

Good Salesman=Good Superintendent

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"Good superintendents are good salesmen." A simple enough statement, but its real meaning and implications are not as obvious. As you travel around the state or country, you often compare your course, equipment, budget, etc. with what you see elsewhere. You probably ask, too, "How does he do it?"

As we all know, different situations will permit the golf course superintendent to do different things for himself and his course. Climate, soil conditions, age of the course and particularly the members' desires will have a great bearing on the course itself and the latitude the superintendent has. But frequently, the results boil down to the superintendent's salesmanship.

A favorite definition of salesmanship is the art of never selling but rather learning what people want and then helping them obtain it. Involved in this approach to salesmanship are the arts of observation and persuasion. Observation tells you what the people want, persuasion provides the means of giving them what they want.

Most golf course superintendents could find this approach successful for themselves and their course. They are blessed with an abundance of the power of observation and with some effort could easily improve on their abilities to persuade.

To utilize this plan, the superintendent must first determine what his golfers want.

Usually, this involves three major areas: scores, beauty and prestige, not necessarily in any order of preference. Next, he must adopt an attitude of "selling" what he wants in terms of what the members desire.

Assume for example you have been contemplating what you feel

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to be a necessary purchase. After attending various equipment exhibits, field demonstrations, and talking with fellow superintendents and salesmen, you have determined exactly what you want. What now? Do you explain to your chairman or committee how having this machine will replace one that has been causing you tremendous problems because of break-downs or other insufficiencies? How the root structure will be affected, etc.?

While these points may be of real concern to you or your fellow superintendents, they will only maximize your interest while minimizing the interest of the golfer.

A better approach might be to

inquire into the golfers' desires to play through with less mechanical interruption to their game, having fewer non-play holes or days, more uniform playing surfaces, having a course with greater beauty—in short, being the envy of golfers at other courses.

Depending on the potential of the item you are contemplating, you can "sell" the golfers on your need through an approach that causes them to be the salesmen.

Regardless of your personal sales approach, persuasion must be supported by a sound presentation that fully documents your case. Undoubtedly, at some time, you will be called upon to "prove your case" before the purchase is approved. This will mean having all the facts and figures gathered in a fashion showing not only your thorough organization, but just as important, the manner of presentation itself could greatly influence your audience and their final decision.

As with all such things, there will be short-comings and pitfalls to be aware of, and this process is no different. You must not "sell" more than you can reasonably expect to deliver, nor should the golfers be permitted to assume such a miracle.

The more successful businesses are operated on a repeat purchase philosophy. You should expect to do the same. Souring your golfers with misspent money will only make it doubly difficult to purchase even a necessity the next time around.