

Cap X in Hard Times

Hats off to the Super Savers

Over the past twenty-something years, I have had the pleasure of working with some great superintendents and suffered the frustration of working with some bad ones. Like any profession, there are bad apples who can leave a bad



taste in the mouth of the owner. You know the ones... come in at 8 a.m., work until 4 p.m., spend most of that time complaining about lousy equipment and yelling at their staffs. I call them the Blamers.

Whenever there is a problem, they blame their staff, me, the weather, customers, course construction, their

dog and anything but themselves. These are the guys who make me very nervous when they say, "WE need some new equipment." All of a sudden it's "WE." The problem is the person is never straight with me about their operation so it is hard to take his or her word for it. So the inquiry begins. Why do WE need it? How old is the machine? Do a productivity analysis on a new machine (that one kills them). Can we get by with repairing the old one? If you don't have confidence in your superintendent, then Cap X (Capital Expense) becomes a much bigger problem than usual. The usual problem is where to get the money to buy it.

Then on the flip side of the coin is the superintendent who bears the weight of the world on his shoulders. There's no bull. When these people need something done, they guide and direct their staffs thru the processes. They solve problems rather than create them. Their staff respects them and they have little turnover.

This individual comes to the owner like this: "You know we've talked about it before and we have nursed that piece of equipment along, but looking forward we are going to spend more money piecing the thing together.

"What a relief! He or she has done the productivity analysis, meaning the cost to repair vs. the cost to replace... obtained quotes from sales persons who are not their relatives, and even looked at financing and used equipment as an alternative.

Combined with our down time while it is being fixed, it will cost more money than replacing it this year. I have looked at replacements and have three quotes from Orange, Green and Red. They all have financing available. I have also looked at used equipment and have found a piece in good shape with only "x" amount of hours on it. I will piece the current equipment along until you let me know what you want me to do."

What a relief! He or she has done the productivity analysis, meaning the cost to repair vs. the cost to replace, combined with the increase in work the crew will be able to do with the new machine. They have obtained quotes from sales persons who are not their relatives and they have even looked at financing and used

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equipment as an alternative. The only thing for me to do is to figure out where to get the money to pay for it.

The superintendent who approaches all capital repairs with this attitude is valuable at any time but most importantly at this time in the industry when more courses are being built and fighting over sales, which is decreasing the average course's revenues. With the superintendent having this approach to all Cap X, in the end you have a better product for less money.

Thank you Super Savers.

Bill Stine

Editor's note: This Owners Outlook column is a semi-regular feature and part of a cooperative communications-exchange effort between the FGCSA and FGCOA to share information and concerns. In February 2005, at the national level, the GCSAA and NGCOA will hold a joint Golf Industry Show in Orlando and our worlds will move closer together, as they should. Hopefully, we are getting a little head start.

USGA Green Section Florida Regional Update Recovering From Mid-Winter Course Conditions

We have passed the halfway point of the 2004 Florida winter season. After a slightly rough start for some during the late fall and early winter, typical mid-winter conditions are being found during TAS visits around the state.

Normal winter season wear-and-tear is evident, but appropriate and acceptable course conditioning is being provided. On a positive note, temperatures and day length are increasing and becoming more favorable to the resumption of sustained bermudagrass growth, and with this it should be possible to produce some recovery and improvement in course conditions.

Along with direct turf injury and wear, another consequence of heavy winter season traffic is soil compaction. As compaction increases, moisture and oxygen infiltration are restricted, which in turn limits growth and recovery. Aeration of high traffic areas and putting



John Foy

surfaces is encouraged to help relieve compaction and promote a faster recovery response. Water injection cultivation or aeration with small diameter solid tines causes very minimal surface disruption and provides two to three weeks of relief.

The biggest obstacle to winter aeration is often scheduling needed maintenance practices when peak play is occurring. At a growing number of facilities, course closures for maintenance are being allowed during the winter season, which is very beneficial in providing top quality conditions.

The winter and spring months also are the Florida dry season, and below-average rainfall (3-inch deficit as of March 15) has been recorded throughout the central to southern portion of the peninsula. While far from the drought conditions of a few years ago, limited rainfall is starting to present some management challenges. The combination of increasing temperatures,



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