

To borrow a line from Lennon and McCartney: "Eight days a week is not enough to show I care." To paraphrase that line with golf course maintenance in mind: Even

having eight days a week would not be enough time for many superintendents and their crews to get their golf courses in the choice conditions they desire.

That said, it's a shame that many superintendents and their crews need more time to complete their work. It's especially a bummer because many superintendents already work 12-hour shifts for six and seven days a week during the season.

They're not slow workers, nor are they perfectionists. They just need more sand to flow through the hourglass to get the work done to meet golfers' expectations for near-perfect turf.

But the \$64,000 question is where are those extra ticks of the clock going to originate? Milt Engelke, professor of turfgrass breeding, genetics and management science at Texas A&M University, believes he has the answer. It's called Chameleon.

Engelke has devised an ingenious idea of how superintendents can manufacture more time so they can do their jobs better — and not worry about being in a hurry while doing them. Who needs expensive time-management consultants and their pie-in-the-sky ideas when you have a guy like Engelke to offer advice? And here's betting superintendents may like his idea.

Chameleon, Engelke's time-management strategy, is as much about golf course design as it is about maintenance. By the way, Chameleon means "changeable," Engelke points out.

Chameleon is about building golf courses with more than 18 holes, say for example 24 holes, but keeping only 18 in play at a time. In essence, Chameleon calls for all of the holes to be rotated for play so that six of them wouldn't be in use during certain periods.

During those times, when the only traffic on those holes is the pitter-patter of wildlife, a superintendent and his crew can aerify and verticut greens, mow fairways, take care of tee boxes, maintain bunkers and do whatever else

Finding More Sand for the Hourglass

BY LARRY AYLWARD



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they need to do to keep the holes in A-1 shape. And they don't have to do the work as fast as possible to get out of demanding golfers' ways.

Engelke speaks of courses in many major cities, which he identifies as golf factories. "They're running more than 200 rounds of golf a day for seven days a week," he says. "How do you do maintenance on a course like that and keep that kind of pace up? Give them more time by having more holes available. It's a no-brainer."

Critics contend that many courses can't be retrofitted to include new holes because they're landlocked. For that reason, Chameleon may be more applicable to new courses. In any case, creating extra holes is costly, and it takes more money to maintain them.

But there are also good points from an economic standpoint, Engelke maintains. One has to do with conditioning, which is a marketable angle for sure. Since a superintendent takes holes out of play, he takes traffic off them and gives time to heal golfer-inflicted wounds. There's also no play on newly aerified greens and fairways because those holes are closed. Therefore, golfers are consistently playing in good conditions. Hence, they would return time and again to a Chameleon-style course, Engelke insists.

Engelke has trademarked the Chameleon name, and he's looking for an investor to pursue the concept. He's confident an investor would agree that a Chameleon course offers better quality play, which could equate to more rounds and — *cha ching* — more business.

And then time-starved superintendents wouldn't have to wish for an extra day in the week to get their work done.

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