

The Gator Grows



By DAN L. HALL JR.
Imperial Golf Club

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Definition —

EMPLOYEE - n, a person employed by another for wages or salary. Webster's New World Dictionary 1980 Edition.

RELATIONS - n, Corrected in Webster's, there is no s as relation is plural.

Definition—the connection between persons, nations, companies, etc.

Our normal thoughts of relation involve those of mostly our blood-line relation or those who are brought into our families through birth, adoption, or marriage. Yet for many years throughout early America's business life, a relationship with those with whom we either worked with or for were never considered on a relationship level. By combining the two nouns into a complex descriptive phrase we have, in the post war eras of the past 75 years; probably the most significant relation-ship that any one of us has daily; outside of our individual families. Except for the Industrial Revolution of the 1800's, the American concept of employment relation has contributed more to the might and power of the United States than probably any other significant factor.

The move from the agrarian plebiscite to the urban plebiscite has been attributed to our capacity to produce wanted and needed items as well as their marketing. Our life styles have drastically changed with the larger population of this land now being employees rather than land-owner farmers surviving only on the family's ability to produce and market their products. First the textile mills, railroads and steel, the automotive business, then our technological products and lastly our nations return to our agricultural technology as our last primary saleable product has completed the circle within the last 125 years. None of which would have had the impact on the world without the employer — employee relationship so vital to success in any endeavor.

Over the years, breakdowns in this relationship led to the vast problems from which our successful unions came to power and now these same unions have drastically contributed to the reduction of our Gross National Product these past 25 years.

The modern successful business is now fully aware of the high place employees must hold to enable any business to succeed. Example, the employer — employee relationship in the business world of our former enemy, Japan. If any

business, including the golf business, desires to continue growth and pre-eminence in the recreation world, we could do no wrong by investigating the success of any post WW II business in Japan. Successful business is so because of its employees. If we, as golf business managers are to avoid the very significant threat of unionism and its problems we better sell our employers on not only ourselves as managers, but on the importance of those persons whom we manage that provide their wants in the clubhouse and on the golf course.

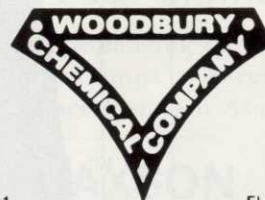
I've been in this golf industry all my 57 years and have worked and been worked under the worst and best of it. As a youngster drawing \$5.50 for a 70 hour week and no fringe benefits, to a manager paying average wages of \$5.50 to \$6.00 per hour plus \$1.17 per hour in fringe benefits. All this in just a little over 50 years. When I started, if

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you missed a day or were late two days in a row, even less than 5 minutes total, you were fired and there were ten men at the gate begging the boss for your job. I like to feel that I have helped to improve employee benefits at clubs I have been privileged to serve. They were among the very first clubs in the south and among the first in the nation to furnish employees such benefits as uniforms, vacations, incentive raises, employee anniversary pins, bonuses, sick leave, promotion from ranks, all forms of insurance, job security, and many other of the so-called fringes.

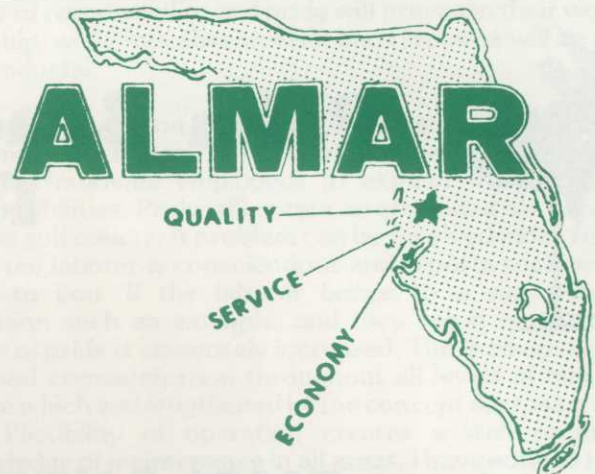
The golf facility not providing these and even some additional benefits that may now be unacceptable are in serious trouble. They are not only issuing a challenge to unionism but an open invitation for these unions to run rampant throughout the entire club from greens to kitchen to valets on the parking lot. Then they will give their employees these benefits or else they will close or fold as no successful club exists that I know of with the membership being both members and employees. We as old golf course managers must sell this to our employers in order to insure the club's need for us as managers.

Some benefits we might consider in the future in addition to those already mentioned are:

Employee golf privileges and later inter-club employee golf matches; other recreational endeavors could be bowling teams and leagues, soft ball teams in inter-club games, such as we now have here in Naples. Credit Unions; low cost rental housing available only to club employees; retirement programs, combined purchasing power of collective clubs for employees in furniture, appliances, and even autos, group vacations, special get togethers like picnics and the like.

Affairs like these will not only help to improve employee relation with management but also employee attitudes. Persons in similar fields like to be with each other and share mutual pride as well as mutual problems. Employee morale has to improve with such one on one contact. Therefore our golf courses will also improve. You may have a budget of over a million dollars, another million in equipment, and maybe 10 to 15 million in land or club appertinances, but without employees and caring employees at that all you could wind up with is a well known pasture.

It's time we consider the total value both now and in the future of our employees and how important they are to our personal success. My first lesson in employee relation was given me by my father on my first job as a Superintendent and I'll quote, "just remember son, when you must fire a person, one of two people has made a mistake, him for taking the position or you for hiring him." Examine the statement in its entirety and think about your last employee dismissal. Was he/she fully AWARE of the severity of the dismissal? More important, as the manager, did you make him/her AWARE of the full penalty of the violation? Therein lies the study of the essence of the quote; the AWARENESS of both the employee and the employer in the attaining of their mutual goals within their realms of responsibility, providing the very best in the end product. ■



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