

THREE R'S OF HIRING THE RIGHT EMPLOYEE: RECRUITMENT, REVIEW AND REFERENCES

Good equipment and chemicals are important tools for golf course maintenance, but the most valuable assets to a superintendent are good employees.

Some superintendents may not spend much time considering potential crew members, but filling vacant positions is one of their most important jobs. Training new employees is expensive so hiring-and keeping- good people is imperative.

According to Ed Walsh, Superintendent at Ridgewood Country Club in Daramus, N.J., the secret to success is finding the right people and providing an environment that encourages them to stay.

"When I hire someone, it's because I have high expectations for them," says Walsh. "If a person does a good job, I want them to be long-term member of our team."

Start by recruiting

Finding good employees starts with the search for candidates. Walsh says superintendents often overlook the best recruitment tools: existing staff members.

"When I plan to hire a person, I'll often post the job listing in the shop," says Walsh. "The people who work here know the type of employee we're looking for, and they won't recommend someone who doesn't meet our standards."

In addition to internal postings, advertising in local newspapers may provide leads. To ensure that you attract qualified applicants, include an accurate job description.



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Review Applicants

The purpose of an interview is to evaluate potential employees. You want to determine-in a short time-whether applicants can handle the job responsibilities and if they will fit in with current employees.

"I ask them about their experience and expectations," says Walsh. "It's important to find out their potential."

Walsh recommends asking questions that require more than a yes or no answer. For example:

- *With what type of management style do you work best?
- *What is your strongest attribute?
- *Do you prefer working in a group or by yourself?
- *How will working here challenge your abilities?

In addition to getting to know the candidates, an interview should give the applicant a chance to learn more about the job. Walsh says candidates who ask meaningful questions show that they are genuinely interested in the position.

References help ensure a good hire

Together with an interview, references provide a good picture of the potential employee's work habits. Talking to previous employers can give you valuable insight about the candidate's attendance record, experience and skills.

While questions to former employers can't be too specific or personal, you do have the right to ask work-related questions. If possible, check references after the interview. This allows you to target specific issues concerning that person.

An experienced and well trained maintenance crew keeps golf course in top condition. But the value of a skilled maintenance team doesn't necessarily show up on the bottom line. It does, however, show up on the course.

Credit: Ed Walsh, Ridgewood Country Club as seen in The Ballmark, Winter 1991.

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