

Director's Column



Overcoming Language Barriers in Staff Management

by Bruce R. Williams, CGCS
Bob O'Link Golf Club

There is a definite trend in the labor market for golf courses in the major metropolitan areas of the United States. The majority of our seasonal employees are Hispanic and speak little or no English. It is obvious that this has created a difficult situation for many of us in golf course management.

Good communication is a key to any successful golf course operation. Even with the best staff it is nearly impossible to reach our desired objectives if we cannot communicate our instructions to our employees. We send a message to our employees in oral or written form and the manner in which they perceive this message provides the line of communication. Most people have a problem communicating effectively in one language without a secondary language.

A perfect example might be to ask a staff member to cut down the first tree at the fourth tee. A mis-communication might result in having the fourth tree cut down at the first tee. It is easy enough for this to happen without a language barrier. Imagine the consequences when sending this message to a person that does not comprehend your language.

Let us look at several ways to overcome potential problems created by a language barrier. The best possible situation would be to have a bilingual staff. This may be a difficult task but not an impossible one. Provide an avenue for Hispanic employees to learn English. There are a number of cassette tapes available for learning English as a second language. A cassette player and a set of tapes are well worth the investment to improve communication. Many high schools and community colleges offer courses in English as a second language. It would also be advisable for all supervisors to learn Spanish. This would eliminate the need for translators. It would also eliminate the old saying "those instructions lost a little bit in the translation".

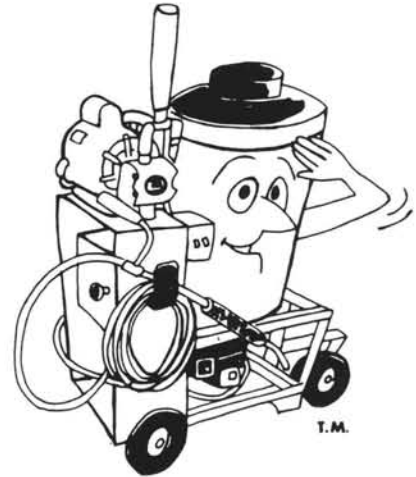
A good start to improve communications would be the use of a bilingual dictionary. The pocket versions will suffice. For those people that are on the forefront of technology there are now pocket translators (about the size of a calculator) that will display a word or phrase in Spanish when you enter the phrase in English. In the future we should see pocket translators with an audio response.

Language barriers present a problem in effectively training employees. Video cassettes are now available to educate your employees in either Spanish or English. GCSAA offers a video

(cont'd. on page 4)

hotsy®

The Hot Water Cleaner For Heavy Duty Jobs



© 1976
THE HOTSY CORPORATION

Hotsy will save you time and money:

Dirt can cripple equipment performance. Hotsy removes industrial grime faster and more economically than steam cleaners can.

Hand-cleaning is a tedious time-waster. Hotsy saves employee time and reduces down time on heavy machinery.

***Clean Equipment Runs Better Longer
Let us Clean Something Dirty For You***

● **CALL FOR A FREE DEMONSTRATION** ●

hotsy of Chicago, Inc.

SALES/SERVICE/RENTALS

90 Models • 200 to 15,000 PSI

893-0777

**25 SOUTH PARK STREET
ROSELLE, ILLINOIS**

Executive Blend BLUEGRASS SOD

THE BLEND—Combination of 5 disease resistant cultivars chosen on the basis of adaptability to a variety of growing conditions.

SOIL TYPE—820 irrigated acres of sandy loam mineral soil.

ROOTING—Rapid establishment in any soil type with less water.

SERVICE—On-Time—Radio Dispatched—Forklift Delivery.

PENNCROSS CREEPING BENT SOD | 75% Sand Base



Quality Supplier of
Seed, Fertilizer,
Chemicals, and
Equipment.

HUBER RANCH SOD NURSERY

Schneider, IN 219/552-0552

- IN 800-553-0552
- IL 800-553-0554

(Director's Column)

entitled "Safe Handling of Pesticides". The Idea Bank in Tempe, Arizona has videos entitled "Applicator's Guide to Pesticide Safety" and "Elements of Pruning". GCSAA member Eugene Stoddard has produced two videos in Spanish entitled "Operating the Toro GM3" and "Cup Changing". His company is Video Training, Inc., 1881 Jeffrey Ave., Escondido, CA.

While we have dealt with long term solutions to overcoming a language barrier there may be a few bits of advice that could be of use immediately. Establish a Personnel Policy Manual and have it translated into Spanish. This will enable management and labor to use the same set of ground rules. Use written instructions when handing out job assignments. It will minimize miscommunication and you should no longer hear "I thought you said". Our Assistant Superintendent, Rick Bowden, writes up the daily work assignments on a blackboard and changes them as necessary. A map of the golf course is also helpful to show employees their assigned work areas.

The Grounds Department at Bob O'Link Golf Club is currently comprised of 4 Americans and 12 Hispanics. We are not alone in this trend in the Chicago area. I couldn't ask for a better staff of hard working and dependable men. Language barriers do present some problems but they are not insurmountable. The golf course superintendent now has a number of resources at his disposal to help the situation. Communication is the key to succeeding in our business today. A well-trained staff can give you optimal results with proper communication.

LESCO ELITE Fertilizers



A complete new line of small-particle sulfur-coated urea fertilizers specially designed for low-cut turf.

ORDER NOW

LESCO

LESCO, Inc. • 20005 Lake Road • Rocky River, OH 44116
Cleveland 333-9250

(800) 321-5325
NATIONWIDE

(800) 362-7413
IN OHIO

What Every Good Turf Manager Needs to Know About Soil Testing

by S. J. Donohue
Virginia Tech University

A healthy vigorous turf is a primary goal of every good turf manager. One of the most important management practices for establishing and maintaining a vigorous turf is soil testing.

There are several reasons for testing soil. First, soil testing assists in determining fertilizer needs, by indicating both how much fertilizer is needed and what kind of fertilizer to apply. Second, soil testing tells us how much lime is needed to correct soil acidity, as well as what kind of limestone to apply (e.g., dolomitic, calcitic, regular agricultural lime). Third, soil testing helps to detect potential minor element needs, both directly, through minor element testing, and indirectly through the soil pH test. Fourth, soil testing assists in identifying causes of poor turf growth. If the problem is one of poor plant nutrition, the soil test will help indicate this. In some cases, factors other than inadequate plant nutrition such as disease, insects, etc. are responsible for the poor plant growth. However, a soil test in this case will help eliminate nutrition as the cause of the poor growth, thereby narrowing down the real cause of the problem. Fifth, soil testing enables one to utilize research in turf production. Researchers have developed a considerable amount of information on turf growth and management. Soil test recommendations are based on these research findings. Therefore, one can utilize this research in turf production through soil testing. Sixth, soil testing helps to protect your investment. When one

(cont'd. on page 9)