

As a subunit of the Unsafe Activities Report, unsafe conditions should be addressed, too. This would include a review of machine guarding (\$2.9 million in fines), electrical grounding or wiring problems (another \$2.7 million in fines), and a host of other issues such as fire/explosive hazards, food in the workplace, defective tools, improper stacking, ventilation, welding, etc.

Final Tips

1) If you don't have a complete list of MSDSs which reflect not only your pesticide inventory, but virtually every other chemical found in the workplace, now is the time to get one.

2) If you haven't started reducing the amount of chemicals stored onsite at any one time, now is the time to do it. You don't want to end up reporting chemicals under SARA Title III and have your name broadcast across the country and your local community just because you couldn't plan ahead. Many of the chemi-

icals are now tracked fairly closely by the government, and you don't want to get caught never having reported these chemicals to the feds, the state (in Florida, the Regional Planning Councils) or the local fire department.

3) If you are not documenting your training and program, you are opening yourself up to, at the very least, some very expensive worker's compensation issues.

4) If you haven't prepared written programs for the types of programs discussed above, you had better sit down and do some. We have yet to see a facility fined that was able to produce documentation that they were trying to do their best with a series of very complicated regulations except under extraordinary circumstances.

5) Speaking of worker's compensation, if you don't review the files and follow up with the doctor and employee, you risk losing considerable amounts of money when your employee takes you to

court. We know one company that saved well over \$500,000 this year just by looking over the files and noticing that something just didn't seem right.

6) We haven't talked about it here, but OSHA now requires employers to not only provide and maintain PPE, but also assess the potential hazards associated with their particular job around the workplace in general. Further, you must train the employees on the proper use of the equipment, and its hazards and limitations. The program must be written and certified.

7) If your training program doesn't include signatures of all attendees and some kind of proficiency test when it is done, you are asking for trouble.

8) To simplify your chemical training, go ahead and break the chemicals down into use categories such as corrosives, flammables, solvents, etc. You may need as many as 10 to 15 categories, or as few as five or six.

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I have 10 years' experience as a superintendent and two years' experience as an equipment sales rep. The purpose of this article is to relate some of my experiences as a sales rep in hopes that this will increase understanding among the two

groups. Following are a number of the questions most commonly asked of me while I called on the hundreds of golf courses in southeast Florida.

"Do you miss being a golf course superintendent and, if so, what do you miss about it?"

I always thought the implication of this question was that I had left the industry. I never felt like I had left the golf course maintenance industry, although there were those who were disappointed to lose me as an "A" member.

The answer to the question was yes, even though at the time I had no intention of going back. Interaction with the crew was what I missed most. Training and educating are primary objectives of the superintendent's position, and I very much enjoyed that part of the job.

"How does it feel to not have all the pressure?"

When I was asked this I thought to myself, "What are you talking about?"

There is a tremendous amount of pressure in sales. It is amazing to me how the professional sales reps are so good at masking the effects of this pressure.

Superintendents and other decision makers do not see it and this is truly a tribute to how well these sales reps manage their own stress. Salespeople are expected to micro-manage their time to the minute but always come across as if you are the only customer on the planet.

Salespeople must produce sales every day. They can never allow themselves to be down or tell their customer what they really think about their decision to purchase a tractor for \$300 less from a dealer who could not care less about the golf industry!

In addition, you must address any problem situation that may occur while you are making sales. I was responsible for seeing to it that a very considerable percentage of the golf courses in south Florida were being mowed on a daily basis.

There is pressure from the principals in the distributorship, from the superintendents, the mechanics, the manufacturer's reps, and that guy who cut you off in traffic. Is there no pressure in sales?

Consider the following sales formula:

Production minus Sales = Scrap

"What can you do to help me do a better job?"

The salespeople who call on you are really your employees. They should be viewed as another resource who supports your efforts just like any other member of your crew.

Would you ask your assistant what he or she could do to help you do your job better?

I think a better question would be, "What can I do to help you do a better job?" I have some thoughts on this.

1) Be honest with your salespeople. Telling someone that you do not intend to do business with them this time is not pleasant. But tell them, tell them why, and tell them in a timely manner.

2) Give your salespeople good information. It is their job to find out what you are buying and when you are buying it. They also need to know what products you favor and why and if there is anything about these products you would like to see improved. This information will allow your salespeople to present the products that best fit your application. Sometimes getting this information is like pulling teeth. I am not sure what negative consequences could occur by

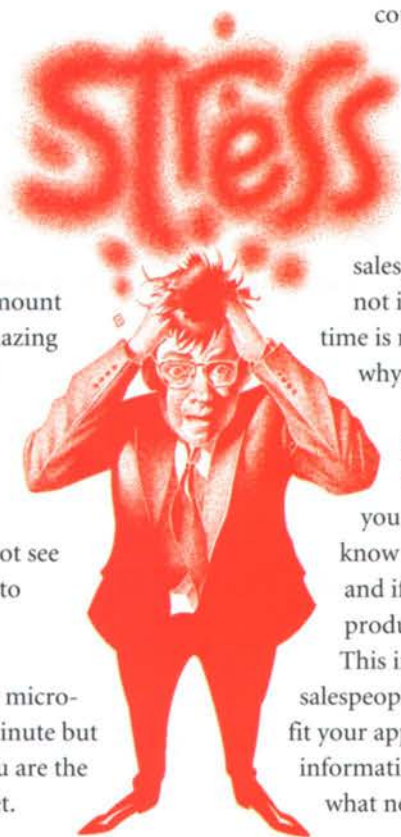
Do you miss being a superintendent?

Notes from a superintendent turned salesrep turned superintendent

Superintendent's Journal



Scott Wahlin, CGCS Longboat Key Club



providing this information; I cannot think of any.

3) Do not abuse demonstration equipment or demonstration policies. All of the manufacturers make excellent equipment. How long should it really take to determine whether a piece of equipment is best suited for your application?

Take as long as you need, but do not run up a lot of unnecessary hours or abuse the equipment. Internal damage resulting from misuse may not be apparent to the dealer or the future purchaser — a fellow superintendent.

4) I would like to make a note here regarding good sales tactics versus poor ones. When I called on a superintendent, I had three areas I wanted to discuss — my commitment to the industry, my company's commitment, and my products.

I never wanted to take valuable time to discuss shortfalls in my competition.

Every sales rep can do a very effective job of disparaging the competition. Chances are they know their competition as well as the people working there. Sales reps who resort to this should be viewed as weak and not worthy of your business.

5) I used to receive a newsletter that was published by one of the other manufacturers. There was an article in one of these that stated, "All things being equal, people will still do business with their friends."

The next time you think you are having your time wasted by a sales rep making small talk, consider this statement. It is the sales rep's job to maximize sales. If making friendships among clients will accomplish this, then that is what must be done.

If we all make sure we are basing our purchasing decisions on value and what is best for our clubs, and not personal relationships, both sales reps and

superintendents could use their time more wisely.

"You should sell your equipment for cost because you make so much money on parts."

This is the capitalist free market system of American we're talking about here. If there was so much money to be made distributing golf course equipment, investors would be tripping over each other to get into the business. Certainly there is a profit to be made, but it is an honest profit.

No one is getting rich overnight doing this.

There is a minimum amount of profit that must be made in order to justify the risks associated with doing business. It is my impression that most distributorships operate very close to this minimum profit margin.

It is also my impression that if the profit margin was to fall below this minimum, the owners would be better

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“How difficult was it to make the transition from superintendent to sales?”

There are many similarities between these two positions.

Most superintendents are excellent salespeople and they do not know it. How do you get projects and budgets approved? You sell them to the decision makers.

How did you get your position in the first place? You sold yourself and what you had to offer.

I believe in order to be a good superintendent you must have all the attributes and skills necessary to be a good salesperson. Preparation for budget presentations and sales proposal presentations are practically the same.

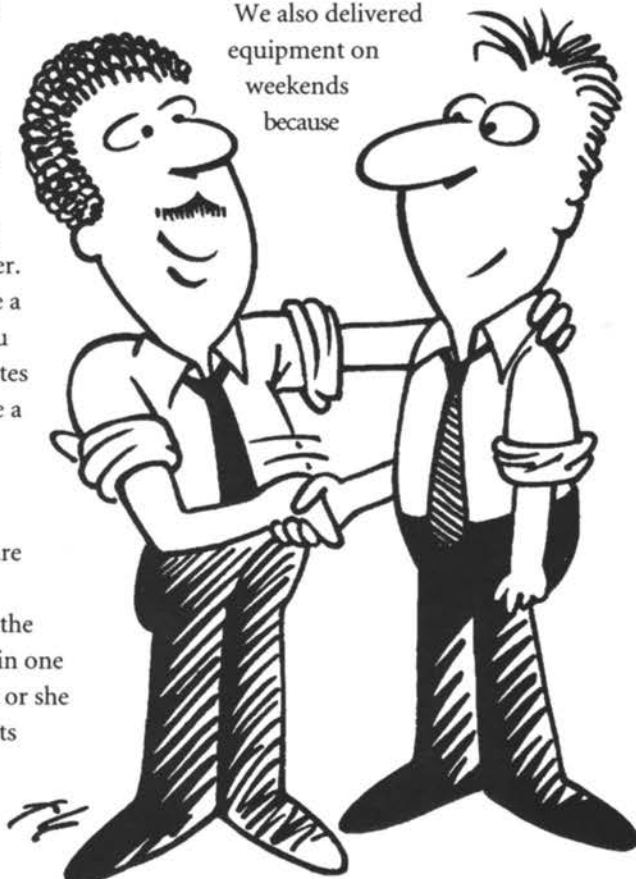
One difference is that the salesperson is an expert in one facet of the industry. He or she can focus on the products they sell and the competition’s as well. The superintendent

must manage all of the different facets and cannot focus too long on any one area.

“What’s it like to take weekends off?”

There are many salespeople who work weekends. We did many demonstrations on weekends because it was the only time we could free up the piece of equipment and the superintendent was agreeable.

We also delivered equipment on weekends because



“I believe in order to be a good superintendent you must have all the attributes and skills necessary to be a good salesperson.”

the superintendents were desperate to receive it. In addition, as I mentioned earlier, salespeople must micro-manage their time.

If decision makers are at work, the sales rep needs to be out calling on them. Weekends and evenings are the only time most salespeople can do planning and other paperwork, and there is much of that.

I like to tell my assistants that they cannot know what it is like to be a superintendent until they have held the position. Those who went on to accept head jobs later agreed.

I feel the same is true for sales

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positions. I believe most superintendents feel they have some idea of what it must be like to be in sales. I do not believe they do.

I believe salespeople work much longer and harder than most superintendents realize. I found the people in the sales arena to be highly



trained, devoted professionals. It is a position that keeps you up at night, considering how you might best serve

the customer and thus get an edge on your competition.

I found that the best superintendents treated their salespeople like professionals, and this is the way it should be.

Author's Note: Yes, I'm a superintendent again. I enjoyed the sales

position I had very much. But, like any new opportunity that comes along there are risks and rewards.

This one wasn't meant to be. The Wahlin family is now settled in to a new location on the West Coast. Longboat Key.

By the way, sales reps are welcome!

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Clippings

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Then and Now

By Pat Kriksceonaitis, GCS,
Essex Country Club

As I sit at my desk and tally the year-end totals for water fertilizer, plant protectants, and man-hours, it's hard to believe how different the maintenance program is from just five years ago. Members' expectations have increased. The amount of play has increased. Being on the town's aquifer means limitations on water, fertilizers and plant protectants. What have I gotten myself into?

Back in the stone ages, if the greens were hungry, they got fed. If the tees were hungry, they also got fed. Now only 50 to 60 percent of the fertilizer applications are on a blanket application basis.

The rest of the time only high-wear areas and specific areas in need of more growth are fed. The large, sunny, well-drained greens and tees don't get nearly as much food as the smaller beat-up ones.

To compensate for the increased traffic, it would be nice to increase the aeration. However, the players who are

increasing this play would go ballistic if the playing surface was disrupted more often. So now we spike the greens instead of mid-season aerating.

Depending on the season, some aeration is done, but it's solid tines instead of hollow. The whole green or collar isn't done. Once again, it's the high-traffic areas where the play gets congested on a green or tee or fairway. The majority of the playing surface isn't disrupted.

Even with the turf being managed more closely these days, the need for plant pesticides is as important as ever. Gone are the days when if it was Thursday, the spray rig must be applying something.

The frequency and amount of pesticides have been greatly reduced. While most of the fungicide applications done on greens and tees are on an area-wide basis, there are several weeks or months between treatments with only some follow-up to the severely shaded or stressed areas.

Insecticides have almost disappeared from the routine program. In 1995, no treatment for cutworms was necessary, and only three acres of turf were treated for beetle grubs (and two acres were tennis courts).

How is this possible?

By knowing the property, mapping hot spots and monitoring for the

different pests, a lot less active ingredient needs to be used on an annual basis.

So what does this all mean to the maintenance program? The annual amounts of fertilizer and plant protectants are greatly reduced. The amount of man hours needed for monitoring and spot treatment is greatly increased.

The need for more year-round personnel who are conscientious and reliable is greater than ever. The more we limit the artificial life support systems, the more efficient and accurate we have to become in their usage.

Can the playing surface be what our members expect? It's possible, but not without greatly increasing the human monitoring and management of them.

From Turf Talk — A publication of the New Hampshire Golf Course Superintendents Association

The Word "Green" in Golf

A good deal of confusion surrounds the use of the word "green" in proper golf terminology. Should one use "green fee" or "greens fee?" Is it a "greenkeeper" or a "greenskeeper?" Exactly what area does the word "green" pertain to on a golf course? And is it the "USGA Green Section" or the "USGA Greens Section?"

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Green is a noun and has two proper golf meanings. The first meaning is chiefly of Scottish origin. It simply defines all territory of a golf course, or all areas outside the confines of the clubhouse.

Thus, it can be used in relation to all outdoor areas of a golf course. The second meaning, most readily known to modern audiences, means the area of short grass surrounding a hole.

This area is generally mown and rolled to the smoothest possible texture. In keeping with the first meaning, a greenkeeper is someone whose responsibilities entail maintaining all areas of the golf course outside the clubhouse. The term was changed to golf course superintendent in the United States several decades ago.

In almost all cases of using the word green in golf terminology, the use should be singular. Green fee, greenkeeper, green committee, and USGA Green Section are all correct uses.

One final word on this subject. Green, in proper golf terminology, does not refer to any particular color found on a golf course. It only applies to areas or regions of a golf course.

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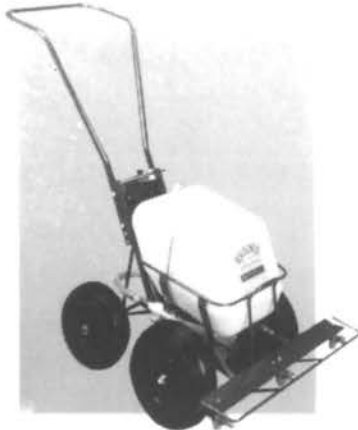
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Can We Talk?

Is Productive Communication Possible at Your Club?

I was touring a golf course recently with a fellow superintendent and was overwhelmed by how perfect his grounds were.

The fairways were tight and weed-free, greens were uniform — even the rough was consistent. Then a funny thing happened. A group of members stopped to give him their comments on the conditioning:

“Hey, did you f- up the 12th hole yet?” “What the hell are you doing on number seven?” “These fairways are horrible; I can’t hit my three-wood off them.”

These are actual quotes from respectable members of a prestigious club. Four or five more groups approached us on our tour, and not one had a positive comment. There wasn’t a single, “Hello! Good afternoon.” It may not be this bad at all clubs, but a pervasively negative tone seems to be prevalent at many clubs today. What’s going on?

In the last few years, it appears that the playing surfaces at our club have gotten better and the appreciation of a job well done has diminished. Has this raised the stress level of you and your turf?

Has the recent rash of job openings in the region made you more-or-less secure in your job position? I’m getting a stress headache just thinking about it. The stress on the average golf course superintendent is greater now than ever, and it’s not going to subside in the near future.

Why is that? Have we promised our

members more every year so that it’s difficult to live up to expectations? Has TV golf conditioned our members to expect indoor arena conditions every day regardless of the weather, amount of play or budgets? How about our members’ personal lives? Have they become so negative from all the downsizing in business and the uncertainty of their immediate future?

I think the answer is “yes” to all three questions. I think one problem many of us have is promising the moon, even when we know our booster rocket is short on fuel. During the good years, Mother Nature may help us reach our destination safely, but during the bad years, even with the 14-hour work days and the miracle cures for diseases, the finished product just doesn’t meet expectations.

Often the amount of play is too much, the window of opportunity to do “meaningful” work is small, and the cultural practices, so needed to maintain fine turf, are frowned upon by committee members.

And beyond all that, the cost of producing a hundred acres of immaculate turf is usually more than our clubs’ budgets can handle. Then our members go home and watch a perfect golf course host the best players in the world. What do they think during the commercials?

“Time for a cold one?” Well, maybe, but more likely it’s “I hit a putt just like that today and my ball didn’t come close to the hole! Our greens are horrible.”

Television, which during the 60s was responsible for the upgrading and increased popularity of the game, has gone beyond that and dissects every aspect of the playing surface and the player’s golf swing.

It is no longer a game played on unique and different golf courses, which offer a multitude of diverse

conditions. There are now written and unwritten uniformity standards which the announcers live by in the commentary of the action.

On TV, golf greens must all putt the same. It doesn’t matter if one green is surrounded by trees and built on clay, and the next green is open and built of sand. Uniformity rules and “knowing the greens” doesn’t enter the commentary. Funny thing is that the turf management professionals have gotten so good that uniformity is usually achieved.

Television has increased our paychecks and decreased our job security. The average member, even at wealthier clubs, has seen his or her standard of living remain stagnant, or even decrease, in the last 10 years.

The profit margins are squeezed ever tighter. Downsizing has been the operative word since the mid-80s in most larger corporations. Most people’s personal budgets aren’t so large that they can spend lavishly on nonessential items. Golf and club life may be essential to one’s mental health, but it usually falls after the house, car and schooling for the children.

How about the chaotic world around us? Just turn on the six o’clock news. Many of us have become desensitized to the killing and corruption broadcast on the evening news.

But it does affect the psyche.

After a tough week at work worrying about the acme balloon account not producing as expected, and hearing rumors of a layoff because of a poor quarter, and hearing from your wife that the car has just died, and your kid is taking a field trip into the city (right where a killing occurred last week), Joe Member is going to play a round of golf at the club.

On the first tee he has high blood pressure, only two hours to play because he has to get home, and no

practice since his last round. How is he ever going to shoot a good number? How is he doing to complete his round calmly and full of praise for a job well done?

The job at hand isn't as simple as showing up for work and getting maximum efficiency out of the staff and yourself. That doesn't work at many clubs. We have to do more — not with our hands, but with our leadership, in several areas.

First, we need to put the "game" back into golf. How do we do this? Every club will be different. Maybe talk with the pro or the club president or the golf chairman — whomever you have a good rapport with.

Get the conversation around to recognizing any problems that may exist. Then you can take it in any positive direction you want. It will take

many discussions before any tangible results are made.

Second, get the club to write a mission statement. If the club can express in writing what it wants and stands for, then it will be easier for you to communicate what needs to be done to achieve those goals.

With a mission statement, you can go to any of the golfing industry consultants (USGA, NGF, state agronomist, fellow superintendents) and get supporting documentation on what is needed to do the job.

Third, communicate to your golfers that when they play golf they should leave the negative trappings in the parking lot. This is a great game, and it is being hurt by people taking the sport out of it.

We cannot change the way society puts pressure on all of us. We can, by

using a little imagination and foresight, change the way our members view us and our golf courses.

We need to convince them that our few acres of turf are there for their enjoyment. Anything less, and they're not getting their money's worth. So during these winter months, think of a positive way to put a spin on what you do for your club and what your club does for its members.

Our jobs and our mental health will only be made better with a little positive communication.

From: Turf Talk, New Hampshire GCSA

Credit: Hole Notes, October 1995

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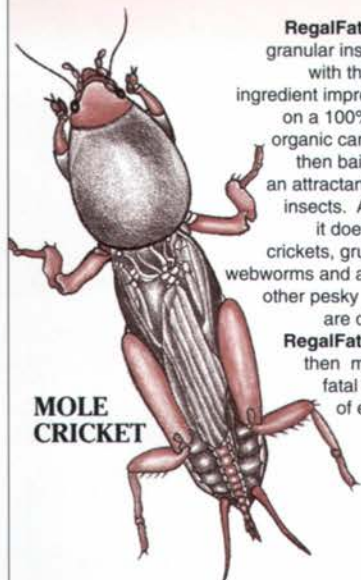
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Letters..

...to the Editor

Dear Joel:

To your "Green Side Up" column, Winter '96 issue, pg.88, nothing more needs to be said. It is a powerful treatise suitable for framing for review by members, players and the staff at every course.

Bravo!

Sincerely yours,

Terry Ward
Sales Manager
Milorganite Division - MMSD
Milwaukee, WI

Dear Terry,

Thank you for those kind words. Thanks also to those superintendents who called or spoke to me in person in Orlando to voice their appreciation for that piece. That one's for all of you!

Joel D. Jackson, CGCS
Editor

Dear Winter Season Golfers:

Throughout a portion of the eastern half of the country, a prolonged period of high daytime and nighttime temperatures during the late summer caused widespread turf loss at a number of northern courses. While hot and humid weather is normally expected during the summer in Florida, record-setting hurricane and tropical storm activity also occurred this year. As a result of the extremely heavy rainfall from June through October, facilities around the state experienced a variety of additional problems. The purpose of this letter is to advise everyone that this summer's weather is having an impact on winter season

course quality and conditioning.

Normal annual rainfall in South Florida averages 58-60 inches. In a lot of areas, this amount of rain was experienced in 3-4 months. During this time, two 100-year and a 25-year rainfall event occurred. In mid-October, a tropical depression hit the lower portion of the east coast and dumped 15-20 inches of rain in a 24-hour period. Total rainfall for the year will be in the 85- to over 100-inch range in many areas. To put this amount of water in perspective, an acre inch of water is 27,154 gallons. Thus, a 120-acre golf course that gets 60 inches of rain has to deal with 195.5 million gallons of water. This is obviously a tremendous amount of water and does not even take into consideration runoff from surrounding areas. With the persistence of a saturated soil and depletion of soil oxygen content, turf growth and development was negatively impacted for several months and, in some instances, turf loss or death was experienced due to flooding.

Further compounding matters was the occurrence of numerous heavily overcast days and a significant reduction in sunlight. The base bermudagrasses of Florida golf courses have an extremely high light requirement for sustained healthy growth. The early fall is a very critical time for storing of carbohydrates and preparing the turf to survive the winter months. As a result of the adverse weather, this was not possible, and thus courses throughout the state are having to go into the primary play season in a weakened condition. The early development of traffic wear problems is being observed at all facilities and is a direct consequence of the weaker condition of the base turf. A full recovery from this situation simply cannot be achieved until this next spring and early summer.

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