

## Strictly Business

By Bob Costa

It's often been said that one of the reasons the position of Golf Course Superintendent is so demanding is that it requires a variety of skills. It's not uncommon during the course of a day to find yourself in situations that require skills in agronomy, politics, accounting, human relations, or public relations. Many times it has been said that our personal success, directly relates to our competence in these areas. There is no doubt much truth to those comments however, perhaps the most important skill, and the one that is most often overlooked is that of leadership.

Webster defines leadership as the act of directing, commanding, or guiding a group, or activity. Sounds a lot like a job description for a Golf Course Superintendent doesn't it? It stand to reason then, that our ability to succeed professionally, is hinged directly to our capacity to lead, rather than just our knowledge of agronomy, public relations, human relations or accounting.

What is a leader and what skills do all good leaders have? Leaders should:

**Be Good Communicators and Teachers** - A leader must be willing to teach skills, to share insights and experiences. In order to be a good teacher, a leader needs to be a good communicator, well organized and a goal setter.

**Have Stamina** - There will be occasions when time demands and pressures will be great. A leader must be able to endure and be strong.

**Be Open Minded** - The best leaders are those who never close their minds to new ideas and are willing to listen to the

ideas of others.

**Be Motivators** - Leaders should display a love of the job, concern for people, dedication to high standards, and provide lots of compliments for hard work and high performance.

**Have Integrity** - Of all the qualities of a leader, this is the most important. A leader cannot lead without respect. Integrity breeds respect.

**Be Able To Laugh** - Humor can be a great reliever of tension. It's okay for leaders to let people know that life is not so important that you can't occasionally sit back and laugh.

**Be Reliable** - Leaders need to be reliable and dependable in order to provide stability and guidance. Leadership implies being able to be counted on, not counted out.

**Lead By Example** - Effective leaders are looked to for direction. Those that are being led are more prone to follow what they see, then what they hear.

**Be Visible and Approachable** - One of the best ways for leaders to learn and to get feedback on

problem areas is to be out with their people observing and asking questions. At the same time they can acknowledge good performance.

**Be Introspective** - A good leader should be able to analyze themselves and their performance, acknowledging where they have made mistakes, or turned people off.

**Have Technical Competence** - Leaders must understand the elements of their business and be capable of keeping up with changes. If they fail to, they will be incapable of making effective decisions.

**Take Care of Their People** - Leaders should recognize not just the top performers, but also the many others that are doing their job well. They should understand the importance of thanking their staff, because it takes care of their psychological health and increases self confidence.

**Be Able to Delegate** - Leaders who give their staff the responsibility and authority to make decisions will have more time available to direct and guide,

while building their employee self esteem and confidence.

**Effectively Manage Their time** Leaders should organize their time and schedules so that they are always productive. Staying busy and working long hours are not necessarily a measurement of leadership effectiveness.

**Set Standards** - Leaders must set standards for performance and require their staff to abide by those standards. Those who can't fulfill the expectations for performance must be replaced.

**Provide Vision** - Leaders must be able to plan and set goals for the future. They must be able to anticipate problems and be prepared to develop solutions.

**Be Patient Yet Decisive** - A good leader should be willing to listen and gather all available information before making a decision. Once the facts are in place, the decision should be decisive and unwavering. They must be willing to take risks.

**Be Organized** - A leader must be organized and capable of planning. Without these skills inefficiency, frustration and chaos are likely to result.

### Golf Tournament - Christmas Party (Cont'd)

Chris Pryor (Assistant at Pebble Beach) won. Our thanks to West Star for their donation of presents to raffle off. There was a weed eater, chain saw, blower and more. Thank you Gene and Marie.

I want to again thank all our sponsors for their support of the Christmas Party and reiterate what Rich Lavine said in his December President's Message. "Where will the phone salesman be when you need support this summer?" Support the people and companies who support us. Thanks to all of you.

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