



Kansas Connection

As the rains fell in Chicago on a stormy Wednesday night, I sat and sat at KCI awaiting the flight home from my recent visit to GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence. The purpose for my visit was to take part in the 2004 Chapter Relations Committee meeting. I was grateful to have the opportunity to represent my new side of the fence as the appointed chapter executive liaison to the committee. I am the only non-golf course superintendent member on the committee.

The [new GCSAA] assessment tool is an “instrument designed to guide chapter leaders through the process of examining association operations, services, programs and activities against the competencies for success.”

Many topics came under discussion as we worked our way through the agenda for the day-and-a-half meeting. One item that we reviewed closely was a newly developed chapter assessment tool. It is a tool in the defined sense. It is a document and can become an important catalyst if used as it is intended. Let me explain. The assessment tool is an “instrument designed to guide chapter leaders through the process of examining association operations, services, programs and activities against the competencies for success.” In non-association management lingo, the chapter assessment tool is a list of questions that our chapter answers. Based upon our answers, goals may then be carefully developed for the chapter.

Chapters gain many direct benefits from completing the tool and implementing the findings into a strategic planning process. Some of these benefits include better approaches to:

- Training new Board members about the organization, structure and operation of the chapter.
- Aiding in the transitions between committee chairs and ensuring continuity exists from Board turnover.
- Uniting goals of all committees throughout the Board.
- Focusing on the needs, benefits and value of membership.
- Improving, creating and driving different processes. (e.g., our Web site, our profile as viewed from the outside, media and public relations).
- Focusing energies on what matters most to *our* chapter.

The last bullet above is of paramount importance when we develop this tool. The assessment tool is designed for completion from the input of the individual member. The individual is the main focus of our chapter. Certainly, the individual member’s needs and the ability of the chapter to meet those needs, is what the assessment tool truly measures. The first step to implementing this tool is to commit to completing the process. The second step involves the membership. The Board must engage with individual members to gather input and provide feedback to accurately complete the questionnaire. The assessment tool’s validity depends on the amount of honesty and integrity placed into it by our members. It’s against our nature to admit our weakness or faults; however, to make this tool valuable, we need to be honest.

I plan to present this tool to our Board at the June BOD meeting and will develop a strategic planning meeting for this fall. I am excited to implement this tool for our membership. I look forward to the questions that it will raise, and I look forward to implementing plans and actions for the chapter. The process of completing the assessment tool will start with our Board. The assessment tool is divided into many sections, or competencies. They include:

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- Membership
- Association Operations
- Leadership/Volunteer Management and Development
- Communication
- Professional Development
- Promoting the Profession/Industry
- Advocacy
- Non-dues Revenue
- Environmental Stewardship
- Research

With input from our membership, each Board member will be responsible for completing a section or two. Results will be compiled into one document and the first phase of the assessment tool will be complete. The second phase will be assessing the assessment tool. From the input gathered, a strategic plan can be developed for the whole chapter.

This assessment tool was designed and put together by a group of individual superintendents dedicated to improving the effectiveness of the chapter. They quickly realized that not all chapters are the same, just as all golf courses are unique. Because

many parameters define success, it is very difficult to compare one golf course to another. It is also difficult to measure chapter versus chapter, and this is certainly not the intention of this project. The objective is to measure the ability of each individual chapter to meet the needs of its own members. One of the most satisfying results of success occurs when an individual comes away from a golf course with an appreciation for the work and efforts that have been completed solely for the golfer's enjoyment. Certainly, opportunity for such success is what the chapter should provide for every member.



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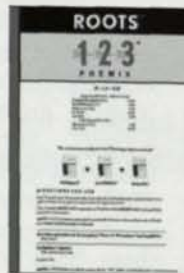


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