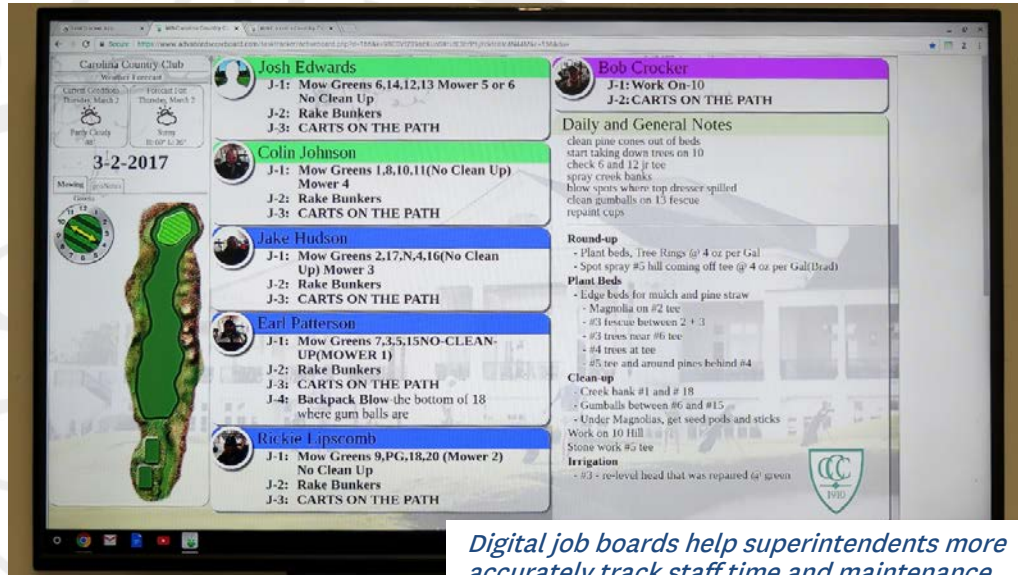




Where Did The Hours Go?



Digital job boards help superintendents more accurately track staff time and maintenance expenses. This new technology is easy to implement and use.

Golf course superintendents track their use of many resources including water, fertilizers and plant protectants. However, few superintendents regularly track labor. Historically, daily tasks have been assigned to staff members on a white board at the maintenance facility. At the end of every day, the information was erased, leaving superintendents with little information about how their staff time was allocated on a daily, monthly and yearly basis. Considering that labor constitutes 55-70 percent of a typical golf course maintenance budget, understanding where labor is allocated can have significant implications on the bottom line. Fortunately, digital job board technology makes labor tracking much easier and helps superintendents and golf facilities focus resources on areas that have the greatest impact on golfer experience. The following are four facts every golfer should know about digital job boards and labor-tracking software and how this technology impacts their game:

1. How it works

A digital job board connects to a computer via the internet. Work assignments can be entered through the computer or remotely with a tablet or smartphone. Once entered, assignments appear on a large monitor for the staff to see. The monitor lists every employee and his or her daily assigned tasks. Digital job boards make it easy to enter and adjust daily tasks so staff receive clear, real-time information about work assignments. Furthermore, digital job boards can be used with labor-tracking software to track the time and costs associated with each maintenance task. All of the information can be stored locally or uploaded to the cloud, allowing it to be accessed anywhere with internet connection.



2. Reporting information

Tracking how staff time is allocated on a golf course helps superintendents monitor and communicate the costs required to perform various maintenance operations. Labor-tracking software can generate regular reports that help superintendents review how much staff time was allocated to different playing areas throughout the year. Most software can also generate graphs and tables that make the reports easy to understand and share. This information can be eye opening to golfers and other decision makers. For example, bunkers can consume a surprising amount of resources, especially if they are hand raked on a daily basis or if repairing washouts is a frequent occurrence. Instead of verbally explaining to golfers that bunkers are consuming an excessive amount of resources, a superintendent can use data generated from a digital job board to show exactly how much labor is involved in maintaining bunkers.

3. Setup is easier than you think

It is relatively inexpensive and straightforward to set up this new technology. Initial costs for the computer, internet, TV monitor and software range from \$1,000 to \$1,500. Monthly fees are typically less than \$50. It is well worth the investment to improve efficiency, track staff hours and record playing-area costs.

4. What it will do

Golf course owners and operators inquire about labor costs with their superintendent on a regular basis. At the same time, they frequently receive requests and suggestions for additional maintenance practices such as mowing the fairways an extra time each week or to rake the bunkers more often. Using a digital job board and labor-tracking software makes it easy to quantify the cost of various maintenance practices and assess any proposed changes to current practices. This technology allows golf facilities to consistently track labor, which helps align the maintenance plans with the current budget and meet golfer expectations.