



ATTRACTING THE GOLFER

David Golding, GTC's Education Director encourages all Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers to "prepare their cases" for the new golfing season....

While we at the GTC work with our representative bodies to encourage golf club employers to appoint competent qualified staff to manage the golf course, we must also ensure training courses are available to provide the skills so vital in today's business world of attracting golfers to your course.

Short courses should be oversubscribed around the country when the training providers organise courses to cover all the important aspects of managing the golf course, but sadly I still hear that courses are being cancelled due to lack of support.

I find this a very worrying sign, especially as the majority of golf clubs are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and/or retain members and to attract the important additional income from the visiting golfer.

I am sorry for repeating the fact that the GTC will continue to promote supervisory and management training but this has been a priority for the sector for many years and while the maintenance skills are almost a daily part of the routine of a Course Managers work, we must support the specialist training for them to prepare the case to the owner/committee, Chairmen/women for the resources required to maintain the course to the highest standard possible.

In my experience very few Committee Chairs actually purchase equipment and materials without direction from the Course Manager/ Head Greenkeeper. It is usually the other way round and this is where a competent Course Manager is such an asset to the business - research products, machinery etc and make the case for all major purchases adding value to the golf course both in the short and long term.

The financing of such equipment will be a crucial factor and this is where the trade can assist with the presentation of the case for...

I know for many this is basic presentation skills however I do still hear and read where greenkeepers are so frustrated that their club won't provide new working facilities or equipment even when there are major health and safety issues both for the employers and employees.

There has to be a partnership approach between the club and the Course Manager and this is where the Home Unions through seminars and workshops will continue to promote best practice in maintaining and managing golf courses.

We know there are some excellent examples of the partnership approach and often these double-acts will be spot lighted to show just how progress can be made without the whole membership having to be involved in the decision of whether to engage an apprentice or to purchase a new piece of equipment.

Obviously major purchases or course alterations will require discussions

at the highest levels, but should all fall within the Course Policy Document.

The key to this is as a Course Manager is do you have the skills to manage?

The GTC has its Provider network of colleges and independent providers (Frank Newberry, Brin Bendon et al) and with BIGGA still support funding specialist courses to cover all the supervisory and management skills, be prepared to put your case forward.

From my own experience as a Course Manager it often appears "we" want the equipment for use on our own back garden and not to improve the golf course for the benefit of the golfer.

I think the trick is to prepare the case in a manner that the owner/ committee views, as "we cannot afford not to agree to the Course Managers recommendations!"

This is where a good Chairman/Convenor or Secretary Manager can also be the key partner in the presentation "party".

I also appreciate that preparing cases very often involves early planning for the budget rounds within a club or business, but again with training this can become another vital skill in the armoury of the modern Course Managers arsenal.

The GTC, as previously mentioned, is also about ensuring education and training advice is available to both employers and greenkeepers and to work with those providers who understand the requirements of our specialist sector.



For more information on the work of the GTC please visit the GTC website: www.the-gtc.co.uk or direct on Tel: 01347 838640 or email golf@the-gtc.co.uk

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