

Franz

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but doing so within the budget guidelines set up by the superintendent.

So there's the question of salaries. How much do you pay a top-notch technician? In the Sarasota, Fla., area \$8 per hour is about average. But is this wage really competitive and fair compensation for this dedicated "backbone" of the golf course maintenance department? I think not.

My feeling is that a qualified technician should earn at least \$350 to \$450 per week. The term "qualified" meaning someone who has been a professional for at least five years and has worked on a diversity of equipment ranging from string trimmers to backhoes.

But how does a superintendent justify paying a technician \$8 to \$12 per hour? Tell the bean counters the truth about his position of great importance and responsibility. Tell them he is responsible for perhaps hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of equipment.

This should aid the bean counters in their decision. If superintendents will more fairly compensate their technicians, we will see a marked increase in professionalism among technicians.

And these qualified technicians are invariably the backbone of this very prosperous industry.

COMMUNICATION A KEY

Now let's talk about communication.

It is a big word that means one simple thing: Let's talk!

If communication exists between technician and superintendent, life is great. If it doesn't exist, life can be unbearable at times. I know this first-hand. I love to be patted on the back as much as the next guy. It's human nature.

But I also like to be told when I'm doing a less-than-pleasing job. This type of communication is very productive. It works in both directions. Too much criticism and too little praise is detrimental. But too much praise and not enough criticism isn't healthy either.

There should be a balance. There are some superintendents who will only talk to their technicians when something is wrong on the course.

Yet when something looks great, they keep it to themselves instead of thanking their technicians. Why is this? It's an age-old problem that too often goes unsolved. When it goes on for a long time without resolution, it can ruin a friendship as well as a professional relationship.

Superintendents are like parents. Some are more strict and dominant than others. Some give you room to grow and express yourself, while others suppress and limit you like a dictator.

But each individual is allowed to run their golf course as they see fit. All I am asking superintendents and technicians is to talk to each other.

Air your feelings, your likes, your dislikes, so that you can work on your problems together.

Be allies, not enemies. We are all on the same side here. To coin a phrase: This marriage either works or it works. It cannot not work. It has to work.

Superintendents, talk to your technicians. Technicians, talk to your superintendents. And let us all reap the benefits and rewards that will inevitably result from this industry that we all love and count on to pay the bills.

Evan a backbone needs a little support sometimes!

Dave Franz is a technician living in Sarasota, Fla.

Boom in management competency next on agenda

To the editor:

As the golf industry accepts the reality of its "boom" not touching all with Midas-like prosperity, the certainty is there'll be another boom. This external surge in the popularity of the game will happen when the baby boomers who have been an anomaly throughout their lives begin to reach retirement after the year 2010.

To survive in these intervening years, we'll need a boom in management competency; a preoccupation with management that can deliver profits, consistent with public expectations of benefit and value.

Future growth of the industry should stress the mundane skills of financial analysis, cost containment, scheduling, forecasting, marketing, public relations and a host of other talents perhaps overlooked in our recent celebration of unbridled optimism.

In my younger days in the hotel industry, a mirror-image of golf existed. The 1960s saw hotel occupancies and industry predictions soar with the opening of each new hotel. No one gave much thought whether the needs curve was being hyper-extended.

While building in the 1970s continued to meet the needs of earlier years, the industry was intoxicated with its own success and oblivious to over-leveraged "Taj-Mahals."

The "morning after" did arrive in the 1980s with an extended hangover and continuing industry distress of today. This new reality indicated in sad retrospect how overbuilding and unsound business practices can be intoxicants of choice.

Much the same can be said for golf courses. Some served their purpose as realty sales inducements, testimonials to bloated egos, or victims of inept management. In the future, they must be able to stand alone as businesses. There won't be a need for them to stay open, dispensing charity in their markets.

The business of golf can create an internal boom in management know-how. It can sharpen skills demanded by the public, the lending community, owners and elected officials charged with operating public golf courses.

Better tools to judge the quality of management through studies of other successful operators will equip these constituencies to reward or punish their golf enterprises. Expectations will increase as public awareness of success in other quarters demands imitation.

At least for the moment, golf has it all.

Ninety percent of the courses today can take advantage of the lessons of other businesses to survive and prosper. The public's

wide variety of choices will mean loyalty to courses perceived as good values.

Returning to the basics of seeking customer satisfaction, courtesy, cleanliness, telephone courtesy, image projection and a wide variety of costless improvements will tell the public we want and appreciate their business. It should continue the reasonable growth of the game, consistent with its universal appeal, an aging population and greater leisure time.

These changes will have their price.

A leaner, meaner breed of professional manager, meeting the expectations of his/her various constituencies, will emerge. They'll be the superstars of the next 20 years, helping to create internal and financial growth for the business of the game, and thus the game itself.

The lesson of the '90s will be: Manage or move!

Sincerely,

Curt Walker, executive director
Public Golf Management Assn.
Minneapolis, Minn.

Letters to the editor are welcomed.
Just address them to: Letters, *Golf Course News*, P.O. Box 997, Yarmouth, ME 04096.

P.J. Boatwright, 'soul of USGA,' dies at 63

MORRISTOWN, N.J. — P.J. Boatwright Jr., 63, called "the soul of the USGA" by the organization's current president, died April 5 at a hospital here after a long illness.

Boatwright had been prominent in the United States Golf Association since 1959, when he was named assistant director. He served in that capacity for 10 years before succeeding Joseph Dey Jr. as executive director. In 1980 he became executive director of rules and competitions. He was joint secretary of the World Amateur Golf Council for the last 20 years.

"He meant so much to golf. For many

years he was the ultimate authority," said USGA President C. Grant Spaeth of Palo Alto, Calif.

"Whenever anybody anywhere had a sticky problem, they came to P.J., whether it was in the United States or anywhere in the rest of the world."

David B. Fay, USGA executive director, said, "We grieve for him and his family, and at the same time we're so much better for having known him."

An Augusta, Ga., native, Boatwright grew up in Spartanburg, S.C., attended Georgia Tech University and Wofford College. He

won the Carolina Open in 1957 and 1959, the Carolina Amateur in 1951, and qualified for four U.S. Amateurs.

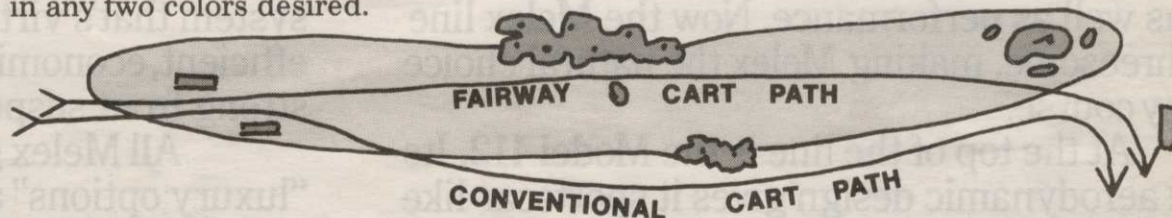
He was inducted into the South Carolina, Carolinas and Wofford College Halls of Fame, and was presented the Metropolitan (N.Y.) Golf Association's Distinguished Service Award in 1983, and the Metropolitan Golf Writers Association Gold Tee Award in 1986.

He is survived by his wife Nancy; two daughters, Cindy of Wayne, N.J., and Carolyn of Columbus, Ohio; a son, P.J. III of Dallas; and three grandchildren.

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