

# The Back Nine

A column for writers and members to air and share their views on golf greenkeeping topics

Social Media is becoming ever more vital and the greenkeeping industry is no exception with BIGGA members starting hugely popular blogs, Facebook pages and Twitter accounts. In part one of a two-part article Justin Ruiz advises you on social media strategy

**Social Media has come a long way in the past few years. For example, previously you might have referred to old guidelines explaining the damaging effects of frost on golf courses.**

Now you can search the web and find hundreds if not thousands of blog posts from superintendents explaining their issues with frost.

Social media can be a very effective tool to push information out to golfers, staff, the community, and other interested superintendents. But social media can also become overwhelming. There is a plethora of sites that you can use. Which one or ones should you choose?

Now, before we go too far, if you want to get into the social media scene there are a couple of things you need to remember.

It is indeed a powerful way to get information out to many different people, which is good, but you also need to be aware of how many people will see what you have posted. It can always be found on the internet once it has been published.

Next, whether you like it or not, you are building your online reputation. If you don't want anyone finding a picture of you at a party with permanent pen markings on your face that resemble who knows what, then you might think about starting over on Facebook. Even if you are not a blogger or tweeter you still have some kind of online presence. How you want to be perceived is in your control.

If you are looking to increase your presence within your club and with members, guests, colleges, and the community blogging and social media can be a great tool.

If you have avoided getting a smartphone or tablet, you may want to join over 60% of the UK and go shopping. It is a large part



of staying current and getting information out in a timely manner.

Blogging is another great tool for the Golf Course Superintendent to reach many people and inform them about your work on the golf course. A blog can also be used as a journal to document your projects over time and be a good reminder to golfers that have a tough time remembering what the course looked like last season or last week for that matter.

Increasing your visibility and helping people understand that taking care of a golf course requires much more input than mowing, fertilising and watering and can become an awakening to those critical members.

If you give them a little insight into what you are doing to take care of an issue or even show them all the other things that are taking place on the golf course, maybe they might understand the function of the bush on the fairway of the third hole that they wanted removed after hitting the other day.

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Starting a blog is as easy as getting a new email. I use Google Blogger, some use Word Press. I find that Blogger is easier if you don't have more advanced technical skills. Once you sign up with a blogging engine you will find that posting on the blog is as easy as sending an email.

I recommend that once you set up your blog get a few posts onto the blog before you open it up to the public.

This will give you some content to keep people interested for a little while until you get into a routine of posting and take some pressure off needing to post right away after you just opened your account.

Nest month I'll look at blogging in more detail with tips for content for your blog and I'll explore the world of Twitter.

## about the author

Justin Ruiz CGCS MG is Golf Course Superintendent at the Indian Summer Golf and Country Club in the US state of Washington. He runs a detailed blog on work on his course at <http://indiansummerglasspot.co.uk/> and has won awards for previous articles looking at social media.

The views expressed within this column are not necessarily those of Greenkeeper International