

# Training is A Constant

by Greg Petry, Waukegan Park District

People are the key to success for any facility, department or business. Start right by hiring people who are willing and eager to learn and improve; those who want a career in the industry and expect to expend the time and effort necessary to move ahead. You want qualified individuals, with sufficient education and experience to fill the position for which they are hired -- but -- you don't want someone who thinks they already know everything they'll need to know.

Learning is a life-long experience.

Training and continuing education programs should provide useful and relevant information. Employees should want to participate in these programs and, by doing so, improve their skills and become more motivated to perform them.

Make training accessible. Most programs should be offered during "normal" working hours. Give personnel sufficient time to make arrangements to attend training sessions offered at other times or off-site. Training is a legitimate business expense. Employees should receive regular compensation for attendance at mandatory training programs. The organization must decide and establish a policy concerning time and expense reimbursement for optional career enhancement training opportunities.

Remember, effective training programs focus on both internal and external training.

Internal training keeps people aware of things going on in the organization. This would include training in broad areas such as new employee orientation, organizational policies and safety procedures, and in specifics such as proper use of upgraded computer systems or how to fill out new forms for purchase orders or expense payment authorizations. The majority of these programs are conducted in-house by organization personnel.

You may set up on-going internal training programs which allow employees to "tap into" sessions as their skills reach specific levels or they move up to new positions. You may offer certain basic internal training programs several times

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# Are You Ready for Some Info?

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versus a loamy soil, versus a clay soil. Each of these soil types demand unique management, so that you can maximize the overall quality of the field."

You'll pick up tips on facing the challenges of maximum turf quality in a minimal amount of time on native soil fields.

Steve L. Schlecht, President, Gempler's, will speak on Personal Protection for Pesticide Applicators. He'll cover the necessary head-to-toe protection that applicators should wear to follow pesticide label instructions. He'll also discuss prop-

er training in the use, cleaning, and storage of personal protection equipment, as well as heat stress issues.

Ross Kurcab, Turf Manager for The Denver Broncos Football Club, will give you his

views on Snow Removal From

Athletic Fields. He says, "I will include the aspects of equipment selection and preferences, snow removal techniques that don't destroy the turf, pre-planning a storm, and all sorts of helpful hints. We plow the Broncos grass practice

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during the year to meet the needs of different departments. You may have a training check-off system that provides one-on-one training in specific policies and procedures as an employee advances to a new position or takes on added responsibilities.

External training programs generally focus on a specific area such as customer service initiatives, diversity training or advanced technological issues which require the expertise of outside trainers.

These programs may range from single sessions that last a few hours, through one or two days of focused sessions to extensive multi-session, multi-year, training.

External training includes sessions focused on proper operation of new equipment or machines. These usually are conducted by manufacturer or supplier personnel for all organization personnel who will operate those units. Many organizations specify that such training sessions be a part of the purchase contract for all new equipment.

External training extends to the continuing education programs offered through key industry-related associations, such as STMA's annual Conference and Exhibition and STMA Chapter meetings and hands-on training sessions.

External training also could include tuition reimbursement to individuals for college courses related to completing an industry-related degree or for specific job-related enhancement. Generally, certain criteria must be met in course performance to qualify for reimbursement.

Internal and external training programs might be offered to everyone in the organization or only to certain departments or personnel.

The constant change of today's world requires on-going training and continuing education programs and the networking interaction with other professionals offered through industry associations.

We must keep up with new developments, not necessarily to try every new technique as it comes out, but to know about and understand advancing technology. No organization has the time or resources to reinvent the wheel. We need to observe the procedures, techniques and policies used in situations similar to our own and find ways to innovatively adapt

them to fit our organization's needs.

People who are interested in doing the best possible job in their current position, who use training and continuing education programs to enhance their skills and keep up with new developments, products and techniques, and apply all this to their job, not only improve the quality of their performance, they improve the quality of the organization.

These people are more likely to feel, act and talk positively about the

organization that cares enough about them to provide programs to help them improve.

It becomes self-fulfilling. More efficient, productive employees, with positive attitudes, move up in the organization. They become long-term employees, with long-term goals and a long string of successes. Other individuals interested in a similar career path are attracted by the organization's positive attributes and image.

*STM*

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