Different media, same result: Communication

It's called communication, and two industry members have showed a flair for it this spring. To wit:

• Sandoz Agro sponsors a survey of chemical applicators every two years and golf course superintendents were included for the first time in the 1994 poll. The results — compiled by the Gallup Organization — make for pretty interesting reading (see story, page 1).

We applaud the inclusion of superintendents and further endorse the idea of opening these important lines of communication. Surveys like these enable manufacturers to pick the brains of their customers, of course. But publishing the results enables other superintendents and applicators in general to see what their colleagues are doing right — and wrong, for that matter.

The Sandoz poll elicited some potentially harmful responses from those who apply pesticides. For example, 50 percent of surveyed farmers indicated they "sometimes" disposed properly of containers (only 20 percent of surveyed superintendents answered similarly).

Fifty percent?! That's way too high.

This sort of revelation is a double-edged sword. Sure, opponents of pesticides might seize upon this tidbit and use it against the entire industry — farmers, lawn care applicators, roadside vegetation managers and golf course superintendents.

Is that fair? No, but manufacturers can now identify farmers as those applicators who most need education when it comes to container disposal. In addition, this sort of communication shows all professional applicators have a common interest in safe application practices.

• Our second "Great Communicator" is the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Yes, you read that right: GCSAA.

The superintendents association has produced a new 30-minute television show, now airing on the PRIME Network in syndication (see story, page 21).


Hal Phillips, editor

It's called "Par for the Course," and it's the only golf program on television that views the game from an environmentally positive perspective: Nature walks on golf courses. Ron Dodson speaking about the Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary Program. Superintendents speaking authoritatively and articulately on environmental issues. Even Jim Snow, director of the United States Golf Association Green Section, made a cameo appearance in April's episode (could it be the GCSAA has actually begun to work *with* the USGA?).

The show is well-produced and pretty darn slick — I even noticed a touch of the hand-held, herky-jerky camera style made famous by MTV (and beaten to death by ESPN2). Kudos to GCSAA Public Relations Manager Scott Smith, who co-produces the series with host Duke Frye.

In order to make the show consumer-palatable, GCSAA has made some concessions. Golf instruction and travel pieces are, indeed, par for the course on 99 percent of cable's many 30-minute golf programs.

Despite all this, "Par for the Course" is an idea whose time has come. Nothing communicates or creates exposure like television (just ask the PGA Tour), and the golfing public needs to see superintendents talking like the environmentalists we already know them to be.

•••

Just returned from Singapore, where I attended Golf Asia '94. This year's edition was a wholesale departure from Golf Asia '93, and you can bet next year's exhibition and trade show will again break the mold. The show's entire structure, sponsorship and management are currently up in the air (see story, page 59).

What remains rock solid is

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When it comes to restrooms, equal rights go down the toilet

All of you who have struggled with figuring your golfing handicap, we'll need your help (and commiseration) with this update on *Societal Deviation* and its effects on the golf industry.

First, the nation had civil rights (basically, that means no discrimination is allowed against a person because of skin color). Then we had gay rights (that is, discrimination is outlawed against a person for his-her-their personal "lifestyle choices"). Then we had handicapped rights (to ensure that physically challenged can get in and out of public facilities).

But, prepare America! The '90s have brought us (hold your breath) Potty Parity. That is, equality in America's public bathrooms. Please stay with me in this. It is all true.

Potty Parity refers to legislation, in effect or under debate in a number of states, that calls for areas of public assembly, businesses, restaurants — and public golf courses — to have more restroom facilities for women than for men — sometimes twice as much. Ladies say studies show they need more room. Hey, who's to argue, but ... is this tantamount to discrimination against men?


Mark Leslie, managing editor

It's hard to find intelligent counsel in this. In the Bible, God only told the Israelites, wandering in the desert, to dig a trench outside the camp. And, in Galations 3:28 it says: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, man nor woman, for you are all one in Messiah Jesus."

Restrooms are just not mentioned.

What unexpected fallout could Potty Parity have?

Existing businesses are grandfathered under such laws. But new developments in these states will normally have to include, say, a 2-to-1 or 3-to-2 ratio.

In Florida, the ratio in the law passed in early 1993 is 2-to-1. In Minnesota, legislation was introduced this winter that "provides for any place of public accommodation constructed or extensively remodeled hereafter, that there shall be three water closets for women for every two water closets or urinals for men, unless there are two or fewer fixtures for men."

Three to four water closets is normal for the men's room in a clubhouse, according to Joe Hafner, vice president of The MacEwen Group, Inc., of Tampa, Fla., which designs clubhouses across the country. That translates into an additional cost of $4,000 to $5,000 per restroom, Hafner estimated.

Not a huge cost. But, after all, parity (not penalty) is the aim of such laws.

"Clearly, our position is always that we respect everyone's rights and want to do what we can to accommodate all people," said Kathi Driggs, vice president of the Club Managers Association of America. She pointed out that people enforcing the Americans with Disabilities Act have not pushed too hard when full compliance means undue hardship for a company. And "extensive remodeling" is a subjective point as well, she said.

"It's not a big issue for existing clubs. But it could be for new clubs and ones under

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Letters

THE NUMBERS JUST DON'T ADD UP

To the editor:

As a golf course consultant, I just couldn't resist questioning the article, "Golf could be profitable for Utah city, study says" in your April issue [page 9]. Hopefully, the conclusions drawn, namely that the present 240,000 rounds played at nine existing courses and green fees of $9 and $15 "could make $607,000 a year" are misreported rather than the conclusions of the consultant.

Simple math tells me that 240,000 rounds spread over nine courses equals 26,667 rounds per course, which is certainly not crowded conditions indicating under supply. If we then add another course the average declines to 24,000 per course. At an average green fee of $12, this equates to $288,000 in revenue — not profit.

Where's the consultant's $607,000 coming from? By my reckoning, even if carts are mandatory at $10 per person, that would add only $240,000 to the total revenue — still short of the $607,000 indicated to be profit.

This then leads to two possible conclusions:

1) The article was incomplete and didn't mention other revenue sources or rationale, or

2) The consultant is incompetent.

Hopefully, the proper conclusion #1. Otherwise, all of us in consulting may be painted with this brush.

Scott Krause
golf consultant
Muskego, Wis.

Ed. While we would never assert #2, we stand by the figures reported in the story — thereby discounting conclusion #1. Mr. Krause's numerical points are well taken. However, the numbers which don't seem to add up are those of E. Peter Elzi of THK Associates Inc., not *Golf Course News*. In Elzi's defense, the $607,000 figure was surely meant to represent third-year revenue, not profit.

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