

Summer is certainly here with higher temperatures and humidity and less traffic on golf courses and roads... except for those of you in northwest Florida, who are well into your beach (and golf) season and are waiting for summer to end. The summer rains have begun. We appear to be receiving enough rainfall to turn the tide on the drought situation and give alarmists less to talk about.

May was a great month with many events including the EGCSA's Poa weekend held at the Naples Beach Club. It was great to see so many people and families enjoying the time together. Congratulations to the EGCSA board, which nicely managed not only the Poa but also the G. C. Horn tournament. Hats off to Seth Strickland

who secured a spot on the FGCSA golf team in the stroke-play tournament at Naples Grande. At the FGCSA Past President's Dinner, Joe Pantaleo was presented with the FGCSA Distinguished Service Award for his many years of service and leadership for the FGCSA and his local chapter.

In August, the FGCSA summer board meeting will be held at the Grand Cypress resort in Orlando in conjunction with the Crowfoot Open. If you have not been to this event, it really is a worthwhile weekend. At that time Shane Bass, CGCS will take over as the new FGCSA president and I will begin my year as past president.

I have often been asked how am I able to spend so much time working on association business, keep my job, have time for my family and find time for other activities. It is much easier to say (or in this case write) than do, but it seems to me to boil down to planning and relationships. The planning piece is more concrete. Daily planners, seminars and books help with time management. But building working relationships with people is the piece that requires constant diligence.

Relationships with people are keys to becoming successful and finding a balance of work, life and, in this case, volunteering. Developing relationships with staff is one of the many ways to stay employed for any length of time. By setting measurable goals for staff and monitoring those results, you teach not only accountability but your employees learn to think for themselves.

By teaching assistants to think for themselves, they develop and grow not only for themselves but also for the operation. Then when you are gone

for any reason, someone is there who can think things through and handle most situations. When your assistants go out for their first superintendent positions, you will have made them much more capable of succeeding.

Developing relationships with peers is also extremely important for success. It has been said to me many times that your toughest competition is your best friend. When I entered the business after college, what really helped me were the relationships I had developed in those first few years with other superintendents in the area. Many were peers of my mentors, and the knowledge gleaned from them was invaluable.

Taking time to visit similar courses in your region is important to keep you fresh; it also validates your management practices. Playing golf at local chapter events is one way to do this. Chapter meetings let you get away for a few hours, network and see other another golf courses.

Networking with vendors is just as important as with your peers. Suppliers are valuable personal and business resources, and relationships with them must be cultivated. Having a good relationship with a vendor can save your bacon in an emergency. Many were once superintendents and are still willing to help when you have a problem. They see many operations in a week and can keep you informed of new ideas and how others are dealing with the same problems.

It is certainly a two-way street with anyone who sells products. We are buying the products but many companies also support our profession with magazine ads and sponsorships of events.

Having strong relationships at work with management is also a key in the relationship-building process. Communicate with the professional staff as to when, where and why you are going off property, and it's critical to tell them who is in charge and how to get in touch with them while you are gone.

Having the same type of dialog with a green chairman or general manager is also important, but adding why it is a value to the club for you to attend a meeting or seminar is also helpful. By creating an operation with a talented, well-trained staff that is able to communicate the goals and objectives of the department – and having buy-in from the other departments and management – fosters an environment in which it is much easier to spend a few hours each week focusing on our industry's big picture instead of only focusing on the smaller-scale, day-to-day tasks. We need to take care of those daily details, but we also must keep an eye on the horizon and prepare for challenges coming our way.

It's All About Planning and Relationships



Matt Taylor, CGCS President