

# Membership directors talk the talk

**G**ALENA, Ohio — Superintendents are not the only staff members being called on to know the intricacies of the course in order to excel in their position.

Directors of membership marketing for new courses under construction are carefully studying architects' design specs, inquiring about different types of grasses and studying irrigation and drainage plans to be able to paint a clear picture for prospective new members of private clubs.

Bauer Voss Consulting, Inc. of Galena, a club marketing consulting firm, helps new private clubs hire membership marketing directors and has integrated "Golf Course Construction and Maintenance" into the company's 90-plus-page training manual. Membership directors are required to know about course yardage, grass types, irrigation systems, design and maintenance philosophy.

Heidi Voss, president of Bauer Voss Consulting, said: "It is just like selling any other type of product. You have to know it inside and out and you have to believe in it and be committed to it."

Voss often places directors in clubs six months to a year prior to the course breaking ground. The Ledges of Huntsville Mountain in Alabama enrolled 325 memberships prior to breaking ground. Natalie Rushing, the membership director, can't turn to the superintendent or course pro to explain the course since they are not on board yet.

"The director," Voss said, "must be able to paint a picture of the course for the prospective member and create a high level of enthusiasm that will encourage new members to sponsor friends."

Beth Gilfillin, director of membership for The Reserve Club in Pawleys Island, S.C., had a background selling golf packages to tourists for a local resort.

Stepping into membership was an easy move for her. Gilfillin networks with her members and encourages them to extend invitations to prospects to come out for a tour of the Greg Norman course scheduled to open this fall.

"If I can get them in for a tour, they will join," Gilfillin predicted. "Once people see this course and realize how different we are from others in the area, they are hooked."

Early on, Gilfillin used her own 4X4 Tahoe to get prospective members out on the site. With the cart paths in, she uses a cart or walks with prospects. "People are always astonished," she added, "when I can tell them about the different types of grasses that were used for this project."

Gilfillin made sure that she was close by to observe Norman when he visited. She also visits extensively with project manager Rick Ryan.

Another director who has succeeded in enrolling new members by touring them through the course under construction is Erin Walling of Fieldstone Golf Club in Greenville, Del. Walling brings prospects on a rough-and-tumble ride through 184 rolling acres that will soon accommodate a Hurdzan/Fry Golf Design course. The course broke ground March 31 and officially hosted its first Member/Guest Dirt Tournament on May 16.

"Five holes were shaped out and playable and the members and their friends just had a blast," Walling said.

Because the construction is not visible from the club offices, Walling said it is very difficult for prospective members to understand that if they go on the tour they are going to be able to visualize the course. One couple who had an appointment pulled in and sat in the car for about 10 minutes, then came in and just asked for a brochure. Walling convinced them to go for a short ride. An hour later she had to pull them away from the rock walls that have been built on holes 6 and 13. They joined and



Membership consultant Heidi Voss.

are excited to be a part of the club.

Voss tries to arm directors with knowledge about the course and encourages them to make friends with the architects and course construction company employees so that they are updated on changes that are taking place on the course. On a recent visit to Fieldstone, architects Dana Fry and Dave Whelchel of Hurdzan/Fry Golf Design allowed Walling to tag along on a walk with the owners and course builder Niebur Golf. Walling picked up a great deal of information that she will be able to share with members and prospects.

Being married to a superintendent, Voss has a special interest in turf. "I noticed nine years ago when I met my husband," she said, "that my presentation to prospective members greatly improved and, in turn, so did my sales. It was more than just talking golf, it was a genuine desire to learn more about my product and to be able to put it in simple terms that the prospective member could understand."

Voss attends Golf Course Superintendents Association of America conferences with her husband and participates in the lecture series. "I hope many more superintendents will take the club director under their wing and teach them about maintenance practices," Voss said. "I don't think they necessarily have to propose marriage."

## Mgt. co. phone numbers


Company	Telephone
American ClubServ	972-392-7378
American Golf Corp.	310-664-4000
American Skiing Co.	207-824-3000
Arnold Palmer Mgt.	407-876-6700
Arvida Co.	561-479-1100
Billy Casper Mgt.	703-761-1444
Brassie Golf Corp.	813-621-4653
Brightstone Mgt.	409-856-4233
Buena Vista Hospitality	813-221-7535
Carefree Resorts	602-953-6400
Carolinas Golf Group	919-571-8091
Classic Golf Group	941-299-0900
Classic Golf Mgt.	770-528-0799
Club Consultants Inc.	210-828-8100
Club Resorts	972-888-7321
ClubCorp	972-888-7321
ClubLink	905-841-3730
Cobblestone Golf Group	619-794-2602
Colorado Golf Mgt.	970-468-0681
Continental Golf	612-929-3255
Corcoran-Jennison	508-896-8666
CourseCo Inc.	707-763-0335
Crown Golf Properties	847-832-1800
Dakota Golf Mgt.	605-367-7092
Del Webb Corp.	602-808-8000
Destination Hotels	303-799-3830

Company	Telephone
Duke Mgt. Services	800-631-5182
Edwin B. Raskin Co.	615-373-9400
Empire Golf Inc.	916-354-3040
Environmental Golf	818-223-8500
Evergreen Alliance Golf	972-915-3673
Foothills Golf	818-637-7734
Fore Star Golf	806-762-3673
Franklin Golf Properties	954-429-0006
Friel Golf Management	603-882-8893
Golden Bear Club Serv.	561-227-0450
Golf Communities	407-245-7557
Golf Enterprises	310-664-4000
Golf Resources Inc.	214-831-9200
Golf Services Group	281-955-6263
Golf Trust of America	803-723-4653
GolfSouth	864-255-4653
Gotham Golf Partners	305-463-0463
Granite Golf Group	800-903-5051
Greenlinks	615-373-3200
H.G. Properties	317-580-2655
Hyatt Hotels Corp.	312-750-1234
In Celebration Golf Mgt.	602-951-4444
International Golf Group	203-259-7272
International Golf Mgt	941-686-2376
Intrawest Corp.	604-669-9777
IRI Golf Group	214-424-4546
ISS Golf Services	352-365-1379
Jemsek Golf	708-287-5872
John Jacobs Group	602-991-8587

Company	Telephone
Kemper Sports Mgt.	847-291-9666
KSL Fairways	703-330-5300
KSL Recreation	619-564-1088
Landmark Golf Co.	619-776-6688
Legacy Golf Management	770-218-0040
LinksCorp	847-441-1010
Lyon Golf LLC	602-953-6553
Marriott Golf	407-206-6257
Martty Golf Mgt.	504-769-1616
Masters Golf Corp.	407-841-4800
Matrix Hospitality	908-521-2900
Maxwell Golf Group	601-978-3795
MDJ Management	714-528-1185
Meadowbrook Golf	310-274-3999
National Fairways Inc.	203-861-0080
New England Golf Corp.	617-326-5717
Nitto America Co. Ltd.	310-477-5111
O.B. Sports	503-678-4330
Paloma Golf Group	619-793-1980
Professional Golf Mgt.	404-233-4487
RDC Golf Mgt.	201-257-3020
Riverside Golf Mgt.	904-356-1000
Scratch Golf Co.	803-686-6000
Shaker Golf Corp.	513-821-1990
Signature Golf Int'l	904-753-7000
Southwest Golf	702-736-2222
SunCor Development	602-285-6800
Troon Golf Mgt.	602-606-1000
Western Golf Properties	602-483-8914

## New Turf Problem Solvers


- ◆ Reduced turf clippings
- ◆ Aggressive tillering & fill in
- ◆ Improved mowing quality
- ◆ Very dark green color
- ◆ Better versus brown patch
- ◆ Durable under traffic
- ◆ Establishes new performance standards




**WIZARD**  
Turf Type Perennial Ryegrass




**EXCEL**  
TURF TYPE PERENNIAL RYEGRASS



**PENNANT II**  
TURF TYPE PERENNIAL RYEGRASS



**CELEBRATION**  
DWARF PERENNIAL RYEGRASS BLEND



**"Seeds for the 21st Century"**  
**Burlingham Seeds**

E. F. Burlingham & Sons  
P.O. Box 217  
Forest Grove, Oregon 97116  
800-221-7333 503-357-2141  
Fax 503-359-9223  
*Quality Seed since 1914*