Build It and they will come” might have worked for Iowa corn grower Kevin Costner in the movie, “Field of Dreams.” But in golf circles (not to be confused with crop circles), the outcome is not so predictable.

I’m not talking about building new golf courses, which will continue despite the game’s current flat-line participation, which is in need of resuscitation in this fast-paced, time-crunched, instant-gratification age. I’m talking about the traditional monthly meetings of local superintendent chapters and the old “scheduling it and they will come” mindset.

Don’t get me wrong. I think chapter meetings are the heart and soul of our profession, and I have jumped on the soap box any number of times touting the personal and professional growth I gleaned from participating in them. Like any worthwhile venture, however, it is always the quality and not the quantity that makes them successful.

Geography may dictate having fewer meetings for some far-flung chapters, which makes sense. For instance, some courses are located a hundred miles apart in some areas of the West. And given the dismal attendance numbers in the more densely populated regions that traditionally have monthly meetings, a little introspection may be overdue.

With many operating budgets shrinking, does it really make sense to have 10, 11 or 12 meetings a year at $40, $50 or $100 a pop? I know some chapters have only six meetings a year, which is a little more reasonable. There still may be more room to improve attendance and meeting quality. What’s wrong with considering quarterly meetings?

Way out yonder in the Peaks and Prairies (Montana, Wyoming, etc.) and Idaho GCCA hinterlands, they meet twice a year, understandable since some courses are 1,300 miles apart. They get together twice a year for a weekend conference complete with nationally known speakers, regional USGA agronomists, banquets, receptions and golf outings. The meetings are planned before and after peak season. The attendance is excellent. Points are earned.

Build It & They Will Come (or Will They?)

BY JOEL JACKSON

MAYBE THE TIME IS RIPE TO CHANGE OUR WAY OF THINKING ABOUT HOLDING CHAPTER MEETINGS

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