



The Character of Leadership

After reading over president's messages I had previously written, I have decided to revisit a subject I first discussed back in April. My message that month was about change and handling change in a positive way. In that message, I asked you to question, how have I adapted to change during this past season? I undertook this recently and was a little surprised by my own answer . . . maybe because it is towards the end of the season and fatigue has set in, or I am constantly frustrated by my golf game, or the Cubs still have not won the World Series. Nonetheless, I do not have any good reason to be cantankerous. I recently took some comments made by longstanding MAGCS members in a negative way. I justified my decisions to myself and did not consider the comments seriously, dismissing them on the rationale that it is impossible to please everyone all the time. Although this is probably true, I should have dissected the comments and evaluated them on character.

The MAGCS Board of Directors has instituted many changes over the past few years. I feel that we have executed very good decisions because our character has been in order. The changes that have occurred in every situation have been made in the best interests of you, the members.

“Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without the strategy.”—General H. Norman Schwarzkopf

Character is defined by a person's core values. These are values one should strive to live by continuously, day in and day out. One should do a checklist on these core values routinely. I have five that I have taught my children and try to abide by. I list them in no particular order, because I feel they all have equal importance.

The first is **integrity**. Webster defines it as uprightness, soundness of character, a moral wholeness. Integrity is really the glue that holds all the other values in place. Next would be **honesty**, the quality of being truthful. If honesty does not exist, everything else is tainted and should be held without trust. The core value that I think is most frequently absent in people of this generation is **loyalty**. To be faithful, and feel a sense of duty, is how we define “loyal.” Maybe the concept is a bit outdated in this corporate world, and that is an example of change in and of itself. I would prefer to think otherwise, but I fully understand the reasons for job relocation and personnel changes. Hand in hand with loyalty is **pride**. Again referring to the dictionary, “pride” means to have feelings of esteem for one's own qualities or achievements. Personally, I don't feel any industry outside of ours could hold a candle to the amount of pride displayed every day on our golf courses. The last value I will list—and

(continued on page 34)

members. Some 68% of respondents were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the hospitality room (21.8% had never attended). “Best in the nation! Way to go!” enthused one respondent. “Members and especially the Board should mingle and make others that don’t attend so often feel welcome,” commented another. “Nice job, guys! Keep up the great work!” said another respondent. “Have it at a restaurant/bar—rent the place,” suggested one respondent.

The hospitality room is an expensive undertaking, sponsored jointly by the MAGCS and generous vendors. Regarding what percentage of the hospitality room’s cost the MAGCS should absorb, 12.9% of respondents said 1-10%, 15.3% answered 21-30% and 8.6% answered 91%+. A substantial 42.3% said the MAGCS should support 41-50% of the expense.

Dues Structure


Nearly 82% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the current MAGCS Board of Directors

(17.2% had no opinion), while 86.1% felt that the MAGCS adequately served their needs (9.3% had no opinion). A substantial 67% said they would support a dues increase if it were necessary for the Midwest to continue operating at current standards; however, nearly 20% said they would not support such an increase (13% had no opinion). “How much [of an increase]?” wondered one respondent. “I would have a hard time selling an increase to my board,” commented another.

Regarding how often the MAGCS should analyze its costs and dues structure, a majority of respondents, 68.4%, answered “every three years.” Nearly 29% felt that every year was valid. Some 22.6% had no opinion. Said one respondent, “We all know from preparing our own budgets that there are cost increases every year. Build in some kind of long-term annual increases to compensate!” Commented another respondent, “Continual evaluation of the chapter’s expenses will allow for

annual evaluation of current revenue from dues.”

On Course

Some 90% of respondents expressed that they were very satisfied (65.8%) or somewhat satisfied (24.2%) with the current format of *On Course*. “Newsworthy and informative,” commented one respondent. Said another, “The 30-day deadline is too long; articles in summer are not timely. The flashy style as compared with the old *Bull Sheet* appears to be cosmetic.” The opinion of another respondent: “I don’t like the continuation of the articles to the back pages. I would like the articles to go from one page to the next.” (As a monthly publication, *On Course* already adheres to an extremely tight production cycle, but we are always striving to be more timely. Continuation of articles is often a layout necessity AND has the added benefit of allowing us to intermingle editorial and advertising content—our loyal advertisers support the production costs of this magazine.) 

On Course With the President (continued from page 2)

contrary to what I previously stated, it might be the most important—is **respect**. We all know what respect means, but it is the one value that grows upon itself. There is no doubt that to earn respect from others you must first respect those around you. I do not take these five words lightly; I find if I constantly remind myself of who I want to be, it is readily obtainable.

I know I can rely on my crew to a man. I count on their loyalty, pride and respect daily. This did not occur overnight; it took, and still requires, leading by example and showing respect in return to them and their families. I admire the work and family ethics of my grounds crew and find it disturbing to notice a lack of these values in individuals who have been given many more

opportunities than they might have received. I have brought up this question of our character because we need this foundation to build strong communication. And yes, strong communication is essential for change to occur.

The MAGCS Board of Directors has instituted many changes over the past few years. I feel that we have executed very good decisions because our character has been in order. The changes that have occurred in every situation have been made in the best interests of you, the members. I am always available to answer questions, field concerns or listen to criticism. Keep in mind that I will evaluate my character and would like you to do the same. I have enjoyed working

with the MAGCS Board during these past eight years. I can assure you that I, like the rest of the Board of Directors, am here to improve and contribute to the betterment of our Association. There are no hidden agendas, only the desire to do a good job, a job to take pride in. Serving can be a very thankless task at times, but it is one we choose to do—with integrity and honesty, showing loyalty to the Association’s heritage and respect for its future. So, how did I handle change this year? I think quite well, and I hope you all agree. If indeed the words of one of my boyhood heroes are true, and “nice guys finish last,” then I say to you, Leo: I don’t mind if I finish last. God bless. 