

## MIDWEST BREEZES

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### “Superintendents List of New Year’s/Season’s Resolutions”

Another year has gone by. It’s time to reload and start a new one. What will this season bring us? Will it be another cool, moist, “easy” summer (I hope so)? Or, will it go back to days of yore (remember 1995) and be sweltering hot and funky humid?

It’s hard not to reflect back on all the successes and failures over the past golf season. We all spend part of our winter preparation time coming up with new programs and adjustments to our agronomic plans. How can I make my Golf Maintenance Operation better, more efficient? It’s time to come up with another of the Superintendent’s List of New Year’s Resolutions. In no particular order:

#### **Be Nicer to Staff**

Most of the people who work in the Golf Maintenance Industry are barely making a living wage. Yet, we expect them to perform at a high level, doing heavy, physical labor at the crack of dawn and in all kinds of weather. Yes, we still have high standards to uphold, because that’s what our golfers expect. And yes, we have to do more with less, because that’s the “new world economic order” of things. As my old Hoosier boss liked to say, “Chuck you can catch more flies with honey”.

#### **Raise Mowing Heights**

A few years ago, we all used to say to ourselves how low can we go and how frequently can we cut it? Now, the new economic mentality is how high can I get away with and what’s the least I need to cut it? It has been my experience that green, healthy grass is always preferred over the dead, brown variety. I still remember from Turf 101 that a higher leaf height will provide more root mass. This could be a good thing if the “sh#@ hits the fan.” Let’s face it; most players would prefer to sweep the ball instead of picking it.

#### **Communicate More**

Tell everybody around you what you are going to do, when you are going to do it, and how you are going to do it. Tell them with email, in person, tweet, blogs, memos, set up meetings, write news-letters, make phone calls, and/or text. Create a scenario of full transparency. Then do it.

#### **Set Up Course Easier**

As we know, most golfers are not as good as they think they are. There is a lot of LOFT (Lack of %#@ talent). Let’s make the game more fun and speed up play with easier hole locations,

keep the rough cut lower, slow greens down (just a little), widen fairways, cut trees down, and set up the courses shorter. If people have more fun, they might play more. This is good for golf.

#### **Play More Golf**

This is one of the reasons we all got in this business. You will see more of your course, or other courses. You might learn something. Take notes. Depending on your game, you might see places you would never think to look. You will get a much better look around and see the details of your course with a four-hour round than zipping around in your cart in a 30-minute lap. It’s a great place to conduct meetings about the course. It will build up your street cred.

#### **Be More Involved with the MAGCS**

Join a committee; it’s not too late (ask Luke). Give something back to the Association and the game. The people you work for might be impressed. It’s extra credit points.

#### **Be More Environmentally Friendly**

Turn off light switches, use power strips, recycle more, use more eco friendly products, switch out incandescent bulbs for fluorescents, encourage other staff to help out and be an example, plant native plants. Have an audit done on your irrigation system to improve efficiency. Improve overall operational efficiency and help keep costs down.

#### **Give More**

Contribute more to charities, churches, and other not-for-profit organizations. Give more time to your family and friends. The more you give, the more you get back. Pay it forward.

#### **Be More Patient**

Chill out, life’s short. Everyone has their own pace for accomplishing tasks. It’s just grass.

#### **Have More Fun**

The “fun meter” in this business went down a few years after 9/11, when we first started to do more with less. People come to golf courses for recreation and fun (I think). Let’s set the example. Make your guests feel more welcome. Customer service is extra important in a time when customer retention is the key to successful operations. Nothing says that more than a simple smile and wave.

There it is: something to think about. Let’s make it a great year. Good luck, and see you at the MAGCS Meetings. **-OC**