

VALUE AS A GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT

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Without question, the role of the Golf Course Superintendent is changing and we must prepare ourselves to adequately meet the needs and demands of our employers and our golfers. Although our first priority and responsibility remains that of providing quality golfing conditions, our profession has transcended the "Greenkeeper" images of decades ago. The Superintendent of today is faced with the same challenges of others in the U.S. workforce: downsizing, the hiring of younger people at a cheaper wage, competing for new positions, lack of loyalty of the employer, etc. How can we equip ourselves to become more valuable in the eyes of our employers?

The Golf Course Superintendent of today must think of himself as a professional business person. When we commit to developing a broad range of talents we become much more dimensional in what we have to offer our employer. Celebrities such as Tom Watson, Byron Nelson and Ben Crenshaw have openly stated the value of the Golf Course Superintendent to the game of golf. If these men are knowledgeable about the contributions of Superintendents, why do so many of our employers and the golfing public think that all you do is fertilize, water and mow? Although many in our profession now receive six figured salaries and are highly recognized in the golf arena, the majority of Superintendents are in no way recognized for the part they play and the contributions they make to their golfing facilities.

Beyond staying on the technical edge of new agronomic ideas and innovations, there are many ways we can help ourselves. Developing a plan for a personal image campaign, development and implementation of improved professionalism and continued training in media and public relations should not be overlooked. Have you developed a professional relationship with golf writers, newspaper editors or state golf association executives? Are you establishing yourself as an informed information source or will you open yourself to be a story target? Are you participating in the Audubon wildlife sanctuary and school programs? Are you taking the lead in environmental stewardship at your facility?

We must develop the business skills necessary to keep us competitive and valuable. Being skilled in management of personnel and finances is no longer an option, rather a necessity. Can you interpret and adequately discuss income statements, profit and loss statements and balance sheets? Do you know what questions you can and cannot ask an applicant in a job interview? Be committed to keeping detailed records. Know your operating budget inside out. This will give you a tremendous amount of credibility. Prepare proposals in a professional manner. Always give your employer a solution when presenting him a problem. How are your computer skills?

Can you read an annual report? Learn the facts on what your operation contributes financially to the bottom line of the facility? Let your employer know that your department is in fact a huge revenue center.