

## EDUCATION RECAP

Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Golf Course*



# Negotiating for Success

*The MAGCS Members met at Seven Bridges Golf Club with Don Ferreri hosting the January Meeting. Presenting an abbreviated version of their GCSAA Seminar: Negotiating for Success were Tommy Witt, CGCS: Director of Golf Operations for Northmoor Country Club and Bruce Williams, CGCS of Bruce Williams Consulting. Both gentlemen are MAGCS Members and former GCSAA Past Presidents. They have significant experience working at high profile clubs between them and shared their insights on this topic.*

Negotiating is defined as: discussing with others terms of business, political or diplomatic matters, to bring about a diplomatic matter, to bring about by mutual discussions. Negotiations occur all the time; we negotiate every day in our relationships with wives, children, employees, supervisors and vendors.

Bruce started out with, "You don't get what you deserve, you get what you negotiate. Ideally the goal is to create a win – win scenario." This occurs when the club and the superintendent walk away from the negotiating table happy. However, often times the Superintendent gets overlooked or over matched as a negotiator because of lack of experience in this type of discussion. Negotiating skills must be studied and learned. One can develop this skill by reading self-help books and attending seminars.

## Negotiating a Job Offer

The average tenure for a Superintendent at a facility is 7.5 years. The facts say you will negotiate a new contract in your career.

During the application and interview process it is very important to match the responsibilities of the job with the salary offer. One of the ongoing mantras of the day was "if you don't ask, you don't get". In most cases the golf course is the key asset of the organization. The golf course generates a wide range of revenues. You have to be aware of the opportunities that each club possesses.

Negotiating takes work behind the scenes, study the club or course. Who will be your boss? Is it the GM, Green Chairman, Golf Professional, Director? Find out personality traits about those individuals and gear your negotiation tactics to that individual. Often you are on your own during the process, be prepared.

In a new position, GCSAA Career Development data reveals that 60-70 % of GCSAA Superintendents accept the job as offered. However, by opening a discussion, the negotiating process can begin. First, one has to demonstrate a willingness to be able to prove himself. This can be accomplished by asking for an annual performance appraisal with built in incentives. When starting a new job, it is best to set yourself up for the future. What are you really worth? Let your skill, work ethic and knowledge of the job speak for itself by building upon an initial starting compensation package with incentives. GCSAA conducts annual salary surveys in which information on average salary and benefit information is available on a state-by-state basis. As a GCSAA Member, this information is available to you, use it.

Furthermore, it helps to identify objectives and priorities. Distinguish between your own personal wants and needs. In the principal of exchange each side will have to make concessions. Seek trade-offs to get what you want. Trade offs may include: A pre-negotiated bonus based on performance. Extra projects create extra value. Beating schedules and timelines can also increase value. What is the value of getting the course back to playing sooner than later?

Finishing under budget can also be incentive based. Identify opportunities that are realistic and attainable and work them into your compensation package.

## Benefits and Rewards

Benefits of working at a club can be of a cash or non cash basis.



*Tommy Witt led the day with some great information on negotiating.*

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Cash based compensation are things like: salary, bonus and deferred compensation. Non cash based compensation are things like: sick days, vacation, bereavement time, holidays, family leave, outing bonus, clothing allowance, facility use, education, spouse travel, no interest loans, education dues, vehicle and housing. Opportunities exist for insurance compensation. Disability, medical, dental, vision and dependent coverage are examples.

What's important to you? Is it large compensation? More security? The total benefit package? The "negotiating envelope" is what you pre-determine the level of compensation and benefits is going to be before you enter into the negotiation.

## Agenda

When beginning the negotiation, an agenda will help you cover all of the issues of concern to you. You have much to offer your employer.

List all your responsibilities and mention measurable criteria such as attitude, team player, within budget, safety record. Do not tie in your performance with subjective criteria or final year revenue for the overall operation. Speak in terms the employer is familiar with in his/her work place. Photos can be a great tool. Be patient, be prepared, be a good listener. Take notes. Be honest.

Persuaders give reasons, negotiators give concessions. Contracts or employment agreements protect both parties. It helps retain the services of a proven performer. Contracts are fact based and don't depend on "fairness". Contracts can help awkward transitions from Board to Board.

## Severance and Separation

Prepare for the inevitable. Some things are beyond your control. A new G.M., new President, new owner, bad weather, you make too much money, bad turf can happen at any time and are all reasons for separation. Be prepared for it.

The two times to negotiate severance is on the way in and on the way out. Don't sign anything until it is the final deal. It might be a good idea to consult a labor attorney if needed. It may be worth it.

Seek guidance from others. Analyze what's important to both sides. Is it money, benefits, reputation, transition, speed?

Channel your energy into moving forward. The employer is looking for a short process without turmoil.

A big thanks to Bruce and Tommy for their entertaining and informative presentation.

The second part of the education for the day was a presentation by a company called Golf/Life/Business. Yost and Rios, Digital Arts entrepreneurs have created a new business venture with a "digital interactive magazine" to help Clubs tell the story of their organization or Club efforts.

Their video magazine or social enterprise publication will be accessible by iPad, Twitter, Android, and Blackberry devices. Their goal is to combine golf, business, environmental awareness and help grow the game by catering to a youthful, often overlooked demographic. They want to create social enterprise partnerships with the MAGCS and their Member Clubs.

Yost and Rios presented a Case Study in which they worked with the Chi Chi Rodriguez Foundation. Yost and Rios filmed a short video at the Chi Chi Rodriguez Academy to represent what the Academy is all about and help get the message

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*Matt Yost, (l) and Andrew Rios (r) explained their ideas behind the new social media magazine "Golf Life Business".*

An advertisement for Club Car utility vehicles. It features a green and white utility vehicle parked in a dark setting. The text "Delivers brains and brawn." is written in a large, bold, serif font. Below this, the text "CAN A UTILITY VEHICLE REALLY DO THAT?" is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font.

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out about helping kids through golf. The film was a high quality, sharp production. It featured narration, interviews, sound bites and sharp images. It was very professionally done.

The video magazine concept uses stop motion gaming technology to make the magazine "come to life". It is very interactive, utilizing animation and tells stories that allow the user to interact with the magazine.

Their goal with the MAGCS is to use the social network to expand communication between the game of golf and our Members. They think there is tremendous opportunity to expand our golfing audience through this interactive social magazine. They see our side of the story as untold and very interesting today. Each course has a story to tell relaying the positive impacts we make as land managers. How we manage the environment in a responsible manner is the message we can place and control for the world to see.

Their method of promoting this concept is first film a video of your golf course and staff. They will follow whatever script you choose and help you promote your message. The video is sent back to your club and upon approval it will be posted online with links back to your club and across the Internet. They will track interactions or "hits" with people who view your video and help you with future posts that will draw attention to your story.

Yost and Rios will provide analytical breakdown of viewed video via search terms and geo track. The overall goal is to expand your audience and build a larger network for your course. Personal relationships can be created for long term benefits. More information can be found at [golflifebusiness.tv](http://golflifebusiness.tv). Or ask Luke. -OC



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