

Human Resources

Maybe it's time you looked at your policies... after all, golf course employees are people, too

To paraphrase an oft-used quotation from Walt Disney, "You can build the finest golf course in the world with all the latest features and equipment, but it still takes *people* to make it work and come alive for our guests."

People, those imperfect biological units, bring their hopes, dreams, ingenuity, strengths, morals, ethics, humor, and problems to the workplace



The old ways can bomb in today's workplace

doorstep every day. As the person in charge, it is your responsibility to coach your employees by maximizing their strengths, minimizing their weaknesses, and in some cases even changing their behavior patterns.

From father confessor, educator, counselor and mentor to drill sergeant, judge and jury, you will wear many hats as you manage the human resources at your command. The following contributions by your fellow superintendents share some of the policies, procedures and wisdom they employ in dealing with that most challenging resource - the human being.

Some thoughts on attitude & evaluation from the Big Bend

"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts, it is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company... a church... a home.

"The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing

we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude.... I am convinced that life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it. And so it is with you...we are in charge of our attitudes." -Anonymous

"There are only two stimulants to one's best efforts — the fear of punishment, and the hope of reward. When neither is present, one can hardly hope that people will want to do a good job. When disappointment is not expressed that one hasn't done a better job, or when credit is withheld when one has done a good job, there is absolutely no incentive to put forth the best effort." -John Wilson

I found a good illustration in a *Calvin and Hobbes* comic strip of the kind of thinking that some members of my crew have when they receive their annual per-

formance evaluations when areas are marked "Meets expectations". The ratings are:

- 1 - Unacceptable
- 2 - Below expectations
- 3 - Meets expectations
- 4 - Exceeds expectations
- 5 - Outstanding

The comic strip went like this:

1st panel: Miss Wormwood, I protest this "C" grade! That's saying I only did an average job!

2nd panel: I got 75% of the answers correct, and in today's society, doing something 75% right is outstanding! If government and industry were 75% competent we'd be ecstatic!

3rd panel: I won't stand for this artificial standard of performance! I demand an "A" for this kind of work!

4th panel: I think it's really gross how she drinks Maalox straight from the bottle!"

Have you had your Maalox today?

Mike Osley

Hilaman Park Municipal
Big Bend Chapter

Recreation helps keep up employee morale all year

At Boca Lago Country Club, several events occur throughout the year to keep up employees' morale as well as getting the employees' families involved. Employee golf tournaments with a barbecue featuring hamburgers and hot dogs are held in the early summer and fall of each year.

Every July, the club puts on a summer picnic for the employees and their families. The event is held on a Monday when the club is closed and includes softball, volleyball and other outdoor activities. After a barbecue lunch, children's races are held on the driving range. It's great to see the parents cheering on the kids.

Although the club is quite busy in December, the board of directors hosts the annual Employee's Christmas Party in the clubhouse. Entertainment is provided by a musical group or a disc jockey. Spouses or significant others are invited for this party and enjoy an open bar and buffet dinner and dancing. Outside help is hired so all employees can attend and enjoy the evening. I think the staff has a great time at these functions and looks forward to these events every year.

David Court, CGCS

Boca Lago C.C.

Palm Beach Chapter

'My mother forgot to set my alarm' ... and other sad tales

The list of excuses by employees for absenteeism and tardiness could fill sev-

eral volumes. Just when you think you've heard them all, another great line is recorded on the seemingly endless list of excuses.

At Windsor Parke Golf Club in Jacksonville we have adopted a pain-and-gain policy toward problems with absenteeism and tardiness.

At the beginning of each month, each employee "slate" is cleared. If an employee is late to work, he or she is given an oral warning.

The second and third tardies within the 30-day period draw mandatory days (*those days!*) off without pay.

A fourth day late during the period is grounds for termination (this extreme has only been tested and used once during the past two years).

It has been our experience that our employees respond to the effects of the non-paid day off and their wallets are the way to their hearts so to speak.

Termination is rarely necessary due to tardiness.

The gain side of this policy comes at the end of the monthly pay period. Each person having not been late or absent for a scheduled work day during the month receives a paid half-day off the last Friday of that month.

The money involved in the half day off is not nearly as sweet as the Friday afternoon off — there's just something about Fridays!

The last Friday of the month has become a challenge for our staff and there's always a "bet" on who will make the grade!

We usually have 80 to 90 percent of our staff qualify monthly with this program and have found it effective in managing tardiness and absenteeism without all the excuses!

Kim Shine, CGCS

Windsor Parke G.C.

North Florida Chapter

Disney 'cast' gets OSHA orientation

All cast member new to the Walt Disney Company are given two days of

orientation called "Traditions". At that time they are given all OSHA requirements.

Upon entry into golf maintenance at Disney World, all cast members are shown the specific hazardous materials areas, MSDS locations, etc. They are required to read and sign the department Standard Operating Procedures Manual. The SOP covers the basic company objectives and outlines departmental policies from attendance to job descriptions for all the maintenance tasks.

New cast members are then given "hands on" training by Disney Trainers, foremen, or other experienced workers.

Attendance is probably the number-one shortcoming of employees. In our operation, there are five categories of attendance violations:

- 1) No call. No show.
- 2) Call in sick.
- 3) Call in absent (personal business).
- 4) Tardy.
- 5) Early release from shift.

Any combination of three of the above in a 30-day period, or five in 90 days can result in an oral reprimand entered into the employee's personnel file.

After three oral reprimands within six months, a written reprimand is in order. Additional incidents without significant improvement are grounds for review by Employee Relations and are possible grounds for termination.

Consistent documentation is a necessity.

While poor performance needs to be documented, good performance also needs to be recognized. We have a couple of awards for outstanding service:

1) **The Gold Dream Pin.** DREAM stands for Disney Resorts Experiences Are Magic. It is a monthly award nominated by hourly peers and voted on by former Gold Dream Pin winners. The winner receives a gift certificate and parking place of choice for a month.

2) **Greensmaster.** For golf maintenance staff. Nominated by management quarterly based on excellence of quality of work, quantity of work, efficiency, safety awareness, dependability, and attitude. The winner receives a plaque and

gift certificate presented by area manager/superintendent.

Pat Hennessey

Eagle Pines G.C.

Central Florida Chapter

Assistants do the hiring at World Woods of Golf

At World Woods, the superintendents have delegated the interviewing and hiring of potential new employees to the assistant superintendents. The theory here is that since the assistant will be dealing with the new employee on sometimes an hourly basis, that he/she should have the choice in whom to hire.

Before we became comfortable with our assistants' interview techniques, both Steve Hritsko and I were responsible for the process. We had our assistants witness how we interviewed prospective employees and we devised a standard list of questions to be asked during the interview.

The next step was to let our assistants run the interview in our presence. After about four or five interviews, we became comfortable with the interview skills of each assistant.

Since that time, our assistants have interviewed and hired all employees, with the exception of spray technicians, mechanics, and irrigation specialists. We still feel more comfortable with interviewing these types of key personnel, as we may be able to ask more particularly detailed, technical questions.

The Americans with Disabilities Act has made us revamp our list of questions that we used to ask prospective employees. Gone are such questions such as "Do you have any outstanding Worker's Compensation cases?" or "Do you have any back problems?"

We also will accept applications from those who have obvious impairments that could hamper job performance. If a person who is blind were to come in to ask if we were accepting applications for a spray technician position, we would answer yes and would accept the application.

The ADA has also changed the way we keep medical records for our employees. In the good old days, personnel and medical records were kept in one file. This is no longer legal. They must be kept separate.

This would include Worker's Compensation, as well as a doctor's note provided by an employee to return to work.

A key point in the ADA is to return the employee who has been injured on the job to the workplace as quickly as possible, even if the restriction would include light duty. Getting the employee back on the job obviously would keep lost income claims down.

I've heard people claim that "I have no light duty jobs on the golf course available." However, I believe that you can always find some type of light duty work (even if it's sitting on a chair and watching the grass grow!) that would allow the employee to come back on the payroll and off of the Worker's Comp claim.

This could limit the rise in Worker's Comp premiums.

World Woods Employment Interview Guidelines

• **Driver's license & social security card in hand?** Other forms of ID include: Voter's Registration Card, Birth Certificate, Florida-issued ID Card, Official Military ID, or Green Card. (Needed for I-9 form)

• **Worker's Compensation** — insurance carried by the workplace (required by law) that covers injuries incurred while on the clock. It is your responsibility (if you are hired) to report any injury regardless of how minor it may seem, to your supervisor immediately. He will start the paperwork trail to report the incident.

• **Transportation** — To & from work is a must for each employee.

• **Punctuality** — Never late, never miss a day!

• **Work Hours** — Monday through Friday, 7:00 to 3:30 or 4:00. Some weekend overtime, approximately 3-4 hours. Overtime is limited; however, some is available. Voluntary at first, then mandatory if enough don't volunteered. OT is anything over 40 hours and is calculated

at time and a half.

• **Type of Work** — Laborer position... Start at the bottom of the ladder. Walking greens mowing, weedeating, fly mowing, edging bunkers, fixing washouts. Basically, manual labor. Do you have any problems with this type of work?

• **If you show responsibility** (being here on time), doing the right job, quality and quantity, are not disruptive, etc... we will work you into more responsible jobs, such as triplex mowing, rough/trim, collar, possible fairway and rough mowing.

• **Pay** — Start at \$5.00/hour. After 90-day probationary period and a favorable evaluation, employee is entitled to up to \$.50/hour raise. Employee then will be evaluated on a yearly basis.

• **Pay Periods** — Approximately every 15 days — 24 pay periods per year, so two per month. More explained in orientation, including PTO (paid time off) system used at World Woods.

• **90-Day Probation** — Designed to protect the employer. Basically during the 90 day probation, the employer can terminate the worker with or without cause. Gives employer a chance legally, to evaluate you to see if you fit into our needs and plans.

After 90-day probationary period, employee will be evaluated on things such as attendance, work habits, skills, proficiency, safety record, attitude, etc... Possible raise awarded with status changed to permanent full-time worker. Employee would then be eligible for other benefits, i.e. paid life & health insurance, and accumulation of PTO time.

• **Check for references.** Are references up to date? Can we check those references stated on your employment application?

Bob Wagner

World Woods of Golf

Seven Rivers Chapter

Safety - is it extra work or part of your normal routine?

During the early years of The Planta-

tion Club, we were extremely busy with the golf course construction and landscaping activities for the entire development. Even though I knew the importance of safety, it seemed to be something that was hard to get a grasp on with the demanding deadlines that seemed to occur in all phases of our early development.

However, with the rising costs of Worker's Compensation insurance and numerous accidents that seemed to have a way of occurring in spite of all the training that you can provide, it was absolutely necessary to make safety a priority.

The process began by establishing a safety statement and writing out a safety policy. In reality, the policy is nothing more than simple do's and don'ts in written form.

It also began by creating safety awareness, not only with myself but also with the other department heads; e.g. assistant golf course superintendent, irrigation specialist, landscape superintendent, head mechanic, and his shop foreman and the grounds maintenance manager.

After creating awareness and establishing a written safety statement and safety policy, we began to hold regular monthly safety meetings. We documented each meeting by having all parties present sign the attendance record which then went on file.

We also included safety regulations in our employment package which each new employee has to read and sign at the time of hire. Our safety program has not only made The Plantation Club a safer environment in which to work, but it also lowered our Worker's Compensation rates drastically.

Now that we have made safety a part of our work routine, it doesn't seem to be time consuming, an added job, or an inconvenience.

David Lowe

The Plantation at Ponte Vedra
North Florida Chapter

(Editor's Note: Dave included a copy of the Plantation Club's safety documents with his article. For those clubs that do not have a formal safety program, we are sharing them here to serve as possible

guidelines in establishing your own program.)

The Plantation At Ponte Vedra Grounds And Golf Maintenance Department Safety Statement

It is the policy of The Plantation Country Club to provide a safe and healthy work environment for the protection of our most vital resource — our employees. The safety program at The Plantation's Golf and Grounds Maintenance Departments contains the following components:

1. Appoint a Safety Director and post the Director's name in a visible location so that all employees shall have access.
2. Instruct supervisors/managers of their responsibilities in providing a safe workplace for all employees.
3. Provide new employees with a safety orientation which will consist of:
 - A) The OSHA Right-To-Know law.
 - B) Hazard Communication Standard
 - C) Location and understanding of MSDS.
 - D) Location of emergency eye wash and showers.
 - E) Location of the chemical room, gas pumps, fuel shed, first aid cabinet and irrigation pump station.
 - F) Instruction of use of radios and their location so that they can contact help in case of an emergency.
4. Hold regularly scheduled monthly safety meetings and document attendance.
5. Encourage open communication of all employees to provide a hazard free workplace.

Safety Policy

TO: All Employees
FROM: David Lowe, Department
Head Golf and Grounds Maintenance
SUBJECT: Safety Policy

It is the policy of the Company to provide a safe and healthy work environment for our most vital resource — our



Environmental Waterway Management... "Preserving Your Liquid Assets"

Golf Courses have Lakes, Ponds, Canals and Water Everywhere! Many of these water bodies are used for irrigation, fishing swimming, drainage or simply as hazards to the navigating Golfer on your course. If you allow Algae, Grasses and other noxious weeds to grow unchecked, they will rapidly take over your precious waterways. Don't allow your waterway problems to get you in over your head. Just call the experts at Environmental Waterway Management.



employees. The safety of employees is of the greatest interest to all levels of management and supervision, ranking in importance above production, quality, costs and service. Therefore, effective immediately, The Plantation Grounds and Golf Course Departments will hold regular monthly safety meetings. The date for these meetings will be posted next to the time clock prior to each meeting. All employees are required to attend.

The Company's basic philosophy is that almost all personal injuries can be prevented. Responsibility and safety is shared throughout the organization. For example, Department Heads are responsible for their departments, Supervisors are accountable for the safety of their groups, and all individuals are accountable for their own safety.

All employees, at every level, are expected to fully accept responsibility for their own safety and for the safety of those with whom they work. There is no place in this organization for an unsafe employee.

We, at The Plantation are a team. Communication is the key to successful teamwork. Communicate all hazards in your workplace to your supervisor or Safety Director. The Safety Director at Plantation Maintenance is David Lowe. The Plantation will allocate the necessary resources to assure a safe and healthy work environment.

**The Plantation Country Club
Golf And Grounds Maintenance
Safety Regulations**

The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Country Club is committed to safety and has taken steps to protect you from injury on the job.

Your compliance is vital for our own protection. Please observe the following rules at all time:

1. No employees shall be under the influence of alcohol or drugs on the job.
2. Report all job accidents the same day the accident happens.
3. Obtain authorization form your supervisor for all non-emergency treatments for accidents.
4. Wear seat belts at all times in company vehicle.
5. Keep the area and equipment where

you work clean and neat at all times.

6. Do not remove or bypass any guard on any machinery at any time.

7. Ask your supervisor when you need additional equipment or instructions to get the job done safely.

8. Lift with your legs, not your back, and get assistance with loads over 50 pounds.

9. Advise your supervisor of any hazardous conditions in your workplace/ equipment.

10. No smoking in any part of the maintenance facility, trailer, greenhouse, fuel shed or area around the fuel pumps.

11. Do not smoke while handling gasoline or fuel.

12. No one is allowed in the chemical room or irrigation pump station unless they are authorized or properly trained.

13. Excavation is to be done only under authority of a supervisor to avoid accidental contact with underground utilities.

14. You must not exceed the posted speed limits both on and off the property.

15. You must have a valid Florida drivers license before operating all company owned vehicles and this license must be with you at all times.

16. No headphones/radios will be allowed.

17. Follow all other written and spoken safety rules.

For any injuries that require emergency treatment, The Plantation country Club has the right to have the employee tested for the presence of drugs/alcohol.

Employees that do not obey safety rules will be reprimanded: the reprimand, verbal/written, will be recorded in the employee's file. Employees should know that reprimands can lead to termination of employment. The employee's safety record will be reviewed at the employee's annual evaluation and will be a consideration in the amount of compensation received.

Where injury is caused by the knowing refusal of the employee to use safety equipment or obey safety rules, the workers' compensation benefits can be reduced by 25 percent . . . (Florida Statute 440.09 (04).

I have read these regulations or have

had them read to me. I understand them and will obey them for my own benefit.

Employee Signature Date

Supervisor Signature Date

Safety Meeting Attendance Record

This is a simple sheet of paper or make your own form to include:

1. Date.
2. Safety subject of discussion.
3. Safety Instructor's name.
4. List of people attending. Printed name and signature.

Training is key to quality golf course maintenance

After years of waiting, the day finally arrived. It was the first day of turfgrass school at Penn State University.

Dr. J.M. Duich, the professor whom I had heard so much about, stood in front of the class of eager "turfers" and began the first day of our formal education by drawing a large circle on the chalkboard. On this circle he drew in a small "slice of pie" (about 15% of the circle). On this small portion of the circle Dr. Duich wrote the word "turf." On the remainder of the circle (about 85% of the circle) he wrote the word "people."

The group of eager students looked around the room at each other confused about what they had just been told. It only took a short time after graduation for many of us to realize how accurate this statement was. I will probably never forget that day and the "Duich Pie" theory.

As turf managers, a major key to our success is the people who work for us.

The quality of a golf course frequently will reflect the ability of the turf manager to attract and hire quality employees and then provide them with training to perform their duties correctly and in a productive manner.

A method of training that I have found extremely valuable is the use of VHS videos in the training of all my employees. However, the videos do not take away the need to provide hands-on training, frequent supervision and the opera-



Crew members at the Olde Florida Golf Club use video tapes

Photo by Darren Davis

tor reading the owner's manual.

The videos provide a thorough method of training that is both visual and audible.

How many times have you given instructions for a task to an employee and have the individual give you a blank stare and a head shake assuring you he understands, and then find out later he had no clue of what you were talking about?

Or how many times have you taken the time and sincere effort to go in to the field to train an employee on a job and spend a good amount of time explaining the correct method for accomplishing the task, only to realize that afternoon you forgot one major point! What if that major point was watching out for hydraulic leaks and you now have dead strips on all your back nine greens?

These are some of the reasons that I use VHS video tapes religiously to train and educate employees. The use of video allows me to thoroughly educate an employee first in the office, and then go through a hands-on demonstration in the field.

I have found that a good video ensures that vital points are not missed in the training process. Before any of my employees get on a piece of large equipment, a triplex, or a walking greens or tee mower, they first sit down and view the video on the assigned task and take a written test to confirm they understood the training completely.

When using video tapes, I have found it helpful to have written material in front of the employee, such as a workbook, to accompany the video. This workbook would give an employee or supervisor a space to make notes on course policies or any changes.

After the employees view the video tape, they are then asked to complete a short written examination. After this exam is graded, and I am confident the employee learned the material, their signature is required on a sign off sheet that is stored in our files.

Employees can only perform their job to your standards if they fully understand what is expected of them. A well-trained employee is able to do their job effectively and will feel rewarded by a job well done.

If employees are not thoroughly trained and told what is expected of them, the job that they perform will most likely be unacceptable. An employee who continually performs unacceptable work will probably be continually disciplined and will never feel a sense of accomplishment. The employee's morale then goes down, decreasing productivity. No training method will ever be foolproof, but I have found videos to be a valuable tool in the training process.

Darren Davis
Olde Florida GC.
Everglades Chapter

The Point System Monitors Attendance

The human resource issue has become a time-consuming process for any industry. Whether a company is large or small, the liability to administer all employment issues in a consistent manner according to the law is an absolute must.

Having over 400 employees necessitates us to have a Human Resource Department. They assist all of our managers in the following areas: hiring, orientation, benefits, policies and procedures, training and progressive discipline. Their primary concern is that all of the areas just mentioned are administered in a consistent manner. Consistency plays a huge role in not only treating all employees the same, but also setting the precedence when legal issues take place.

One of our biggest problems in the past has been attendance. The resort has adopted a point program to deal with this problem. The following is a brief overview of our policy:

The late/absent program is to record tardiness and absences. Points are assigned for each tardy or absence from scheduled work time according to the following schedule.

Tardiness:	Points
Employee notified supervisor in advance	0.5
Did not notify supervisor in advance	1
Tardiness exceeds more than 1 hour after scheduled shift	1.5
Absence:	Points
Reported to work but left early (excludes emergencies)	1
Notified supervisor of absence 1 hour prior to scheduled shift	2
Failed to notify supervisor of absence 1 hour prior to scheduled shift	2.5
Failed to call or report for work at all, or called in to notify supervisor of tardiness and then fails to report to work	6
2. 5-4 points within a 12-month period:	
Oral warning	
4. 5-6 points within a 12-month period:	
Written warning	
6. 5-8 points within a 12-month period:	
Suspension one day without pay	

and final warning

Two suspensions within six months and the employee is fired. One complete month with perfect attendance results in one point subtracted from total points accumulated.

If an employee has sick time available, then no points will be assessed. Employees accrue .92 hours per week for a total of 48 hours per year. Employees do not receive sick pay during their probation period of 6 months and thus receive points during this time.

The bottom line is that if you don't have a problem with tardiness or absenteeism, you will not need a point program like the one at Grand Cypress.

Tom Alex

Grand Cypress G.C.

Central Florida Chapter

Team Building to Improve Employee Involvement

We are working on developing improved employee involvement as a team member in a professional environment.

Staff members are on a job-rotating program so that all staff members are knowledgeable in all areas of operations. Staff supervisors participate in the rotating program to supplement employee training.

There is a monthly staff meeting to keep employees informed. It is a round-table discussion and everyone is encouraged to offer their views, problems, and solutions.

Employees are eligible for an "Employee of the Month" award given by the club. Also, for the golf operations department, there is a tardiness incentive program designed to reduce tardiness in the mornings and equipment down time.

We take the positive approach in training the staff, compliment the jobs well done, and supply as much educational and safety information as possible.

Tom Trammell, CGCS

MetroWest C.C.

Central Florida Chapter

Junior's on Deck— Training the Assistant

Most everyone involved in the game of golf now appreciates the work scope of a golf course superintendent. True, "Greenskeepers" just mowed grass, but as the business evolved more into a science, the yearning desire to just sit on a tractor and mow grass has long faded away like a memory. Nowadays, the work scope of a superintendent has become so managerial, even the assistant seldom "gets to just mow grass," and that is the point of this article:

Let's evaluate the work scope of an assistant golf course superintendent.

Most assistants are technically trained, college educated and striving ultimately to move upward and become a superintendent themselves.

There are very few career assistants. There is nothing wrong with being a career assistant. The industry should not frown upon this career niche. Yet, most assistants graduating from college are pursuing an ultimate superintendent's position.

By default, we are viewing the assistant's position as being relatively short term. Now, let's view this situation from the superintendent's perspective. We have already agreed the superintendent's daily work scope is intense. Now, couple that with the training of an assistant and the inevitable departure of that assistant. One can quickly see a managerial inefficiency that should frustrate upper management or owner of the organization.

In the last 10 years, I've had the pleasure and pride to be associated with three assistants that have ultimately moved onward to become very competent superintendents. The only drawback is — yes, I have lost three very competent assistants! Do I have the time to be a post-graduate training school — no!

I have, however, developed over the past few years, an in-house Junior/Senior Assistant training program that has proved to be management efficient, and cost effective yet rewarding to the recipient — the assistants.

Management will first ask: "Why do you have two assistants for just an 18 hole golf course?"

Let us now analyze the difference between the Junior Assistant and the Senior Assistant.

The Junior Assistant must be patient and possess all the true qualities to ultimately become a superintendent. The key word here is "patient." If they are not patient and their respective colleges instilled into them that they will or should become a superintendent within a year of graduation, then my system simply will not work for them.

So far, I have found Junior Assistants that are patient, and truly respect the total work scope of a superintendent and they want to take it gradually. In the long run, they will be exposed to so many issues that a university does not address.

Give me three to four years and I can equal their formal training with something that one can never put a price tag on — and that is on-the-job field-training."

The Junior Assistant will sit in the cat bird's seat watching everything the Senior Assistant does — good or bad. The Senior Assistant is responsible for the training of the Junior Assistant.

Obviously the superintendent is there to instruct both.

However, when Junior makes a mistake, Senior must bear some of the responsibility for the error — much like the rest of the world, it all flows down hill.

By the time people have worked through this program, they have just about seen it all: agronomics, budgets, staff management, peer pressure, and most importantly — politics. Generally, the formal training of college only addresses the first issue, agronomics, and it is already assumed that you understand the science of horticulture to get to these job opportunities.

Can you start to see how much the world has to offer and how a company can profit by having a Junior Assistant on the payroll? The employee will obviously be loyal and be far more effective than "just a regular worker on the staff."

Junior Assistants will participate in the applications of all pesticides, cultural renovation projects, and generally par-



Photo by Mike Bailey

Matt Quinn, senior assistant at Boca Rio CC, left, explains elevation details of the construction of a new ladies' tee to junior assistant Steve Jacaruso. Crew member Pierre Duuelsaint is in background.

ticipate as a key worker on the staff that involves more than just the simple task of "mowing grass." This person, however, must not consider themselves too good to hop on a mower and mow grass, when no one else is there and the job must still get done.

I have designed a work schedule where the Junior Assistant manages on Saturdays with the belief (and the hope) that little has gone wrong from just Friday afternoon and the Senior Assistant manages on Sunday so that if disease or whatever is developing, the more qualified individual of the two manages the latter day where the problems could be more severe.

Now mind you, Junior has on occasion overlooked an issue on Saturday that Senior will detect on Sunday, and let me tell you, Senior will show Junior their

mistakes, because ultimately Senior should not have allowed Junior to even allow the mistake to occur in the first place.

This style of management allows the Senior to be responsible for people in a key way. If the Junior Assistant is not working out, it will fall upon the Senior to figure out a way to make it work...or else.

Probably Senior is not trying hard enough to cooperate and put the effort out to make it happen, because we will not accept the excuse that "Junior just is not working out and I think we need to find a replacement."

This type of platoon management also creates a stronger management team during three-day holiday weekends and when the management staff goes on vacation. I am actually sitting by the pool at

Grand Cypress as I write this article with complete confidence that my assistant duo is competently managing the operation with virtually no problems.

Nothing should occur to overwhelm them, primarily because Senior has been on the payroll for nearly three years. He worked his way up the ladder from the Junior Assistant position just three months ago, yet I feel completely confident with his new Senior's position.

Recognizing the scarcity of new superintendent's positions that an assistant might actually be hired for, Senior appreciates the need to be fully competent before going out into the real world. Of course, I correct their youthful mistakes. They are only human. Once these issues become clearly recognizable, these common mistakes should not happen. When they ultimately become a superintendent these mistakes could be severe enough to actually jeopardize their first head superintendent position.

Therefore, an appreciation of the correct way to perform their job becomes priceless. It does not necessarily indicate my way is right or wrong but more so that they recognize their mistake for something that should have perhaps not occurred (mistake) or something that they now look back upon and realize they could have done it better.

The more involved both become, the more both respect they have for their jobs. The Junior begins to feel the pressure of "actually being in charge" and greatly respects what senior does and how he conduct himself. When Senior moves onward, Junior will now have more

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responsibility and he “better do it right” because he had enough time to watch from the catbird’s seat.

When it’s time for the change, you can usually view the obvious. Senior becomes complacent, everything seems too easy and “I can do it all!” Not really. I’m exaggerating. If I wait that long for their respective personalities to surface, I’ve waited too long to start pursuing a head position for Senior.

That is a key here. The superintendent must know that individual well enough to know when it’s time for him to move on.

Sometimes, jobs are simply not available and they must be patient. It’s even good to watch them pursue some opportunities on their own and feel the aggravation of the real world. As good as they might think they are, they might not be that marketable. After a few rejections, they might appreciate what management is trying to do to help with professional contacts.

When everything works out and Senior lands that new job, the individual has tremendous pride. The crew is usually complimentary and supportive of their career move. Junior then moves up to a new position, and the crew respects the process. The management switch is not a major ordeal.

All too often, the assistant superintendent’s departure can be a major blow to the department. With this concept, no one strikes out. Everyone hits a home run, and everyone comes out a winner.

Mike Bailey

Boca Rio G.C.

Palm Beach Chapter

Employee of the Month, Year Program

Last December, the Board of Governors of Boca Woods Country Club approved and initiated a program called “Employee of the Month” and “Employee of the Year” award for our full-time hourly employees.

Each month an employee is chosen as

“Employee of the Month.” He/she is nominated by their department head. Four employees are nominated each month from the four major departments in our club. The Personnel Committee reviews the recommendations of the department heads and selects the monthly winners of this award.

The department head makes their recommendations based on the employee’s attendance record, appearance, attitude, work ethic, initiative, safety awareness and record.

The award to the employee for being chosen “Employee of the Month” will be a special parking space and badge denoting the award. He/she will also receive remuneration in the amount of \$50 and a picture in the *Focus*, (Boca Woods’ monthly news letter), with the department head. When the award is given out, the crew puts the winner on a chair and he then gives a short speech which is then followed by major applause.

Each December, one employee will be chosen from the pool of monthly winners to be “Employee of the Year.” The award to the employee selected “Employee of the Year” will be a special parking space and badge denoting the award, and a remuneration in the amount of \$250.

Since the awards’ inception last January, it has really made a positive difference in attitude with the crew. They look forward each month to the new winner, hoping they will be the one.

John Gallagher

Boca Woods C.C.

Palm Beach Chapter

Managing Your Most Important Asset

Have you ever been asked, “What is the most difficult or challenging part of your job?” What would your answer be? Getting rid of those pesky mole crickets! The thin turf on No. 8 green caused by those pretty oak trees 20 yards from the green! The nematodes on the front nine fairways! Keeping up-to-date and in compliance with all the governmental regulations?

These are all great answers, but I firmly believe that managing people is the most challenging aspect of our profession or any profession. I have been a golf course superintendent for 17 years. If you compare managing the staff now versus 17 years ago, the job has gotten more complex with lawsuits resulting from wrongful terminations, harassment and discrimination charges, ADA regulations, and even from *not* hiring someone!

No matter how large your budget, how much new equipment you have, or how great the course design, if you don’t have a properly trained and motivated staff, you will have a difficult time getting the course in top playing condition. Once you have a properly trained staff, you have conquered the biggest challenge in managing the course. How can this be accomplished?

I don’t know of any secret formulas or techniques. Usually, some common sense can be very helpful. I try to use the golden rule: “Do unto others as you have them do unto you.” This practice has helped me tremendously in managing staffs at three different country clubs.

Building a good staff can be broken down into the following areas: Hiring, training, motivation and morale, and discipline.

1) **Hiring:** The hiring process is probably the most important step because if you get the right person for the job, the other areas of staff management should be easier. When needing to hire new staff, I have found the best source for applicants comes from your present staff.

They usually know someone who is looking for a job. They will usually give you prospects they want to work with and meet your criteria. Other methods include newspaper ads, employment services and walk-in applicants.

No matter how you get your applicants, it is imperative that you do a good job in the interview process. By asking the right questions, you can narrow down the list of prospects. Then by using your judgment based on the interview results you can make a more intelligent final decision.

Drug testing and background checks are also becoming integral parts of the hiring process. They can help weed out

potential problems and get better people on board. The bottom line on hiring is to develop and use good interviewing and screening techniques to help find the right people for the job.

2) **Training.** Training the new employee is probably the next most important process. The amount of training required will depend on the type of work and the person's prior experience in similar jobs. It is wise to have written job descriptions for each job your staff performs. This gives the new employee a visible description of what each job entails. It is then up to you or a designated trainer to instruct the new employee on how to perform the job to the department's expectations. Be sure to explain all safety, right-to-know, hazard communication, and any other programs that are in effect for your staff.

3) **Motivation/morale.** Once you get the right person hired and trained, you must be able to motivate him and maintain good employee morale. This is probably the hardest thing to do because what works for one person may not work for another. It is important to find out what makes each employee tick so you can coach them to perform to the best of their abilities.

One of the best morale boosters is to praise your staff members for good work both orally and in writing. Cook-outs, parties, and golf outings at other clubs in your area are also morale boosters.

You can do a simple survey of other clubs to compare wages and benefits. It is a good idea to promote from within whenever possible. Internal promotions encourage employees by rewarding good

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work, and giving everyone an incentive to progress and accomplish more.

You must administer progressive and consistent discipline to all staff members. Inconsistent discipline can cause severe morale problems. Sometimes, just being willing to listen to your staff can work wonders with your staff.

According to many surveys, one of the most common complaint among workers is that nobody listens to them! We just completed an employee survey at our company. We got some very interesting answers. Some were predictable and some were surprising!

4) **Discipline.** Sooner or later you will have to discipline someone on your staff. Good discipline requires the right punishment, criticism, and guidance that will help prevent future mistakes and infractions. Proper reprimanding tips include:

◆ Reprimand an individual in private, never in front of others.

◆ Never reprimand when tempers are high. You might say something you may later regret.

◆ Listen to the employee's point of view. There are always two sides to everything.

◆ Try to end on a high note with encouragement.

◆ Document all reprimands. In labor disputes, the burden of proof is on the employer!

I have touched on a few items that I consider to be the keys to sound staff management. As you manage your golf course, don't forget to have a some "preventative maintenance" programs for your staff just like you do for the turf and the equipment.

As I said, "People are your most important asset!"

Hal Richburg, CGCS

Heathrow CC

Central Florida Chapter

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