

# Where Has Our Loyalty Gone?

**In my opinion, 90% of all superintendents are underpaid for what is expected of them**

I just finished reading the commentary entitled “Management Groups” written by Greg Plotner. I agree with some of what Greg says in the article. There are some situations where an honorable management group is good and can help struggling clubs. I also agree that there are several fly-by-night management groups that are ruining clubs and our industry for personal financial gains, but that’s a whole other topic. However, there is one comment Greg makes that disturbs me tremendously.

Greg comments that if you work for a management group, you will be asked to operate on a tight budget and do more for less. That part is admirable! Most good superintendents are masters at getting the most from their dollars, no matter what the budget is. Budget cuts are a way of life for most superintendents, and a good superintendent will endure. What angers me is where Greg says you will possibly be expected to work for a wage less than what you consider fair. BS!!

Attitudes like that are tearing apart the foundation and hard work established by all who preceded us in building the credibility of our profession.

The standards of our excellence grows in leaps and bounds every year. Therefore our compensation should also grow. In my opinion, 90% of all superintendents are underpaid for what is expected of them. Working for less than what is considered

fair is starting to and will continue to cheapen our profession. PGA professionals surely don’t undersell themselves — why should we? Certain standards should be set and no member of any superintendents association should settle for less than those standards.

I know what a lot of management group superintendents make. All those supers I know are making about \$20,000 a year less than they should. I find it hard to believe that a management group couldn’t come up with \$20,000 extra a year for the most important person in a golf course operation.

Most of the clubs run by management groups are high-volume clubs. If a club plays 40,000 rounds of golf a year, increasing the greens fee or cart fee 50 cents per round will compensate the superintendent. That is only one way to raise sufficient funds — there are many more.

In my opinion, our loyalties should lie within ourselves and our profession, not with management groups who want a lot for a little.

By selling yourself short you are hurting yourself, all who follow you, and you are ripping apart all the hard work of those who fought for years to improve our image. The demands on superintendents increase yearly. It’s time for all superintendents to take a stand and demand more compensation.

— Mark Hamilton, CGCS

***‘Our loyalties should lie within ourselves and our profession, not with management groups who want a lot for a little’***

# Greg's response: Supers aren't clones

Dear Mike,

There are several points that you make reference to that I would like to comment on.

First of all, the statement which I made about working for a wage that is less than what that person might consider fair, is the same statement you make about supers making \$20,000 a year less than they should.

Most superintendents are indeed, as you said, *underpaid*. That is what my statement is saying but in a different context. If it says anything different, I didn't intend for it to.

Another point you bring up is that loyalties should lie within ourselves and

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our profession, which I totally agree with. You continue by making the comment, "Don't sell yourself short."

This is also true, but what does one do when in a position of working for a wage less than he or she considers fair? Does that person abandon ship and go to the unemployment office?

Most supers I know will continue with that job until a new one arises or changes within that job are made. From what I've seen over the years, being outspoken about wages doesn't usually get one anywhere other than terminated from employment.

A third point you make states that certain standards should be set (which I assume have to do with wages), and that no superintendent should settle for less than those standards. Bravo! Some might agree, but I don't! Just as all jobs have different salary demands, so do most superintendents. It's the American way!

There are many reasons why salary

structures are so different and many reasons why all job descriptions are so different. Supers aren't clones, and I think it's great that each of us has our own unique methods of bringing about positive results within our own operations.

Those methods determine one's place of employment and salary. If it happens

to be employment at a management owned and/or operated facility, then it may be at a wage that is comparable to other clubs within its web. Or, it may be at a wage less than what that person considers fair, then who's responsibility is it to change it? End of story!

— Greg Plotner, CGCS

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