

How good a manager are you?



Whether you are a golf superintendent, course owner, general manager, or other supervisor, how well you manage may determine the success of your golf course and the realization of its fullest potential. Anything you can do to improve your present management skills is a step toward success. To find out whether you are developing the habit of good management, ask yourself these leading questions:

How well do I manage myself?

Unless you are adept at organizing your own time and talents, you can't do a really good job of managing others. From long experience comes

"Honesty means keeping all promises — and not making those you can't keep."

this suggestion: every day prepare a list of things that need to be done, letters and calls to be taken care of, then tackle them in the order of urgency. Don't worry about a sequence or let anxiety about unfinished items distract you from the business at hand. Cross off items completed to get the "feeling" of accomplishment. At day's end, even if you haven't completed the listed jobs, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that you did "first things first." And, put the unfinished items at the head of tomorrow's list.

Am I willing to do as I want others to do?

This is really management's golden rule, because a manager sets the pace

for his staff whether it numbers 1 or 100. Come in on time, shun lengthy lunch hours, do a full day's work each day — and your employees will think twice before doing otherwise, even without the benefit of lectures from you. Be free-and-easy in your work habits, and employees will take the cue and do likewise. Then, when you protest, they're bound to resent your goofing off and laying down rules you won't follow. Yes, you are the boss, but you have to set a good example.

Am I a good teacher?

All good managers are — but poor ones, never sure their employees have "caught on," tend to become nursemaids instead. Are your instructions outlined in step-by-step form, clearly worded, phrased in "do's" rather than "don'ts"? Do you use visual aids (even a rough sketch can help)? Ask questions to make sure you've been understood? Perhaps most important of all, do you understand the value of proper teaching? Would you, for example, be willing to pay for a training program to improve employee performance? Would you pick up the tab for job-connected schooling?

Do I "level" with others?

Perhaps the surest way to win an employee's respect is to be consistently honest with him. "You always know where you stand with the boss" is the way he's likely to describe it. Honesty, of course, doesn't mean brutal frankness or reckless disclosure of secrets. It does mean that you should let your staff know, as soon as you properly can, about a pending change in policies; morale plunges when people feel kept in the dark. Your employees shouldn't find out about major decisions affecting their livelihood from visiting salesmen, from competitors, or from country club scuttlebutt. It also means that you should not withhold unpleasant truths to be popular; if a man has little chance for a raise at this time, don't foster false hopes. Finally, honesty means keeping all promises — and not making those you can't keep.

Know when and how to offer criticism?

"Criticize in private, praise in public" is a good rule to follow. But just be-

cause you give someone the courtesy of private criticism, don't feel entitled to speak as bluntly as you like. Criticize constructively; mention good points along with flaws, and emphasize how improvement could be achieved. Criticize the individual's performance, not the individual; never hint that it's he, not his work, which leaves something to be desired. You'll make your point just the same — and without making an enemy.

Always give credit where it is due?

High on the list of employees' pet peeves is the "glory grabber" who assumes all the credit for successes. He may not say he did all the major work; he may just sit back and let everyone draw that conclusion. Go out of your way to credit others for the help they give you — even if you must labor hard to whip someone else's rough work into finished or acceptable form. You won't lose face, but

"Before you change work routines, consult those who would be affected."

you will create priceless good will among those who work with and for you.

Help assistants upgrade their jobs?

If you can make your tractor driver perform like a foreman, or your foreman do a superintendent's work, you have increased their value to your operation — and there are many ways to upgrade an assistant's job.

Delegating some of your own chores is only one of them. Spend some money to modernize your office

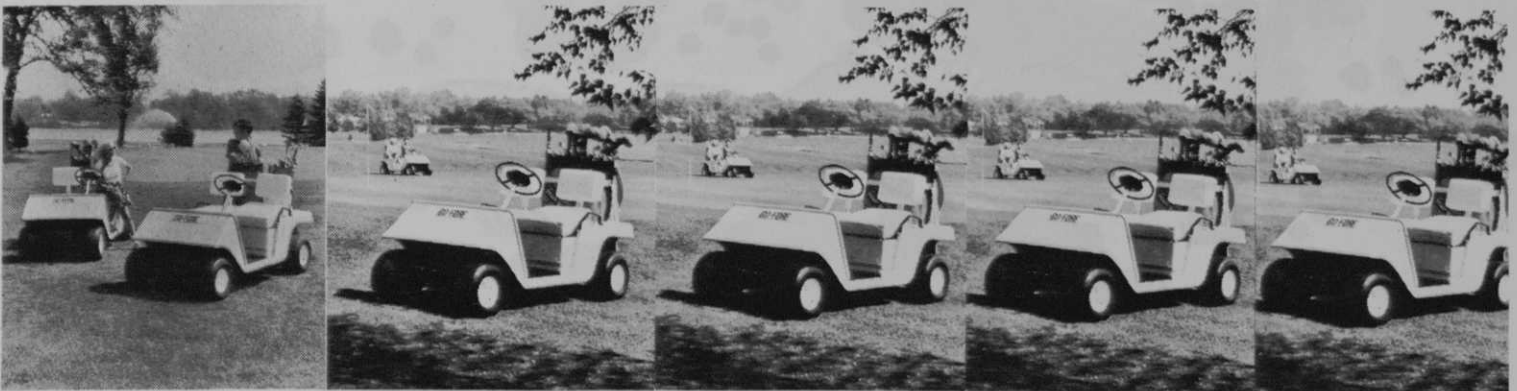
and maintenance premises — purchase machines to eliminate distastefully menial chores.

Am I too proud to ask for help?

Managers who get best performance from their staffs have usually discovered the magic in the simple phrase, "What do you think about this?" Before you change work routines, consult those who would be affected; even if you don't accept their viewpoint, they'll feel better for knowing it was considered. Encourage assistants to bring you their brainstorms; many people have perfectly good ideas, but won't voice them without being asked.

These, of course, are only a few of the key principles that should be mastered by a manager. But if you can manage to apply them, you'll be giving strong proof that you are indeed a good manager and worthy of the trust and loyalty of your employees. □

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