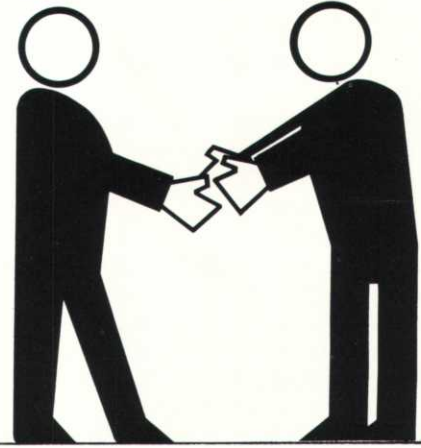


SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND



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Finding a good employee - ah, the elusive gem every golf course superintendent searches for and always hopes to find. The prompt, efficient, courteous, hard-working, sober, intelligent employee is the stuff which superintendent's dreams are made of. Those model employees ARE out there, and finding them is the first and often the most difficult step. The following are a few suggestions of where one might search.

1) NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENTS

Probably the most widely used method of attracting new employees. The benefits include having a specific target area so those seeing it live . . . say, within a half-hour's drive from work. Utilize the major newspaper classifieds, but don't forget about those smaller publications which go out to every residence free of charge. Many folks don't have time to read a weekday major paper so don't subscribe, or do so only on weekends. If your budget won't comfortably cover ALL papers in your area, cover as many of the freebie papers as you can and target a weekend day - preferably Sunday - to advertise in the major newspaper. Be specific in your wording. If you only hire people with prior experience, say so. Don't waste your time fielding calls from those without an inkling of what the job entails. The outfit my husband works for requires employees to have transportation. This hopefully insures they will show up every day. Of course, if an applicant with extensive experience and sterling references, who happened to ride the bus, applied, he/she would definitely be considered.

2) GOLF COURSE CURRICULUM SCHOOLS

Here you find a host of people who are already interested in the industry, and are, in most cases, required to complete an On The Job Training Program as part of their education. Generally these people can be used only during the summer months when school

is out, but here, too, there are exceptions. The course where my husband did his second-year on the job training was within commuting distance. Tim scheduled his third year classes so his Fridays were open and he could continue to work one full day and weekends on the course. He was a good bet for the superintendent, too; at the top of his class academically, and with two babies at home to feed, it was safe to assume he'd be there on time every day for his full eight hours.

3) WORD OF MOUTH

Keep the pipeline open to other superintendents. A good worker may choose to switch courses for a variety of reasons, from family obligations to personal reasons. Say John Doe's wife gets a job 60 miles away and he's leaving you. You hate to lose him, but she's making twice the money he is and you obviously can't stand in his way. A superintendent in his new area is an acquaintance of yours. Offer to send your employee with a shining recommendation. What goes around comes around. Your crew may also know of other golf course people looking for employment.

4) HIGH SCHOOLS

From golf teams to guidance counselors, high schools offer a wealth of raw material to shape to your own specifications. Kids on the golf teams may want to work weekends during the school year to finance their expensive hobby . . . summer vacations give you three whole months to really let them get their feet wet and separate the men from the boys.

Guidance counselors deal with hundreds of graduating seniors each year. Granted, many kids go on to college. Use this to your advantage - drop off some brochures from the golf course curriculum colleges and let the kids know that this career is available to them. Hundreds of area kids won't opt for college,

but prefer to go right to work. Remember, these young people are used to getting up early for school and getting off at 3:30 in the afternoon. Perfect! Look to the athletes - young men and women who are in top physical condition from football, baseball, basketball, tennis, track, cross-country - sports that require dedicated sustained exertion, preferably in the great outdoors. (In Florida, this translates to "in the heat and humidity".) For those of you near rural areas, most farm kids drive a tractor before they can walk and spend their free time harvesting everything from hay to tomatoes. Give 'em the acid test - check their hands for callouses. (just kidding!) A decade ago, I myself sat in my high school guidance counselor's office, wondering what in the world I was going to DO with my life. Work in the golf course industry was never even whispered as a possibility, even though there were two courses in the area. In those glorious days of 6 B.C. (before children) I was as strong as the bull in the barn and used to getting up at 5 a.m. for chores. This former farm gal would have loved to watch the sun rise while working on a beautiful golf course. But it was never mentioned, therefore never pursued. There is such a wealth of healthy young people out there - let's not overlook them.

5) JOB SERVICE OF FLORIDA

John Doe's brother, Jack, is among the 900-plus people that moved to Florida yesterday. He has ex-

perience in the industry and a wife and three kids in a hotel room. Finding an apartment is his first priority, and while he's out looking, he passes the Job Service of Florida office. It's on his "things to do" list. He swings in, fills out his papers, is given your course's name and address, and by 4 p.m. you have a new employee. Jack didn't have time to search the classifieds and go off looking for golf courses in a strange area, and has to replenish those savings he just spent on that apartment. Because you registered your opening with the state and not some lesser-known agency, you just got yourself a good employee. How clever of you, Mr. Superintendent! You describe what you want, and the employment counselors sift thru all possible employees looking for that experienced person for you. You just saved yourself a lot of time and hassles. Of course, there are no guarantees - but there never are, are there? Don't arbitrarily close a door because Joe Blow at Course "B" didn't have good luck with a referral. One added bonus: some radio and television stations run Job Service openings as part of their Public Service announcements, and are heard and seen by many potential employees.

6) EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

Another possibility. We don't want to malign these places - some are quite good at what they do. It's the fly-by-night operations that get all the bad press. At some agencies, the prospective employer pays a fee



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to register his job. At other agencies, the applicant pays a fee when he is hired at a job secured for him by the agency. The fees are often quite hefty. But one could get lucky. Just depends on how much you want to spend to find a good employee. Those hundreds of dollars would go a long way in newspaper advertising.

7) TURF MAGAZINE CLASSIFIED ADS

A long shot, I admit. But suppose the guy who works up on a golf course on the Great Lakes decides a warmer climate is a must - and chooses to secure employment before he makes the big move. He places a job-wanted ad in a turf magazine classified section. For the cost of a phone call you might get lucky. As obvious as it may sound, keep your eyes open.

8) RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

I'm not suggesting that you put elderly people on those torturous greens-mowers. I'm talking about the newly-retired man who is driving his poor wife absolutely nuts shadowing her every move, nothing constructive to occupy his time. We had the pleasure to meet one older gentleman in 1984 in the St. Petersburg area. Bud was positively delightful; a retiree, a gentleman in every way, with the muscles and stamina of three twenty-year olds. "Doing Nothing" after his retirement didn't sit well with him, and being an avid golfer, he started working on a golf course. Didn't really need the money - but the golfing privileges were valuable to this gentleman. I envied his seemingly limitless energy! Golf course laboring is definitely not for all members of the senior set, but when I think of Bud outshining so many other laborers I knew, I must recommend looking to the new retirees for employees. This is probably more overlooked than any other segment of our population - folks who have soooo much to contribute. My hat's off to Bud for opening my own ignorant eyes to the wealth available in the senior set. Please, please, PLEASE don't dismiss this ever expanding field of potential workers.

You all have had extensive experience in hiring new employees, running the gamut of success from abject failures to sterling winners. What I propose is to give more attention to the paranthesis of the working class . . . the young and the old. The younger people for their limitless energy, quick brains, and eagerness to MAKE IT in this world, and the older folks who aren't willing to be put out to pasture - who have so much to give with their experience, quiet determination, and mature dedication to the job at hand.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you the best of luck in your search for those good employees. They're out there! If you have an unusual way of finding a diamond-in-the-rough, or a unique success story you'd like to share with other superintendents, drop a line to THE FLORIDA GREEN. I leave the training and retaining to you experts, and only hope some of my suggestions lead to your finding that special employee you've been looking for.



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