



GETTING WHAT YOU WANT, NO SORRY 'NEED'

By Kevin Munt

The Rolling Stones said it best 'You Can't Always Get What You Want...But if you try sometimes, well you just might find, you get what you need.'

Having been on both sides of the golf club managerial fence, I thought I would give you my take on how to get what you 'need' from the bosses at your club.

Firstly, a little secret that you should be aware of, most bosses at some time or another think that their employees are messing up and not telling anyone, or worse still they just aren't aware that they have a problem. To check this a boss will pick an element of your operation, which may seem random to you, and ask minutia questions about it. If you are hesitant and evasive then, rightly or wrongly, there is a fair chance this boss is going to assume that you have not got a grip on your work.

So now you know this 'secret' your job should be to make sure you can demonstrate that you know what you are doing at all times. It is called reassuring him/her, and the best way to do this is by keeping them in the 'loop'. Keeping your boss in the loop on a regular basis should be one of your priority tasks.

THINK YOU'RE THE BOSS

Prepare your request from the boss's perspective. What will matter to him/her? Whether it is your total annual budget or simply a request for time off think, 'what is your boss's agenda?' Do they have pressures they need relief from, will your request help or exacerbate this pressure?

How often, as a child, did you ask your parents for something, justifying your request with "because everyone else has one", just how successful

were you with that tactic? Avoid the 'me too' approach and make sure you have an angle that will at least get you a fair hearing.

WHO NEEDS IT?

We all know that you need a deep soil aeration machine, its bl**dy obvious isn't it!

"What you mean that great lump that you haul over the greens bashing huge holes in them and making them bumpy!"

Now, you know you need it, you know the golf course needs it, but do your members think they need it? Also which of the above views is your boss going to take?

Think all the scenarios through, be very well prepared, and make a very strong case by doing your homework, have all the negatives aspects covered before you even consider making the request.

Preparing the ground

It does amaze me that Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers, as people who spend most of their lives preparing the ground so that they get the best possible result, often fail to do this when it comes to the business side of their jobs.

The most time wasting thing you can do is to walk into the boss's office under prepared. This means you must have prepared a positive response to every negative comment and have watertight figures backing up those positives. If you think that a wonder machine is going to get your course open for an additional five days in the winter, generating an additional £2,500 in total spend at the club, say so. Nail your colours

to the mast and have the courage of your convictions, if you don't it will be seen that you really don't 'need' it!

Good bosses appreciate individuals who are serious about what they do, and are willing to take the time to fully understand well conceived proposals.

BE ON A MISSION

All good organisations have a 'Mission Statement', or the phrase I prefer 'A Sense of Common Purpose' - this will be based on your club or company's strategic objectives. If your club doesn't have one hopefully you will be working to a 'Course Management Policy'. (If you have none of these do something about it, you will be seen as being at the head of management thinking).

Ensure that you link your proposals to these club/company initiatives and objectives. Define where your request(s) fit in, how they impact on both improvements and profits, and highlight the risks of not giving you what you need.

COURSE MANAGERS ARE SALESMEN

Selling! Oh yes you are in sales territory now and you have got to be much better than the company rep who has got a vested interest in you getting this proposition through. In sales there is a piece of jargon called a 'Value Proposition'. A value proposition is a short statement that clearly communicates the benefits a potential customer/client gets by using your product, service or idea.

"Why should we buy this specific product or idea?" asks your manager, your value proposition should answer this question in a compelling way. The aim is to help them see the specific value of your request and in doing so, you will grab their attention so that they say, "Yes this is right for the club and I am going to support it".

Also ask yourself what am I going to do if the answer is no. You may well be asked what the alternatives are, make sure that you have creative ways in which to get what you and your club requires.

APPROVED

Congratulations you have done it. The Board of Management has approved your request for a budget matching that of The Wentworth Club. You can go and get your course into tournament condition all year round! As you do, don't forget the following:

- Credibility. Follow through on actions and deliver what you said you were going to.
- Reporting. Remember to keep the boss 'in the loop' if you want to be well received in the future.
- Results. Keep a track of progress and quantify results, this will aid the success of future 'need' requests.

Remember bosses need people who have unique expertise. You don't have to be an expert in every element of your job, but you are employed for your specific area of knowledge. Believe it or not your boss values this, make sure you are able to articulate this expertise with confidence 'and you just might find, you get what you need'.

AUTHOR

Kevin Munt is Principle Consultant of KMgc, a management consultancy specialising in the Golf Club operational development.

Kevin has been the Course Manager at The Wentworth Club, Royal Dornmoch GC and Hankley Common GC and was the Operations Manager of the Buckinghamshire GC.

