationship: Nobody can really tell another superintendent how to get the most out of his employees or establish good working relations with the pro or manager; there are too many variables in each group's personalities. A discontented crew, as well as a shaky footing with the pro and manager, is one of the quickest ways I know of leading yourself down the path of failure.

Besides having near-daily informal exposure with the pro and manager, luncheon meetings are held on a regular basis during the season. Another aspect of the relationship is the social contact I maintain with them. No matter what means are used to achieve the end result, the club's and departmental success depends on a well-meshed relationship between the three.

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Employe relations: Fairness, consideration, understanding and well-earned praise are only a few of the virtues a superintendent should show towards his staff. In appreciation of the year's time-consuming toils, I normally give the men parties after each member-guest tournament and at Christmas, along with Christmas presents for the three permanent employes.

Local and national press: The only way to get to know individual sportswriters is to take it upon yourself to do it. This can be accomplished by making your presence known around the scoreboard at major tournaments, sending in any meaningful club improvements to your local paper, publication and results of any chapter meetings and tournaments held at your club, along with an invitation to the sportswriters to attend these functions.

On several occasions I have had stories and pictures on various accomplishments, including the successful passing on the certification program. Contributing articles

and other interesting bits of information to the many trade magazines we have is one way to achieve national exposure.

Member participation: By this I mean giving talks at both men's and women's opening and closing golf tournament luncheons, attendance at social functions for major tournaments, participating in varied sport committee meetings and making one's self available to the members on Saturday and Sunday mornings in the grill room or pro shop.

Actively participating in these functions, or just plain mingling at social affairs, is one of the best ways to sell yourself to the membership. Clubs that neglect to have their superintendent participate are doing themselves and us a great injustice. Having nearly full membership privileges, I attempt to take part in all sport activities; in this way I can get a first-hand view of any problem areas in each particular sport; thus hopefully, correcting would-be complaints before they originate.

Monthly club newsletter: By far, my monthly newsletters have been

my biggest attention-getter, and the most beneficial and informative communications device that I use. Superintendents who do not take the time and energy to carry out such a publication I feel are missing a great opportunity.

The goals of any newsletter should be to better keep members informed on monthly routine and special work schedules; a type of appointment book to remind the superintendent to carry out the stated work and project schedules, a defensive explainer of unusual course setbacks, a subtle reminder of present accomplishments and as a device to upgrade your professional image as a turfgrass manager.

If one can converse intelligently with his chairman and members on the problems and doings of his course, he can most certainly transfer these conversations to paper for the benefit of the entire membership to read. Help on the proper techniques, or writing and grammar can be obtained by seeking advice from professional secretaries, teachers, etc. □



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