



SUCCESSFUL SKILLS TRAINING

In this month's article David Golding, GTC's Education Director, appeals to Course Managers to play the key role in staff training and assessment.

"Here he goes again" I hear regular readers say – "NVQ's and what we should be doing!"

Well that might well be the case but I would like to just take a few minutes of your time to ask who is best placed to know the staffs' training needs, how best they would learn and how the employer would best benefit from staff development?

Is it the College Lecturer? The Secretary Manager? Chairman of Green? Professional? The Owner?

While all of these people can contribute to the process of staff development it has to be the Course Manager's responsibility, otherwise the system of skills training cannot be successful.

Just to be a little controversial, you will note I have appealed to Course Managers and not mentioned Head Greenkeepers.

I am well aware that many Head Greenkeepers are managing the golf course but more and more employers contact me regarding their Head Greenkeepers and how they only maintain the course but do not manage the facility.

Yes, believe it or not many employers do really want their Head "men" to supervise and manage, and become increasingly disappointed when they don't carry out these important tasks.

This is often the area where Head Greenkeepers become frustrated because they still hear statements such as the "Secretary or the Chairman of Green keep interfering with my job". In my experience it is not interference so much as typical management duties which should be carried out by the Course Manager.

Clearly the key word in the title debate is MANAGE and most of us entering the greenkeeping profession were not born managers, we just wanted to work outdoors and loved the challenge of working with nature.

Not for the first time I will put myself forward as a typical guy who fitted the above criteria and that is why I feel so strongly about supporting those of you who do want to

develop into Golf Course Managers.

As the game of golf is now in a period of change with more and more clubs under tremendous financial pressures, the Course Manager will truly need to be up for the challenges ahead. They will need to be at the table when key issues are under discussion with management and their professionalism, hopefully, will be fundamental when the future of the course and club are being decided. Financial planning, including staffing resources, will be high on the agenda and you will have a major contribution to the make to the discussions.

Today's modern Course Managers are well versed in these matters and I won't name names but I noted some of our top Course Managers were in workshops during the Harrogate Week topping up on their management skills - brilliant! So much so that I know they were keen to discuss speaker skills and programmes with Ken and Sami, all with the intention of ensuring that future training in this crucial area is of a high quality.

We know the tried and tested Frank Newberry and Brin Bendon, who continue to support so many of you, as management trainers who have taken the time to understand the sectors needs and I am sure there are other individuals who will serve us well but I have little time for trainers who just deliver generic courses and wonder why the delegates switch off!

We know this has been the case in our own assessor training programmes of late and this will be addressed due to direct feedback from the delegates to us. The GTC will be working very closely with BIGGA and the Home Union Golf Course committees to ensure we not only provide the subjects on seminars and workshops but also top speakers.

My guess is that you will see many more of our "top" Course Managers becoming the tutors at future workshops because one thing is for sure, this industry is not frightened to share their experiences and we must encourage this.

There is no better tutor than the one who has and often still is "at the coalface!" When you see these Course Managers offering to share their experience and knowledge with you, take up the opportunity, don't just say "oh it's alright for him he is at a course with a mega-budget", it is often these types of courses which will feel the financial pressure first!

Whether it is by contacting your favoured training provider or BIGGA direct, please do

not sit back with just your greenkeeping skills. Discuss the courses available to "convert" to a Golf Course MANAGER. Trust me, employers need you!

The association and the GTC approved training providers will supply the demand on a local basis and it need not be a course which is a full qualification e.g. N/SVQ Level 4 but short specific courses or bite size learning is the way forward.

Courses aimed at supplying employers with the skilled staff they require, and the GTC for its part, will continue to support this aim by arranging trainer and assessor training to keep you at the front-line of your teams skills development.

There will be many of you who have over the years achieved the assessor award and feel the GTC has not been in touch with you regarding updating or attending a standardisation/moderation meeting? If I can explain – the GTC, since the introduction of vocational or work-based training has invested heavily in assessor training believing that the best placed person to train and assess greenkeepers are Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers, or in certain circumstances Deputies, and this programme of training has been designed to assist Centres/Training Providers with the assessment process.

When you decide on your Centre to register your trainee you should automatically become an assessor within their quality control (verification) system. It is therefore the Centres responsibility to keep you updated on quality issues as well as the obvious task to ensure you are training and assessing your staff to the national standards.

Some Centres are still by-passing qualified assessors and using their own peripatetic assessors when really they should be visiting you as the Internal Verifier not assessor.

Don't settle for this, especially when you are the 'MANAGER'.

The Awarding Bodies External Verifiers are onto these Centres and we at the GTC are continually trying to drive up the quality of work-based training by supporting Centres through regular contact with verifiers and the Awarding Bodies.

This role is just part of the Course Managers role and I truly hope you are prepared for the demanding times ahead, if not take advantage of the courses available.

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