



The Future of *On Course*

Most people hate to do two things that are vital to successful organizations—volunteer and fill out surveys. Thankfully, MAGCS has a tremendous pool of willing volunteers and survey takers who make the Midwest what it is today.

This past Spring MAGCS members were asked to fill out a short anonymous online survey about *On Course* (OC). The survey was designed as a tool to measure the value of OC to our members and to help in the creation of a new sponsor package dubbed “Midwest Core Sponsors.”

MAGCS thanks all the members who took the time to complete the survey. Your feedback is greatly appreciated and allows for an open and honest look at operations and helps us make things better for the OC readership. The results have been tallied and can be found below.

Here's the Good Stuff

96.7% of you look forward to receiving OC each month and out of all those people, only one of you doesn't read it (I could insert an explicative about that one subhuman, but he or she would never see it).

22% of you read half of the magazine, 44% of you read three quarters of it and 30% of you read all of it.

The question that interested me most (from a publisher standpoint) was how much time passes before you read the magazine – 49% of you read it on the day of delivery and the rest read it within a week of receiving it. This tells me what I knew all along, but never was able to put it into words – our members like to read OC magazine because it is about people, places, problems and solutions that they know and understand. It's about us.

We asked the same question (how much time passes before the magazine is read) of other industry publications. All of them combined did not reach the same number of readers that read OC has on the day of delivery.

When it comes to advertising, 95% of you notice the advertising in OC. 68% of you said the advertising presence in the magazine will influence your decision to purchase products/goods/service. And 91% say there is a good balance between advertising and article content in OC. Several of you use OC

as a reference for finding new companies and it serves as a solid directory for locating products and information. Golf course are more comfortable doing new business with companies who advertise in OC.

We also tracked your favorite article to read, and to no surprise “Bull Sheet”, is still the favorite. Accolades to John Gurke, CGCS who has never failed to submit and put a smile on my face each month. Our feature articles were ranked number 2, thanks to all those that tap these out each month and provide the meat of the magazine.

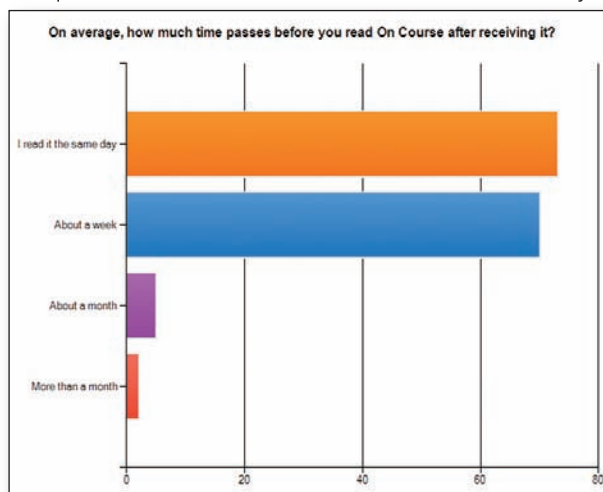
To Make Better

Survey results can be like discovering a piece of lettuce caught in your tooth and trying to remember who you've talked with since chomping down that Caesar salad during lunch. The problems have been there but no one has told you about them; hence, there is no fixing them. Here's the lettuce:

- Get the issue to us at the beginning of the month so that information is relevant to us.
- Cover more local issues in our industry.
- List the authors of the articles that are up for consideration in the Gerber and Opperman Awards – so recognition will be given to all contributors.
- Mail a week before the monthly meeting profile.
- More pictures of courses and projects around town – it is nice to see what is going on instead of just reading about it.
- Less droning on about meeting participation, etc.

There were a few comments associated with delivery – it being a little erratic each month. For those of you that don't know, we are now using a printer in Batavia, called BFC. We made the switch with our May 2010 issue and have worked out a few kinks since then with the publishing process. As always,

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our timeliness depends on getting material so we are able to edit, layout and print. The process from pieces - to proof - to print has been shortened but we still need content and we still need to get it done each month.

We are quickly approaching the winter months where Association activities begin to gear up. Many items gleaned from the survey will be used to direct the editorial committee as it meets and plans the future issues. Topics suggested for future articles include:

- What other courses are going through
- Facility type topics
- Superintendent experiences
- Science related information
- Course projects
- Practical applications, new ideas and innovations
- Business and budget advice
- CDGA and U of I research articles
- Unrelated to golf
- Construction topics
- Member biographies
- Golf course histories
- Environmental issues and stories
- Local news and time sensitive topics
- Maintenance standards and budgeting
- Reviews and uses of new chemicals and equipment
- Personal finance, writing wills and trusts
- Create an opinion section containing many viewpoints
- Recap of articles in other magazines, especially during the busy months of our year

Future of *On Course*

We surveyed you on the "Future of *On Course*", a topic that always seems to come up given the state of the publishing and print industry. 68% of you said you would read the magazine in a digital format and 59% said we should pursue options to print and distribute the magazine digitally beyond our current offering. The board has discussed this option (and will continue to visit this) but don't expect the printed version to go away anytime soon. If anything, this survey has shown in its current print form it is still a true value to all who receive and read it – and we only sent the survey out via email! *On Course* will be offered in print and electronically to satisfy all of our members.

Keeping it Up

Members value *On Course*. Our articles are authentic, written by members who know their topic and care to share their successes and failures with other professionals. Our articles are first rate. They are not written by professional writers who are paid to research a topic, but written by those in the trenches, living the life that their words describe. Our articles are first-run. If it is published in *On Course*, it was written for *On Course* with our member in mind. 45 of you said you are willing to contribute to *On Course*- see what I mean about the volunteer thing with MAGCS. You all rock! Look for a communication from Mike Mumper, our soon to be editorial chair for 2011. **-OC**



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