

DIVOTS

by: John P. Hayden CGCS
San Jose Country Club



PREVENTATIVE PERSONNEL TURNOVER

Preventative maintenance on turf equipment has proven to be enviable in golf course operations. It is ironic that at times more is done for machines than for the men and women that operate them. High personnel turnover is as critical to the total golf course operations as would be poor maintenance of equipment. Where high turnover rates are the norm, constant retraining and orientation of jobs reduces productivity in man hours. This type of situation is directly related to the image of one's course and overall club operations.

Like preventative maintenance, preventative personnel turnover starts with some forethought from the golf course superintendent. Initially, prospective employees should be interviewed closely by the golf course superintendent. List of references and skills should be asked for and researched by the superintendent for their validity. If the superintendent finds the individual is suited for his golf course operation, it is up to the superintendent to utilize preventative personnel turnover.

A golf course superintendent should work to develop the respect of his personnel and their confidence in his abilities. This confidence can be coerced by:

1. Delegating responsibility to employees,
2. Developing of trust, and
3. By asking for employee input into the golf course operation.

Communication with the people you want to remain and work for you is essential. Don't be afraid of communication because there are many different ways one can go about it. Superintendents can communicate through the education of their employees, by explaining and demonstrating equipment or job task to be performed. Explain how the job of a simple cup placement is important from a maintenance view point and in relation to the game of golf itself. Be precise when explaining a job procedure and encourage input from the employee. Education takes time but one man in five years is better than five men in five years. Communication can be achieved through constructive criticism for a job well done or by pointing out a mistake and encouragement for better performance. No one likes constantly getting their "butt chewed out". If one has a capable assistant, use him as a means of communication

with your men to find out what area you may want to improve communication.

Nobody cares for a bad employee. A bad employee is someone you do not want to work with, and is someone who tends to drag down others' efforts. It is a supervisor's responsibility to monitor his employees efforts, and there is just cause, a bad employee should be reprimanded and/or discharged.

Supervisors have a great deal of emotional and mental control over their employees' lives. A prominent labor relations attorney expressed his feelings about supervisors and their control over people. He explained that even through an employee punches a time clock for 8 hours a day in reality, their work day is much longer.

Employees begin their waking hours with work on their mind. In fact, the whole purpose for getting up is to go to work. They work 8 hours, drive home and possibly recap some of the day's activities. Subsequent to arriving home, they may discuss the highlights of the day with their spouse or a friend. If it was a particularly bad day, or the boss criticized them, a discussion could ensue. Many employees lose sleep, have family problems and other related social stresses simply because of work related experiences. It is obvious that work encompasses more than 8 hours. It is, for most people, a menial commitment that occupies most of their waking hours.

Golf course superintendents must be people managers. We are not only an arm of upper management, but we are also the voice of our employees. We must know their needs and desires, and our employees must be assured that we are working toward these needs. It sometimes even becomes necessary to act quite firmly in our worker's behalf. If management does not know the importance of our employees' needs, then a good supervisor will bridge that gap between the workers and upper management.

Employee meetings are one of the best methods for information feedback. Planned and announced bi-weekly, or at a minimum monthly meetings, can provide the necessary link between course maintenance workers, the golf course superintendent and upper management.

(continued on page 50)

(continued from page 49)

The meetings should be held during working time and when all employees can be present. Meetings can be used for dissemination of information from management, updates of company policy, benefit and insurance information, training sessions and, most importantly, employee feedback.

It is very important to know how our employees feel about their work environment, management policies, ways to better improve maintenance methods and just generally have an opportunity to express their feelings. Don't get discouraged if the first few meetings are rather quiet on the part of employee feedback. After a few announced meetings, they will begin to plan for and expect meetings. It will then be easier to plan in advance what questions are of utmost concern to them. Feedback sessions give every employee an opportunity to be informed and feel like they are a part of the program.

You may be the boss but don't put yourself in the position of being unapproachable by your personnel. Try to relate in a personal way to your people that you are interested in them more than just time card punchers as a human being.

Support your crew image through positive statements to management and club members when applicable. No one can make a golf course operate by itself. Remind your crew that team effort and depending on each other will bring rewards. Never lower an employee's self esteem because of illiteracy. Educate, don't denunciate.

Preventative personnel turnover utilizes morale and motivational techniques. Activities such as golf after work when the club is closed, softball games with other maintenance crews and field trips to other courses can be used to educate, communicate, and instill progressive thinking in your employees. Attitude adjustment parties consisting of a cookout and some beverages gives an excellent opportunity to unwind at the end of a hectic season, tournament, etc.

One of the best forms of preventative personnel turnover is to supply the right working conditions. Barns are for lower chordate animal vertebrate, not human beings. A maintenance facility that offers crew quarters with proper restrooms, showers, heat and good lighting will help to insure performance in your personnel. As a superintendent has an office, give your personnel something they can call their own and take pride in and pride will show in your golf course.

Preventative personnel turnover employs a round universal rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." With golf course operations becoming more and more complex and intense, one needs to retain personnel that are familiar with golf course operations. High personnel turnover need not exist, it is up to the superintendent to insure against it.

Editors Note: We congratulate Eddie on his new position as Superintendent of Selva Marina C.C. and welcome John Freeburne, Assistant Superintendent, Timuquana C.C. as a new reporter for North Florida. ■

OUR GAME IS IMPROVING YOUR TURF



FERTILIZERS-CHEMICALS-FUMIGANTS

See your Superior Golf Course Specialist

LAMAR "SUNNY" SMITH Mobile: 305/832-0451 Unit 636	ED HAITHCOCK Mobile: 305/581-6123 Unit 2425	DARRYL REJKO 305/746-0667 305/747-3541
--	--	---

PLANTS IN TAMPA AND FT. PIERCE

Du Cor Du Cor Du Cor

Du Cor

TURF AND LAWN

MAINTENANCE PRODUCTS


Home of :

DOWN 'N THRU SOIL PENETRANT

EMERGENCY GREEN

TEAM WORK

LIME AID



Du Cor Chemical Corporation

P.O. Box 13298 · Orlando, Florida 32809

Phone (305) 859-4390

Du Cor Du Cor Du Cor