



Getting the Word Heard:

Marketing PDI to Employers

Editor's note: This is the third in a series of articles from GCSAA concerning the Professional Development Initiative. The GCSAA Board has reviewed all the input from the Member Services Resource Group, the GCSAA delegates meeting and the membership at large. Contrary to the vocal minority, it appears that the PDI will go up for a vote in February in Dallas. In answer to how would PDI be marketed to employers GCSAA has provided the following article for chapter publications.

The first step in any marketing program is to create the identity that you want to promote to a specific audience. Our audience is employers and influential golfers. PDI creates the identity of educated, knowledgeable and competent superintendents, which can then be promoted.

A "Yes" Vote

If the vote at the annual meeting and election supports PDI, the next step will be the execution of a multi-faceted marketing campaign during the next several years. Communicating the benefits and value of PDI is a long-term process that involves the joint efforts of the association and its members.

A Rewarding Goal

Our goal in communicating the benefits of PDI to employers is to have employers acknowledge the value they receive from employing a general member, a Class "A" member and a certified member. We do not plan to explain the intricacies of the classification system but focus instead on the results this system will provide. Consequently, employers will recognize and reward their su-

perintendents for the competitive edge that they bring to their golf course operations and golfers will enjoy the results of superintendents' work — a superb golf experience.

GCSAA Marketing Strategy

The association will use external and internal communication methods to position the benefits of certified, class "A" and general superintendents to employers and other audiences.

We will continue to use national media, such as television and magazines, to promote the superintendents' role and value in managing golf courses. Our national public relations efforts have been laying the groundwork for this initiative during the past several years, positioning the superintendent as key to golfers' enjoyment of the game, and consequently having a direct impact on the golf course's economic success.

To effectively reach employers, GCSAA will target the publications they read and the Web sites they access. We will send press releases and articles to golf trade and consumer publications and Web sites about PDI's approval, and what it means to the business of golf, the

golfer and the employer. In addition, we will work with our allied associations to get the message out through their publications, such as NGCOA's *Golf Business*, CMAA's *Club Management*, the NGF's *Golf Market Today*, their Web sites and in other appropriate venues.

GCSAA also uses many publications and materials today to market the golf course management profession. We will continue to use those vehicles. Information will be placed in *Course Management*, *Leader Board* and on our Web site. Other resources that support the profession, such as standard job descriptions, information on certification, the benefits of joining the association and materials that employers use in hiring superintendents, will include information on the competencies of superintendents. In other words, the message that PDI allows us to develop about the superintendent profession will become a standard business practice for GCSAA materials and resources.

Members' Marketing Responsibility

Members have the opportunity to prove and communicate the benefits of PDI to their employers. Demonstrating effective management of the golf course is perhaps the most important validation of competence. Discussing with your employer your commitment to continuing education, achievement of proficiency and, if certified, use of the Professional Development Resource (PDR) is strong support during your annual performance review.

GCSAA will also provide you with the resources to help you communicate the value of PDI to your employer. We will develop a package of information in an easy-to-understand format, with suggestions on how you can present the specific benefits of PDI to your employer on a continuing basis.

A "No" Vote

If the vote does not support PDI, an identity around the commitment of golf course superintendents to competency-based education and professional development will be created and promoted to employers.