

Superintendent's View

Dean M. Graves



r. Chris Ayers, Communications Director, asked me to write this article with some perspective on the ways Superintendents make purchasing decisions. I have learned that no two of us approaches this process the same way. My intent was to discuss purchase protocol with individuals representing different segments of the golf course industry and to present you with their points of consensus as well as any contrasting viewpoints.

The lucky individuals were; Mr. Andrew Sheehan, representing the private club that is privately owned, Mr. Louis Rudinsky, depicting the municipal course operated by the public [government], Mr. Mike Legere, portraying the management company segment, Mr. William Shirk, personifying the public course owned by private business, and myself, describing the private club owned by its members.

Planning
Everyone prioritizes his particular needs and then presents this information in writing to his respective superiors. What happens after that point is as variable as the weather. Mr. Rudinsky explained that his requests go to four different branches of the county government. At any of these approval stages monies may be reduced for what ever reason. Mr. Shirk expressed that usually his requirements were approved with minimal justification. As a consensus, if the facility did well financially it was most likely that the request would be looked at more favorably.

How do you decide which equipment is purchased," brought out other interesting thoughts. Mr. Sheehan simply rotates out the old to be replaced by newer and similar equipment. The decision for replacement is discussed with his mechanic, Pat, and his able staff. By evaluating this information Andy feels, I can make the best decision for all concerned.

How newest equipment was discovered and evaluated is fairly consistent throughout the participating professionals. When it came to gathering this information the International GCSAA Trade Show was by far utilized the most. The consensus went like this:

Area of Interest	New Equipment	Replacement Equipment
International GCSAA Conference	1	3
Trade Magazines	2	4
Word-of-mouth	3	1
On Course Demonstrations	3	2

Information gained at "the National" is most useful for evaluating equipment just introduced, while personal experiences and dealer demonstrations ("demo's") prove most telling in gauging equipment that has been on the market awhile.

Negotiating

Negotiating consensus came out the same as if we were purchasing a used car. Our opinions were mixed, some of us liked the challenge of negotiating and others simply say "Give me the best price."

Continued on page 4

Sixty years after our doors first opened we still live by one rule: "Sell the finest equipment made and back it up with the best parts and service support possible."

This year we celebrate Jacobsen's Diamond Anniversary. With new products like the Greens King V and the second generation Tri King 1900 series, Jacobsen has listened carefully to what you said you needed in performance and



comfort. Whatever your challenge on the golf course, we have the experience and products to help you do your job better, faster, and easier.

We thank you for making sixty years of growth possible and promise to keep our pledge to you.

Best wishes for 1996 from everyone at G.L. Cornell.

1-800-492-1373
1-301-948-2000

JACOBSEN **TEXTRON**
Jacobsen Division of Textron Inc.

SUPERINTENDENT PROFILE

Our Host for the July Meeting: *Lentz Wheeler* of Hidden Creek Country Club



Lentz Wheeler, of Hidden Creek Country Club, has made grooming the land his life for over two decades. He graduated from the University of Tennessee (Go Volunteers!) in 1979 as a Bachelor of Science in Ornamental Horticulture and Landscape Design. He has been serving the northern Virginia golf industry ever since. He apprenticed under Bill Brock for the first year out of college as the assistant superintendent of the Reston Golf Course. He took over for Bill and ran the Reston course until 1987. Lentz spent the next two years, until he moved exclusively to Hidden Creek C.C. (Reston North Course) in 1989, overseeing both Reston courses. He has kept a steady hand on the tiller at Hidden Creek ever since.

Remarkably, Lentz managed to get married and have two wonderful children in the interim. He wed his lovely wife, Jane, almost twelve years ago, while heading the Reston G.C. Greens Department. His oldest, David, came along just after Lentz relegated himself to superintending a single golf course. Katie, his youngest, is just three years old and the apple of her father's eye. Jane, an educator by background and training, now superintends her own very active crew—home daycare. Lentz values his sports, whether on the links, the court, the track, or the couch (Rabid Tennessee football fan). His most challenging, as well as most rewarding, sport remains the balancing act that we all face between the pressures of the turf industry and the everyday details of bringing up another generation of golf course aficionados. ■

Superintendent's View

Continued from page 3

Mr. Legere does not have any negotiating with his national accounts. The price is set nationally and that is the price he pays. He does have a checks and balances system in place. Mike simply, "calls his fellow superintendents with Kemper Sports Management" to check consistency. Another interesting fact with Kemper is they do not purchase any equipment, they totally lease everything.

When asked to rank service, price, and compatibility to their expectations the group was very consistent. Service was by far the most important. We realize the equipment will eventually need repairing and it is of utmost importance to have it completed in a timely fashion. Compatibility is second with influencing our decision. With consideration to the mechanic and staff, it is vitally important we keep our equipment manufactures consistent and not change unless their is a huge gap in pricing or equipment quality.

Pricing was considered a distant third and is considered a minor part of the formula. I believe that this only if we feel we are getting a good value for the money. When researching equipment do you honestly feel that there are really many poor pieces of equipment sold by our local distributors? I feel, "you cannot go wrong with the quality of equipment produced today and service is of primary importance when deciding on anything."

Evaluation	Rating
Service	1
Compatibility with present equipment	2
Price	3

In conclusion:

In conclusion a few interesting points were discovered.

1. It is simply amazing how variable the five of our needs were. We have a better realization of how difficult it must be when a distributor tries to customize each proposal to their interested customer. How do they keep all of our particular needs organized? Good luck!

2. Financing was a topic that was discussed essentially by accident but provoked lengthy review. Basically we are all running businesses. We can become more creative and dynamic with the monies we have to spend. We owe it to the facility to do so. With margins of profit and budgets being scrutinized as they are we invite more creative financing. think with this season starting so slowly and revenues being greatly reduced this is even more essential especially for daily fee courses. ■

Since 1928



fisher & son company, inc.

Distributors for:

- Turf & Horticultural Protectants
- Fertilizers
- Seed & Soil Amendments
- Top Dressings

THE "GREEN INDUSTRY" SUPPLIER

Meeting the Needs of Turf Professionals

237 E. KING ST. • MALVERN, PA 19355 • (800) 262-2127
Represented in the M.A.A.G.C.S. Region by Ted Huhn • 800-945-9894