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Paying His Respects
Canterbury Golf Club superintendent Terry Bonar believes the best way to manage employees is to show your appreciation of them.
By Larry Aylward

Conflict Resolution
Fighting and frustration can actually be channeled into positive outcomes. It's just a matter of learning the proper skills.
By Becky Mollenkamp

Super Service
Judy Hutt, owner of Shadow Valley Golf Course in Idaho, is known for her terrific treatment of customers.
By Larry Aylward

A 'Leading' Question
Recently, I found myself wondering what my crew members think of me as a leader, so I decided to ask them.
By Ron Furlong
TurfGrass
This month, Golfdom's practical research digest for turf managers discusses the importance of considering nematode thresholds before treating for them. See pages 49-65.

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cover story
In this four-part series, industry insiders offer tips on how to improve relations with everyone from your crew members to your course's golfers.

About the cover
You could say Maryland-based illustrator Bob Lynch captured the essence of managing people in his hand with our cover illustration.

Fine-Cut Fairways
Golfers' expectations for improved conditioning between tees and greens are forcing superintendents and mower companies to meet them.
By Frank H. Andorka Jr.

The Foliar Feeding Factor
It's gaining popularity, but more education is needed, suppliers say.
By Larry Aylward

Keep Your Bunkers Beautiful
Here are some products to help you do just that.
By Frank H. Andorka Jr.

TurfGrass Trends
This month, Golfdom's practical research digest for turf managers discusses the importance of considering nematode thresholds before treating for them. See pages 49-65.

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've lost count of the number of great superintendents I know who've finally thrown up their hands and given up the profession over the past few years.

For some, the physical and emotional demands of the job are too much. Two or three decades of uncertainty, long hours and lack of recognition will take their toll. For others who are forced by a new general manager or club president to "seek other opportunities," the daunting challenge of finding an equivalent position in one's 40s or 50s is more than they can stand. This drain of veteran expertise is a quiet crisis in our industry that will continue as long as superintendents remain in the underappreciated and overworked category.

For most who no longer wish to practice the art and science of greenkeeping, the prospect of moving to the private side — selling turf products to their former peers — is a tantalizing one. The most common thing you hear from the fence-jumper is, "Hey, I finally get weekends off and I'm starting to recognize my wife and kids again." There's no question that's a benefit. It's as if these folks have finally come up for air after being underwater for years. They feel they finally have a real life.

But it's not always an endless vacation on the sales side. The time demands of the course are to some extent replaced by the time demands of business. Those constant cell-phone calls from your crew or boss are replaced by constant cell-phone calls from customers who have urgent needs or problems.

Those weekends spent baby-sitting a sick pump station are replaced by weekends standing in trade-show booths at turf conferences or attending corporate sales meetings at the Cleveland Holiday Inn. In short, there's hard work, time demands and pressure on the sales side too ... they're just a little different.

**Job security**

Another constant refrain from superintendents is, "They can fire me for nothing!" There's no question that horror stories like these are abundant. An influential member takes a dislike to a superintendent, works his or her way onto the club board and moves heaven and earth to fire him. It all adds up to getting fired for reasons beyond your control. It's unfair and it's shortsighted, but it is a possibility for every superintendent.

That never happens to salespeople, right? Well, on the other side of that fence, you have mergers, acquisitions, downsizing and bosses with ridiculous expectations (does that last part sound familiar?).

I occasionally run into sales representatives who are pining for a return to turf management. For them, it's easier to put the upsides of being turf managers — those beautiful sunrises on the course, satisfaction in a job well done — into perspective with the negatives. Always remember that before you take the leap over the fence.

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The Eight Rules for Being Cool

BY LARRY AYLWARD

In any profession, whether it’s golf course maintenance or journalism, I’ve always believed that being cool to people is half of what it takes to achieve success. It’s all about the Golden Rule — do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

But being cool to people isn’t always easy. We’re human, and sometimes we look out for No. 1. Sometimes we don’t treat others the way we want to be treated.

With that in mind, I’ve devised a list to help you (and me) manage people better and get along with co-workers. Let’s call it the “Eight Rules for Being Cool to Fellow Employees.” There are no trend-setting philosophies here. All of the rules are pretty basic. But sometimes we have to be reminded of the basics, especially when it’s about treating others with dignity.

So, on to the list of rules:

**#1 Integrity Rules**
Your integrity is the biggest strength you have going for you. It’s especially important if you’re a superintendent who’s managing a crew. If you have integrity, your crew workers probably trust and respect you.

Think about those two things — trust and respect — for a minute. Is there anything else more important when it comes to managing people? If your workers have trust and respect in you, everything else falls into place.

But the key here is that you have to earn their trust and respect by building your integrity. And this is one of those building jobs that’s never finished.

**#2 Get Down and Dirty**
You’ve got to love the superintendent who orders a worker to “grab a shovel and get in that ditch,” and then the superintendent grabs a shovel himself and follows him. The action sends a Godzilla-sized message — that the boss doesn’t place himself above the grunt work.

But don’t believe for a minute you can do this once and your employees will think you’re “in touch.” Your employees are smart enough to realize single actions of such are just for show. To be convincing, you have to get down and dirty often — and show that you like it.

**#3 Empower, Don’t Manipulate**
Do you delegate authority for the sake of others, or do you delegate authority for the sake of yourself?

The former consists of bosses who delegate authority with the idea of empowering their employees. These superintendents want their workers to learn and grow by taking on new responsibilities.

The latter consists of bosses who don’t delegate authority as much as they delegate work. They do that because they don’t like to work. They also could care less if their employees learn and grow — they just want to go home early.

**#4 A Time to Teach**
As the superintendent, you may be viewed as the expert. Your employees look to you for guidance, so you need to take the time to teach them. Show them how to do something. Don’t just tell them how to do it. Not only will they be better workers, they’ll appreciate you for taking the time to teach.

**#5 Don’t Strut Your Stuff**
Don’t brag about yourself and what a wonderful career you’ve had. Even if you helped stage a dozen U.S. Opens and have received the finest education in the world, don’t spout off to your co-workers about how prominent you are. They don’t want to hear it, and your arrogance is perceived as ignorance.

If you want to turn off your employees, just keep struttin’ your self-perceived stuff. Soon you’ll have no respect.

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