



# IT'S ALL MONEY, MONEY, MONEY

*In this month's article David Golding, the GTC's Education Director, gets into the festive spirit (not)!*

**As we move towards the festive season and all the hype that goes with it, those of us who - should I say have seen more Christmases than others - take the big build up with a pinch of salt.**

Hands up all those who prefer to leave the preparations for the big event to their partners?

Maybe you begrudgingly help with the "big shop" just to ensure that all the goodies you enjoy find their way into the basket - or should I say baskets!

What about that last minute dash on Christmas Eve to the shop for the main present? Come on we have all been there...

What can we all learn from this time of year and how does it relate to greenkeeping? I would like to mention a couple of areas which might just ring a bell or two.

## Marketing and planning...

Shops and hotels especially start their marketing programmes so early in the year I for one just switch off until it suits me, not them, but one thing we cannot ignore is their persistence!

In the competitive world of golf, we are seeing a tremendous amount of competition for the golfers' money from, as you would expect, the proprietary clubs - but even the traditional members clubs can no longer expect even loyal members to automatically fork out their hard earned wages without assessing value for money.

While there will always be those clubs whose product is of such a premium, golfers will pay to play. Even these facilities must have a marketing policy.

It is a fact that 82% of clubs in England have no waiting list and many have reduced or waived entrance fees - such is the competition for the golfers cash.

We know from various websites that many Course Managers have to review budgets with their employers as the current financial economy is biting even harder, but as with the last recession, those companies who continue to invest in training will survive.

I digress for a moment! Government schemes such as 'Train to Gain' are grossly under spent and Skills Brokers have been given flexibility with the training providers to provide training to meet employers needs, so contact your GTC approved training provider to see what courses are on offer to ensure staff development stays on your clubs agenda and you will find it need not make a major hole in your course budget.

Back to marketing, all levels of greenkeepers will, from now on, be seeing an increase in the amount of focus from our training providers on customer care and marketing within courses.

The GTC has ensured that within the National Occupational Standards, from which all qualifications are developed, customer care is included and Course Managers should be invited to contribute to management meetings to discuss future business developments, as often they have excellent ideas for improving the 'product' but frustratingly never get to share their vision.

The very latest communication and marketing techniques will be shared by training providers to give our side of golf the skills and knowledge to have an input in the business.

"Failing to plan is planning to fail" and I guess we can all relate to that quote?

Equally as important as having a good marketing plan for the business is forward planning and for the golf course, this must involve the Course Manager.

A course, environmental or health and safety plan should involve all key personnel and still after many years of campaigning some golf clubs fail to include the Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper, this I find unbelievable.

Rest assured the GTC will continue to ensure all qualifications have all aspects of management

included in both vocational and academic qualifications. Short courses covering these subjects will also be included on programmes organised by BIGGA.

Planning, budgeting and marketing are management skills which in today's modern Course Managers job role are the norm, but for many, new territory.

As many golf club budgets get tighter, we must ensure "our" sector of golf gives our greenkeepers the opportunity to train to become managers - and these skills do not stop at course management. We already know several Course Managers who have taken on additional responsibilities off course and we listened to the added skills they required when they moved into their new job roles.

Rest assured the GTC will meet these needs through discussions with Directors of Golf, Course Managers, training providers and employers.

If you feel you can help us identify "new" skills that help bridge Course Managers to Directors of Golf please contact the GTC.

We are regularly reviewing the Industry Skill Sets as seen on our website and we need industry input.

We at the GTC are planning for the future and that includes our budget - but that's another story, maybe it's time to write my letter to Father Christmas!

**If you feel you can help, contact David direct at the GTC on Email [david@the-gtc.co.uk](mailto:david@the-gtc.co.uk) or Tel: 01347 838640**

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