second-guess a decision or devise your own
scheme may not be as prevalent, but even a
good manager can make a mistake or two,
or not see the best way of accomplishing a
task or goal, or how to deal with a person
generally or specifically. Same can be
said for a superintendent with a general
manager or club owner. If a decision is
made that is not to your liking, ask yourself
what you would have done differently if
you were in that position. Who knows?
Maybe someday you will be.

Generally speaking, I base my
management philosophy on the adage
of treating people how I would want to
be treated. Be honest, fair and try to
communicate in a pleasant, professional
tone. I try to inject humor into mundane
or uncomfortable situations. I want my
employees to feel like they are all part
of our team, and that I, and all of our
management, do care about them as an
employee and as a person. It sounds basic
but it works.

I am also a firm believer in giving
the people an opportunity to succeed on
their own, or develop their own way of
accomplishing a task. Empowering an
employee is a very rewarding thing for
both the employee and the operation. The
one exception to that is when wisdom and
experience trump ambition. A blending
of the two is optimal. By giving direction
backed with experience they will acquire
the knowledge they need to succeed, but
too much direction stifles ambition and
retards the individuals desire to progress
and feel self worth. A good manger walks
that fine line, and the line is often blurry
and resides in different locals for each
employee. That is what makes people
management both complicated and
rewarding.

Now that is not to say that
there are not superintendents that
have different styles and personalities
that also get the job done. We have all
heard of superintendents that are “my
way or the highway” guys, or “fire and
brimstone” guys. A few are even the
opposite- the “I don’t care what you do”
guys. I think there are far fewer of these.
Some guys run a tight ship, some guys run
a very loose ship. It seems to me a balance
works well, but there are operations that
stand the test of time with dysfunctional
managers.

However in this era of ultimate
scrutiny of golf course management,
practices, budgets, etc. it seems to me a
superintendent had better have his crew
on his side. Especially when seemingly
everybody else is not. A manager cannot
be all things to all people, but with solid
communication, a positive outlook and a
relaxed spirit the operation will have a
pretty good opportunity to succeed.

We have all heard of or know of
the manager that “seems like a really
great guy or gal- but I would never want
to work for him or her.” What a shame
that is. If you are that guy or gal, or
even have a suspicion that you might
be, take a good hard look at how you
do things and carry yourself. If you are
successful presently, think about how
much more successful you could be
if your employees genuinely enjoyed
working for you and with you,instead of just putting up with you.
You might be astonished at how
much more enjoyable your job
will become, and how much more
successful the overall operation
will be.