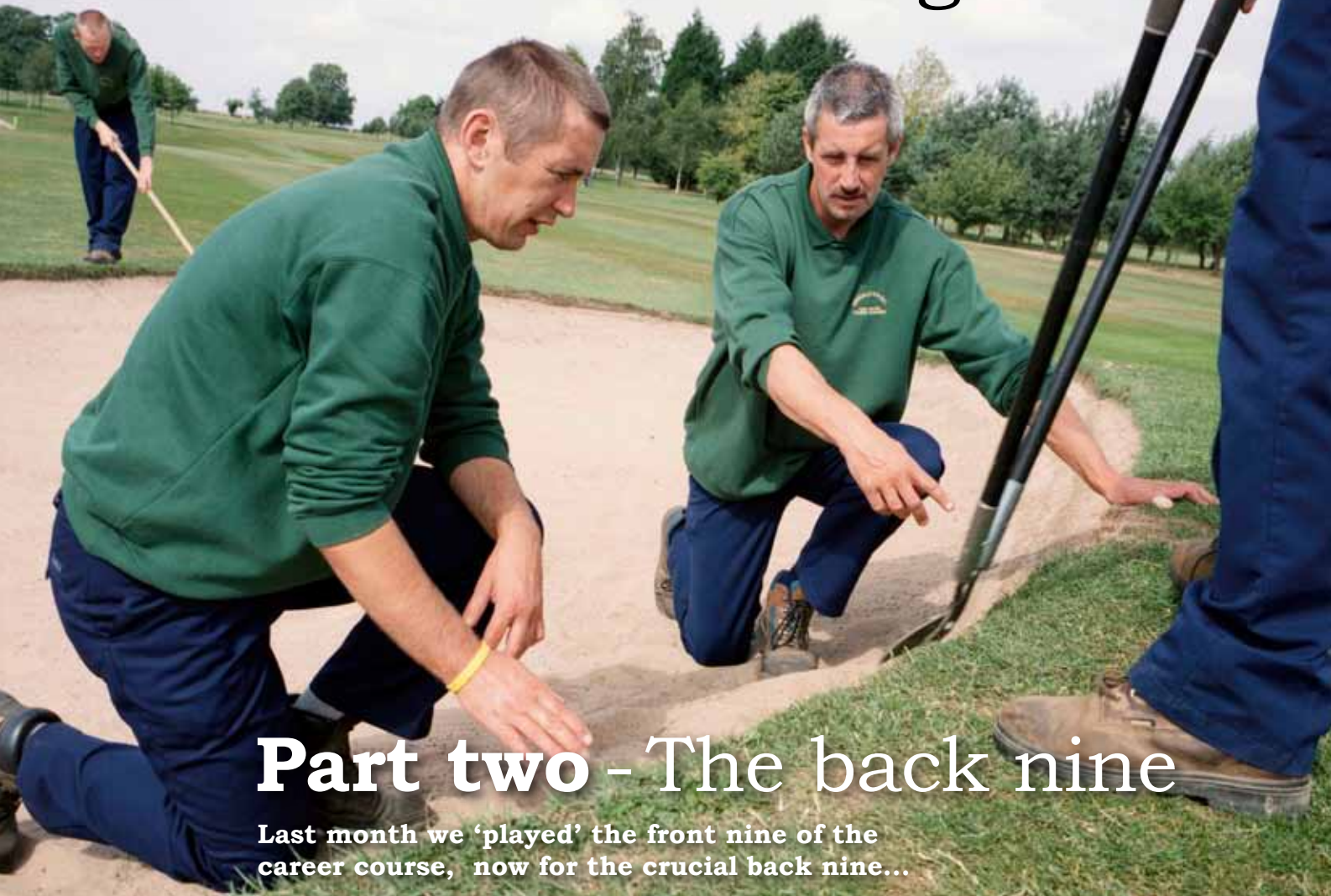


# 18 steps to becoming a Golf Course Manager



## Part two - The back nine

Last month we 'played' the front nine of the career course, now for the crucial back nine...

### 10. Budgeting

For many this is often the most boring hole on the course and thus the one that receives the least concentration – a real card wrecker. Budgeting is a great discipline for any manager.

If you carefully plan and build your budgets you can make them work in your favour, making your aims easier to achieve. If you can draw up a management policy for your golf course and quantify the resources needed to execute this policy, you have all the information you need to draw up a budget.

Obviously you will need to look at all the small detail to ensure you get your annual expenditure fully quoted and priced, but this is, comparatively, the easy bit.

As with the policy document, look at as much golf course budget information as you can from your

boss or the club's financial controller. Once you see a comprehensively detailed spreadsheet showing the main budget headline costs and their respective sub-division line items all will become much clearer. Of course these will just be figures, you still have to be able to demonstrate control and the ability to find savings when asked.

### 11. Negotiation

You will need to develop good negotiation skills, not just for purchasing purposes, but also for management situations, dealing with bosses/committees and of course getting the salary package that you feel you justify.

You will need to toughen up. Business is business, all the rest is social interaction that makes the world go around.

A better term for negotiation is being persuasive, as with influencing when communicating you should be persuasive in negotiation.

You negotiate all the time in life. We all develop our own set of persuasive skills to win what we want, however the best negotiations end in 'win-win' situations.

As with all management preparation is the key, ensure you have a list of fact-based points backed up by sound persuasive arguments.

There is no substitute for experience in negotiation situations.

When a person with money and little experience meets a person with little money but lots of experience, the first person ends up with experience and the second person ends up with money.

The 'second' people are usually your bosses and sales representatives.

## 12. Getting That Job

“Too much competition”, “jobs being filled internally without advertising”, “I don’t have the skill set for the type of course”, “no private club or proprietary business experience”, “I have never been a Course Manager”, “I lack interview experience”, “my spouse/family does not want to move”. These are just some of the obstacles identified by prospective Course Managers during our Continue to Learn workshop. So you are not alone, you have to overcome these obstacles by process of elimination. Whatever the barriers are, reduce them.

By the way, I am not suggesting you leave your spouse! Make a sideways move if necessary to gain specific experience. If you hear of a vacant position be proactive, submit a CV and explain why you would be a good choice, don’t wait for an advertisement. The main trait that will overcome these hurdles is confidence, a lot of the perceived obstacles above are born out of a lack of confidence in your ability.

The more experience, knowledge and skills that you gain the more confident in your abilities you will be, there is no escaping this fact. It is the person who is fully prepared, persuasive, determined and goal focused that gets the job. All the things that a good Course Manager should be anyway then!

## 13. Marketplace

This is included because if you are going to move up in your career you have to know the market you are in.

Do your research and look for jobs in the marketplace that fit your skill set. If you feel the marketplace is crowded for certain course management roles, be prepared to go for a job that you may find less appealing but also has less competition.

It is about getting that first manager’s role that sets you on your way. Aim at clubs that might be looking for new ideas and enthusiasm, find out what their problems are and formulate plans to help them. Most of all make sure you are ‘marketable’ and are able to meet the prospective job’s specification.

## 14. Networking

Get yourself out there in the industry, get to know course managers, club managers, professionals, consultants, Association officials and staff, trade members

### about the author



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Kevin Munt is Principle Consultant at KMgc. Forty years ago he started his greenkeeping career during which time has been the Course Manager at the Hankley Common, Royal Dornoch and Wentworth Golf Clubs. Kevin has also project managed golf course constructions and been Operations Manager Buckinghamshire Golf Club

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and peers. Get yourself known (professionally!) on social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

Get on greenkeeping and turf management forums and ‘turf clubs’. It is often not what, but who you know. Aged 20 I was the secretary of the BB&O section and ended up on the steering committee for the formation of BIGGA, all things that got me noticed. At least two of my major career moves were facilitated because of personal recommendation from industry professionals. I didn’t see these relationships as networking at the time but there is little doubt they could be described as such.

## 15. Curriculum Vitae

A CV won’t get you a job but it can get you that all important interview. Firstly it needs to be read and that means it must be engaging. Make sure yours is professional, up to date with no time gaps, succinct, and get it proofread by someone who can spell. There is so much information on the internet on how to prepare a CV and plenty of seminars from BIGGA too, so there are no excuses. A CV equals a professional profile, so make sure it presents you in the best possible light.

Break down your CV into the following sections:

Personal details – Name, address, age, marital status, contact details

Profile – Brief summary of experience, character and suitability

Key Skills/Achievements – Eg agronomy, people, quality, presentation, IT

Key Characteristics – Enthusiasm, motivation, leadership, organisation, resilience

Career Summary – From today back to the start of your career

Career Detail – Key achievements in each role

Interests – Professional and recreational

Getting an interview is dependent on the quality of your CV so do not fall at the first hurdle with a mediocre representation of yourself.

## 16. Interview Ability

A good handshake, smart appearance, eye contact and a quiet but assured confidence works every time. I know this because I have been in many interviews on the employer’s side of the table so I know what engages me. Note all of this ‘information’ is gained before a question has even been asked, so first impressions do count.

If you are short on interview experience practice with someone with experience, carrying out roleplay is the only way you are going to ready yourself for the real situation. Yes there will be the dynamics of the interview room to deal with as well as those ‘killer questions’, so get yourself prepared and be well versed in your answers. This means researching your prospective employer, you want to find out the following:

- Club information
- Type of business
- Type of course
- Future aims
- Staff levels
- Membership numbers
- Financial position
- Course condition
- Resources

One unforgivable mistake I’ve seen repeatedly at interview is the candidate not walking or playing the course. What sort of interest in your prospective employers’ club do you think this demonstrates? So again this is about preparation and research.

## 17. Implementation

At the end of it all, once you have a Course Managers job, you are employed to implement. Using the resources at your disposal you have to implement your plans within budget and in line with the agreed course management policy. In other words you have to deliver on all of the skills and knowledge you have gained in steps one to sixteen. It is one thing finally getting a Course Managers job but it is through efficient implementation that you will keep it.

## 18. Review

Lastly reflection. You should review all of the implemented plans and work, checking progress, learning, benchmarking and adjusting accordingly. This review does not just apply to the work produced by your staff and yourself, but of your progress as a manager and the progress of your chosen career. You will often find that you need more learning, sometimes you may find that you have made the wrong move, or that you need to test yourself in a more demanding role. A review will ensure your career as a Golf Course Manager stays on course.

I wish you the best of luck and look forward to seeing and hearing of your progression in the golf course industry.