






Communications Talking Heads

	1. How important is it for you to be able to communicate with staff out on the course?	2. How do you keep in touch with staff during the day? Are they asked to call in on a regular basis if lone working?
<p>Name: Stuart Greenwood Position: Course Manager Club: North Berwick Golf Club</p> 	<p>Very important; right down to seeing if everyone is ok and checking there are no problems. Communication is something that has been almost forgotten about up to now and the subject of health and safety has brought it more to the fore than ever before.</p>	<p>I would be out on the course whenever I can be, and my two Deputies usually are and they're keeping in touch with staff on a very regular basis. I tend to discourage lone working wherever possible because of various reasons, but there are situations when it can't be avoided.</p>
<p>Name: Steve Mason Position: Course Manager Club: Stocks Golf Club</p> 	<p>It is very important to be able to communicate with staff on the course and also works the other way too, such as breakdowns and damage to the course.</p>	<p>When the lads are given their duties, they get that certain task completed and come back to the sheds for extra jobs to be completed. If I didn't think they were capable of working alone, they wouldn't be out there by themselves.</p>
<p>Name: Dan McGrath Position: Course Manager Club: North Foreland Golf Club</p> 	<p>Communication with the team is the most vital aspect in the success department, running efficiently and professionally. We are in a highly competitive market and any time saved by means of constructive communication is both a labour and money saving.</p>	<p>We have been using Entel two-way radios for the last five years and they have proved very reliable. They are a licence-free radio and give excellent coverage. The team communicate constantly throughout the day and are always in sight of each other on this exposed, open site. The radio use also covers the company in its policy of working alone.</p>
<p>Name: Peter McVicar Position: Course Manager Club: Hesketh Golf Club</p> 	<p>It is very important for us to communicate with staff out on the golf course. The need for regular contact is there as new priorities may arise at anytime.</p>	<p>With regards to lone working, all members of staff are asked to communicate with other staff members every hour. This year will see the addition of a course marshal, however, and this policy will be removed.</p>
<p>Name: Phil Wentworth Position: Course Manager Club: The Army Club</p> 	<p>Communication with all the staff is essential. It enables me to keep track of progress with the planned work and to inform staff of any changes I might make to improve the operation with regard to perhaps members and society play.</p>	<p>I generally, through observation, keep track of my staff's work schedule throughout the day to monitor progress and to deal with any problems that might arise. It helps to let them know also the position of golfers especially if you have members and a society using both starting points at the first and tenth holes.</p>

Jim Cook returns with another Talking Heads feature, this month asking five Course Managers for their views on communications in and around the golf club

3. Have you encountered any situation where having a communications system or indeed the lack of one was highlighted?	4. Do you have a club system or do you rely on the staff's own phones? What is the network coverage like at your club?	5. What would the ideal system be and how do you think this could impact on the condition of the playing surface?
<p>We have had an injury to a golfer out on the course so having a communication system then was important to the green staff to be able to report it. It has happened on a couple of occasions so having a mobile phone was important.</p>	<p>We do have a radio system installed, but normally we rely on the staff's own mobile phones to communicate if any problem arises and the network coverage at the club is very good. We do discourage the use of phones in the clubhouse and around the course though, so only in emergency. Radios are a bit bulky and heavy.</p>	<p>The ideal system would be for everyone to have a mobile phone, to answer report or communicate, but the last thing you would want was for everyone to be ringing each other regularly and not doing what they're meant to be doing. I don't see it as having a great impact on the condition of the course.</p>
<p>Yes, before we had a new irrigation system installed, our old system was constantly breaking down, by the way of leaks, so our walkie-talkies were a godsend to communicate out on the course and the pump-house and the main shed at the same time, this saved so much wasted downtime.</p>	<p>We have a Kenwood radio system, plus a new keypad controller for the irrigation that allows us to put the water on any area that is looking dry on the Greens, tees and approaches. My lads also carry phones, just in case of emergency. The Orange network works well; all the others are intermittent.</p>	<p>I think our present system works really well and wouldn't change it at this moment in time. My lads all know to keep an eye out for each other too and also to see what else needs to be done as they complete their tasks, therefore keeping the course in the best possible condition.</p>
<p>Having a high percentage of senior members we have had the odd occasion where a golfer has fallen ill while playing. The first member of staff on the scene is generally a member of the green staff. We have called in to the clubhouse on many occasions for assistance and this would not have been viable without our radios.</p>	<p>The carrying of mobiles is seen as vital, as a radio cannot obviously dial for emergency services should they need to be deployed. Coverage is good, but we can occasionally go into the Belgian mobile network with our location on the north-east coast of Kent.</p>	<p>The system we have here works very well and the efficiency of the in house communication and professionalism is for all to see in the presentation of the two courses. So for us at this moment in time, carrying both radios and mobiles has proved successful on this site.</p>
<p>During the summer of 2008 a member collapsed on the course. With the help of staff mobile telephones the call for emergency services and the arrival of a first aider probably kept the gentleman alive.</p>	<p>We at Hesketh Golf Club rely on staff mobile phones. We tried radios, but the ones delivered had poor coverage. Perhaps we will look at improved ones in the near future.</p>	<p>I think that our current system works well as it is, but perhaps the club should reimburse staff for work calls however.</p>
<p>I think it is essential that communication is used and I prefer the use of mobile phones to a radio system purely because of being able to connect the emergency services if required. This has happened on several occasions when dealing with heart attack casualties and fractures occurring out on the course.</p>	<p>Originally we used radios to communicate between staff, office and course marshal but now all the staff use their own mobiles for keeping in touch, which suits them and at no cost to the club either. Network coverage is very good out on the course but one member of staff sometimes has difficulty getting a signal at our maintenance facility.</p>	<p>I think the way forward is with mobile phones unless your network coverage is poor. I believe communication is important among staff and particularly to keep the membership and committees informed of the work programme. This will in turn lead to a better working relationship with everyone at the club by hopefully producing a better golf course overall.</p>