



Taking an active interest in one another's job responsibilities and success will pay dividends for the careers of golf professionals and superintendents.

BUILDING A STRONG RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPERINTENDENT AND GOLF PROFESSIONAL

BY BRIAN WHITLARK | AGRONOMIST, WEST REGION

Golf course superintendents are responsible for producing and maintaining quality playing conditions while golf professionals typically work in a more customer-facing role. Therefore, the ability for any facility to succeed is enhanced when superintendents and golf professionals work together to produce a memorable golf experience. However, sometimes departmental agendas conflict and the relationship between a golf course superintendent and a golf professional can sour. But fostering a healthy and productive relationship requires time and effort. Dana Lehner, executive director of the Sun Country Amateur Golf Association, recently offered his ten best practices to build and maintain healthy working relationships between superintendents and golf professionals.

Best Practices

- An informal survey of golf professionals and superintendents conducted by Lehner revealed that daily face-to-face meetings are key to building and maintaining a healthy working relationship. Daily meetings can be informal and brief; getting together to discuss daily operations is the key.
- Schedule a weekly tour of the golf course. Ideally, play a few holes together.
- Work together when setting up the golf course for special events. Plan and set hole locations, select teeing grounds, discuss heights of cut and green speed together to ensure everyone is on the same page.
- When necessary, be willing to modify course preparations based on the needs of the golf professional and the golfer experience. A superintendent's willingness to adjust demonstrates a commitment to the success of a facility.
- Embrace the golf professional's interest in agronomy. Educate golf professionals and the golf shop staff about agronomic challenges and the various practices that impact play. The more they understand the challenges facing superintendents, the better they can communicate with golfers when questions or concerns arise.
- Routinely discuss golfer questions and comments with the golf professional. The goal is to provide the best possible golf experience by adjusting based on valuable golfer feedback.
- Commit to open, honest communication. A forthright line of communication is imperative to a healthy, productive relationship.
- Both the golf professional and superintendent must put facility interests ahead of their respective departmental needs. A successful facility relies on both parties working toward the common goal of providing a memorable golf experience.
- Be willing to support one another under challenging conditions. Don't throw each other under the bus when issues arise. Work with the mindset that making all departments successful will make you successful.
- Being loyal and supportive of one another will foster a happier working environment for everyone and will very likely prolong your career.



For information on the USGA's Course Consulting Service Contact the Green Section Staff.

[Learn More](#)

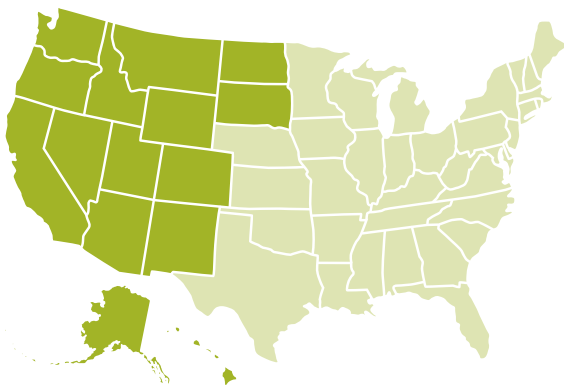
Above all, recognize that the success of any facility rests in the hands of the golfer. Therefore, it is in the best interest of both golf professionals and superintendents to provide a memorable golf experience on a consistent basis. Be an advocate for one another, make each other successful, and maintain open, honest lines of communication.

Save The Date

Warm-Season Grass Renovation Seminar – November 29, 2018, at San Jose Country Club, in San Jose, Calif.

Save this date to attend a warm-season grass renovation seminar with host golf course superintendent Pete Bachman at San Jose Country Club in San Jose, Calif. With pressing water issues in California, courses in the northern part of the state, from Monterey and the Bay Area to the Central Valley, are looking to replace cool-season turf swards with warm-season grasses such as bermudagrass or zoysiagrass. Those that currently maintain common bermudagrass or other old warm-season turf varieties may be interested in converting to a new variety. Spend a cool November day in San Jose to hear speakers including Pat Gross, regional director of the USGA Green Section's West Region; Dr. Marta Pudzianowska from the University of California Riverside; golf course architect Andy Staples; Mike Kenna, director of USGA Green Section research and a panel of golf course superintendents speak about their experience with new warm-season turf varieties and renovation strategies.

For more information on overseeding, transition and the upcoming Warm-Season Grass Renovation Seminar, please contact the [USGA Green Section](#).



WEST REGION AGRONOMISTS:

Patrick Gross, Regional Director, pgross@usga.org

Larry Gilhuly, Agronomist, lgilhuly@usga.org

Brian Whitlark, Agronomist, bwhitlark@usga.org

[Information on the USGA's Course Consulting Service](#)

[Contact the Green Section Staff](#)
