

What Is Leadership?

Editor's Note: Warmest thanks to Bob Williams for initiating this column. Bob is now passing the torch to a group of MAGCS senior superintendents, who will author this column on a rotating basis. Look for it bimonthly in On Course.

Early in my career I learned from some great mentors. There was Dr. Ken Payne at Michigan State University, Bob Williams at Bob O'Link Golf Club and Bruce Sering at Glen View Club. All of these fellows were great leaders and I learned much from their leadership styles. It was evident that they had the skills to steer the ship in the right direction.

Five Skills of Effective Leaders

• **Communication**

Great leaders communicate their position well. All those around them know where they are coming from. You cannot over-communicate. Keep all those around you informed.

• **Interviewing**

Great leaders surround themselves with great people. They know how to ask the right questions and do the right background work to assemble a successful team.

• **Observation**

This area of leadership would include being a superb listener. Listen to what the golfers, staff, industry, etc. have to say. You need to observe not only by listening but also by watching. Be visible on your golf course. Find people doing something right and let them know it.

• **Negotiating**

Understand how to negotiate win-win situations. Work toward compromise when solving problems. Pick your battles; don't win the battle and lose the war.

• **Sharing Recognition**

Finally, sharing rewards and recognition with peers and staff is a hallmark of leadership. Celebrate successes! You wouldn't be successful without those who surround you. Let them know how important is the role they play.

Great leaders share the common thread of being able to visualize and create a vision for the future. They communicate that vision to those around them. They are very capable

of making good decisions and giving appropriate directions. They do the right things. They realize that those around them have contributed to their success and recognize them accordingly.

When we think of leaders, it is easy to come up with names of coaches, CEOs and elected representatives. However, we must remember

that each and every one of us is a leader in our own right. We lead our own teams (staff). All of the aforementioned skills are important to each and every superintendent. It may be true that these skills don't come easy to all, but they will come if you work at them!



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