

FEATURE ARTICLE I
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An Industry Related “Modern Marvel”



In today's world of technological advances few things seem unbelievable anymore. The bridge that could not be built, the building that could not be erected, or the disease that could not be cured become possible with today's technology. Who would have imagined that man-made islands could have been created, let alone populated the instant they are finished, as is the case in Dubai. Television shows such as Modern Marvels give us an inside look at these fantastic feats and help us understand the intricacies of the things that exist around us. Just what are the many by-products of corn? How many tons can the World's largest dump truck carry? What makes the largest airports in the world function? These are questions most people don't normally think about, but once someone tells us about it we become fascinated and want to learn more.

Every time I travel through an airport I am amazed at the logistics necessary to insure that thousands of travelers arrive at their destination each day. To know that you can book a flight months in advance, fly across the world, and arrive on time is simply amazing. I get a similar sense of amazement every time I step into the host convention center at the annual Golf Industry Show. I cannot help but think about the years of planning that have taken place behind the scenes to put on an industry show of this magnitude. I consider it one of our industry's “Modern Marvels.”

The very first Golf Course Superintendents Association annual meeting was in 1927 and the first trade show was in 1928. In 1943, 1944, and 1945 the show was suspended due to economic conditions and World War II. The show evolved into the Golf Industry Show in 2004. It now includes the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, the National Golf Course Owners Association, and the Club Managers Association of America as Presenting Partners. Participating Partners include the Golf Course Builders Association of America, the American Society of Golf Course Architects, and the National Golf Foundation.



Planning for the Golf Industry Show never really ends. Of the 105 GCSAA staff members, approximately 90 come together to manage and conduct the show each year. Although man hours would be hard to compute, from a staffing perspective there are about five people who spend 50 percent of their time on the show. Additionally, there is staffing from the National Golf Course Owners Association and the Club Managers Association of America.

The Golf Industry Show is without a doubt the most important event that the industry conducts. It is the Super Bowl, Kentucky Derby, and Final Four combined.

GCSAA used to plan as far as 25 years out. Currently there are amendable contracts that go 15 years out. Contracts for hotels, convention centers, and golf courses are done as much as 10 years in advance. At any given time there are at least three shows being planned.

Immediately after one show ends, surveys are distributed and analyzed. Prospecting for clients for booth sales soon follows. Depending on the location, the number of vendors or exhibitors ranges from 825 to 950. Also dependent on location,

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the net revenue ranges from \$3.6 to \$4.5 million, which is reinvested into membership services.

Education is always being planned. Of the 25,000 who will attend the show, about 8,400 will arrive early the week of the show to take advantage of the numerous educational offerings. Walk the hallways of the convention center and you can't help but notice the class titles displayed outside the conference rooms, just as you see gate signs lining the hallways at the airport. On average there are 115 seminars on topics including agronomics, management, computer skills, and even language classes. If that is not enough, attendees can take advantage of another 50 hours of sessions, forums, and panels. Counting all the educational opportunities, GCSAA alone has approximately 300 people delivering information.

If the educational opportunities aren't enough, there is also the trade show floor. The floor ranges from 275-300,000 square feet. That equates to just shy of seven acres where the 825-950 vendors will set up shop for the week. They will show off their latest and greatest sprinkler heads, mowers, tractors, and other accessories. Generally it takes a window of five days for the vendors to move in and set up.

In total, the show uses 600,000 square feet of exhibition space or approximately 14 acres.

There are about 4,500 trade shows in the United States each year; the Golf Industry Show ranks 75th in size. There are very few cities that can host a convention of this size.

It is rare for a show of this size not to involve a large number of hired support staff. GCSAA and all the show organizers feel that having staff administer the show adds a personal touch.

Prior to the show itself, the most intense time is from early October until the show ends in February. Through the years of planning, each person involved knows his or her role in making such an event happen with minimal surprises.

So this year, if you haven't done it before, take a moment to realize how the buses pick you up on time each morning, how the conference rooms are filled with classes, how meals are offered by the thousands, and how countless pieces of equipment are on display to meet the needs of any one of the 25,000 people in attendance. It is well done by its organizers. It is amazing. It is a Modern Marvel. **-OC**

