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## “People, Who Needs Them?”

by Ken Shepherd  
Wedgewood Golf Course

Recently, one afternoon I was venting some frustration by pounding my head against my desk, when suddenly I remembered Fred Opperman saying he needed some articles for the **Bull Sheet**. After regaining consciousness, I figured a more practical way to vent my frustration would be to write an article in the **Bull Sheet**. I also figured that if Fred would publish a friend's article titled “Don't Read This” in the January **Bull Sheet**, then I'm a shoe-in to be published.

But seriously, the source of my frustration is one all too familiar to many superintendents, employee turnover. Being realistic, I realize we'll always have some employee turnover, but what's hard to swallow is continually losing key employees who you've invested a lot of time and money training. The head banging begins after you very carefully explain to the boss how vital to your programs this key employee is, and that you'd like to give him a fifty cent raise for a job well done. After seeing the look on the boss's face, I begin to wonder, “Did I say something wrong, or did I speak a foreign language when I asked for the fifty cents?” Even more amazing is how cooperative upper management can be when the superintendent requests thousands of dollars to upgrade programs, or to do a capital improvement project on the course. But when it's time to compensate that key employee or employees, for carrying out the upgraded program, there's no money to be found.

Below I've listed some of the advantages of retaining experienced employees.

- less time retraining, new employees require supervision to follow behind to make sure the job is done right.
- continuity, the experienced employee knows the programs and what's expected of him, he also knows the goals that have been set.
- self-starting, the experienced employee doesn't have to have his hand held, he's a self starter and can make decisions out in the field.
- safety, the experienced employee is able to operate many types of equipment, is able to apply fertilizers and pesticides, and when digging an irrigation leak he knows to check for wire locations first.

The list could go on and on, but I guess what I'm trying to say is that People are one of our most important resources in an industry that caters to the golfing public. It's hard to have a quality golf course without good turf maintenance programs, and it's just as hard to carry out those programs if we don't have good people that we can rely on.

OK, now that I've said my peace, I just found fifty cents on my floor and I've gotta go get something to drink to soothe this pounding headache I've got.

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**What tree contains all the vowels, A-E-I-O-U, but not in that order? Answer will be on page 24.**