

DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

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Your Opportunity for 2009

Happy New Year to each and every member of MAGCS.

Everyone that I have encountered this past month has shared the similar thought about the economy, golf course management, and the golf industry in whole – and that is we don't know what to expect in 2009. Some thought things would change once the presidential (national, not MAGCS) election was over, some feel things will begin to turn once the new administration is in place, and still others believe that it might take longer given the depth to which all turn downs have been connected. My question to you is when did we ever know what was going to happen?

The problem right now is that the "outlook" doesn't look so great, so our thought about the future turns into worry. We begin to fear what is ahead and this can overshadow our entire thought process. Is it possible to have a positive outlook right now or is the best to prepare a somber future?

How many times do you find yourself thinking about how crappy things could become when you hear about the stock markets, the housing industry, and the "big three"? It gets dire quick. Then you attend a budget meeting and all you hear is cut, save, reduce, layoff, do we really need, etc...

It is difficult to keep yourself motivated and positive in this environment. You might walk away from these news events or meetings realizing there is not much you can do about the economy, and that might be true on a grand scale, but there are things that you can do to stay positive in your life:

- Realize you are not alone, both personally and professionally.
- Utilize your associations. (MAGCS was founded on the principle of sharing information and knowledge for the betterment of our profession. This living core principle separates the super-intendent profession from most industries in our society today.)
- Find out from fellow members what they are doing through association activities and services to cope with the issues they face.
- Use the most important asset MAGCS possess, its members.
- It is easy to get down; however, as a leader at your facility, you must stay positive.

I offer a few ways to stay positive and weather this storm:

- Lead your staff and motivate them to stay positive no matter what happens (layoffs, reduced OT, etc.).

- Make good hires when the season rolls around.
- Treat your staff well. They may be impacted more severely than you.
- Encourage your staff to come up with new and better ways to accomplish their jobs. You might be surprised when you ask for their ideas and input.
- Increase your value to your employer by making yourself indispensable. Be a leader at your facility and come up with ways to save and cut back while staying positive.
- Stay focused on the short-range goals. Plan for the future but don't let it overwhelm you. Take care of the tasks at hand and do them well. Don't give up because you think "it won't make a difference in the future."
- Assess what you really need. Take care of those things and prioritize items and processes that can wait. Plan to accomplish less pertinent tasks in the future.
- Have you been asked to "do more with less?" This can be accomplished but only for the short term. It can quickly lead to "doing more mediocre with less enthusiasm." How about just "do the best you can with what you have." This process lasts much longer and everyone feels much better about their accomplishments.
- Plan to survive and succeed.
- Realize what you have got, be thankful for it, and take care of it.
- Help others. Share your success (and failures) with those around you. (This is where MAGCS comes in – attend a meeting, utilize our online forum, call a fellow member, network, and share.)

Economies have been set back before; even when there seems to be no end in sight, realize that cycles are part of the economy. I encourage each of you to be a fighter. Put things in perspective in your life. Good times come and go, and when they go, bad times can take their place. It is the cycle of life. Tough times provide an opportunity for us to develop courage, fight, and survive. We admire and are attracted to those who are able to shrug off discouragement, stay focused, and enjoy life in good times and in bad. Be one of those people that we all admire. **-OC**