

SOCIABLE SUPERS

In the heart of the Information Age, some superintendents are using blogs, Twitter and smart phones to get the word out.

BY BETH GERACI

John Davis is excited. Today, the director of agronomy at Secession Golf Club in Beaufort, S.C., is finally launching his course blog. "I've been wanting to do this for a year but it was hard to find the time," he says.

Davis is one of 8.4 percent of superintendents who said they use blogs regularly to promote their clubs.

"I do love my blog," says the superintendent at Tacoma (Wash.) Country and Golf Club. He started his blog in May 2011 to communicate with members and his green committee.

Since then, the blog has garnered 37,000 hits. And because "a picture speaks a thousand words," Kachmarek ensures the blog is heavy on photos.

If course repairs need to be made, Kachmarek's photos help him easily get projects approved by members and the green committee. "The visual image tells the whole story," he says.

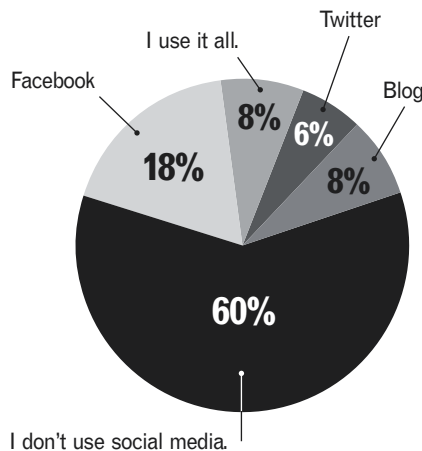
As for Davis, now that his own blog is up and running, he feels more empowered. "This is mine. I'm in the driver's seat," he says.

Secession is a national club, so its 700 members live all over the country. Given those logistics, Davis plans to use his blog to inform and establish a relationship with them.

"The issue I've had here is, the pro shop is the first point of contact," he says. "I've told members to contact me and they don't, so now I want to develop that relationship."

Davis also uses an iPad on the course and says it's the best thing he's ever

WHAT FORMS OF SOCIAL MEDIA DO YOU USE FOR WORK?



bought in his life. He uses it mostly to do research on the course and keep track of his schedule.

"I love the convenience of it," he says. "You're carrying your personal computer around with you everywhere you go."

Kachmarek takes photos with his iPhone and iPad, then uploads them to his blog on the spot. He also uses the devices to determine weather conditions and control his irrigation system remotely from any point on the course.

Having seen his cyberspace following grow exponentially, Kachmarek knows how to take advantage of electronic media. Each has its place, he says. For him, Facebook is for friends and family, and Twitter is for communicating with fellow superintendents.

"I don't want to know that you just went to the bathroom," he says. "I'll tweet something that will stimulate conversation."

Most surprising to Myers is how far and fast word spreads through social media. "If you post," he says, "you'd be amazed how many people from all over the world see it and comment on it. That opened my eyes." ©

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Gary Myers, CGCS at The Sagamore Club in Noblesville, Ind., developed Sagamore's blog when he arrived there three years ago, when course blogs were just a blip on the radar.

He's one of just 7.8 percent of greenkeepers who said they use all forms of social media for work. He has linked his blog, Twitter and Facebook accounts, using them to inform his members of course projects, playing conditions and scheduled maintenance.

"We try to give them a heads up before they go out and play," he says.

Joel Kachmarek describes himself as someone who is "big into blogging."

