

# A different perspective: Pro-active job interviewing

## A job-hunter's perspective

By RAYMOND G. DAVIES

As superintendents, we have developed specific knowledge and skills that allow us to produce great golf course turf. Interviewing skills are not required to grow great turf, but having the right job is. To land a job in which your career can thrive, you must excel in the interview process.

A key to successful interviewing is to

take initiative in — pro-actively manage — the interaction between yourself as the candidate and the employer as interviewer.

As the applicant for a superintendent's job, you must achieve four objectives in an interview to glean

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Ray Davies

## An employer's perspective

By TOM ISAAK

I heartily endorse the principles of pro-active job interviewing. The job candidate who understands the concept put forth by Raymond Davies, in the companion article, has a powerful career-building too — if he or she can implement the concept.

Ray and I work together. When we were interviewing each other we applied

considerable collaborative effort to shaping a job that would marry the company's needs with his skills and career goals. Now, as colleagues for two years, we continue this problem-solving relationship.

It was a pro-active interview that both launched and formed the basis for this highly productive relationship.

My observations are intended to affirm Ray's concept, while providing an employer's perspective.

### COMMUNICATE COMPETENCE

It is almost as hard to communicate competence as it is to examine it. The pro-active interview strategy solves the problem for both parties. Competence — and its essential component, confidence — are communicated best by those who know where they stand. Understanding how a job fits into the career growth you have planned says you know where you stand. If career growth can be defined as acquiring knowledge and skills and applying them with satisfactory results, rather than simply where one works and for how much, the foundation is laid for a dialogue about what constitutes a successful employee-employer relationship. Think through the elements of career growth that will lead you to satisfaction. This self-knowledge about the subject of the interview — your career — is essential to communicating competence. It "centers" you for an interview and is the basis for knowing if the job is good for you. It also gives you the perspective as well as the strength to recognize if it isn't a good match. Note that this is quite different than playing "hard to get," which will come across to the interviewer as arrogance or manipulation.

### QUESTION THE QUESTIONER

A good interviewer seeks to understand how you think. The pro-active candidate shows this, not tells about it, by question-

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Tom Isaak is president, CourseCo., Inc and Raymond Davies, a certified golf course superintendent, is the company's regional superintendent.



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## Salt & turf

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## Employer's perspective

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ing the questioner. A great interview for both parties happens when engagement occurs which reveals analytical thinking and applied knowledge by the candidate. Correct or satisfactory answers to questions are fairly easy to find in job candidates, particularly when the interviewer knows less about the subject than the candidate, as is usually the case when interviewing a superintendent. But what the interviewer does know is what his or her problems are. The outstanding candidate elicits and understands the interviewer's goals for the position and matches his or her competencies to them.

The hardest job the interviewer is to dream up hypothetical scenarios which will reveal how the candidate will reason and act. The best candidate can make any scenario a good illustration of his or her competence by putting on Ray's "consultant hat." Gain objectivity by thinking, "This isn't about me, it is about a problem to be solved." A consultant needs to understand fully a situation before he or she can respond with an effective solution. So, ask the interviewer the clarifying questions that give you the information necessary to solve their problem. Combining all relevant information with your knowledge as a superintendent will reveal your analytical and problem-solving ability. This provides the interviewer with a much richer basis for evaluating a candidate than simple Q and A. If scenarios are not offered, supply them from your own experience, include all the relevant information, then synthesize with your technical knowledge to show the effective conclusion.

### DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Pro-active interviewing is not just an attitude, it is knowledge-based behavior. This means you need to be confident of your knowledge of the relevant facts and processes. Prepare by knowing all you can reasonably learn about the physical property, its management and its recent history.

You may find that because you are a trained professional, you can quickly know more than those interviewing you about turfgrass and its underlying conditions. Appropriately and modestly conveyed, this knowledge is impressive, and the fact of your effort to be informed says you are serious in your interest. Moreover, this knowledge creates the context necessary to put on the "consultant hat" necessary to understand the employer's goals and the problems and opportunities inherent in the job situation.

## Job-hunter's perspective

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all the information necessary to make a good decision:

- The employer must determine your competence in the areas the employer has determined are critical for a successful candidate.
- The employer needs to communicate the job's benefits and

opportunities in order to interest of the best candidate.

- You must show your competencies, especially those that the employer is not aware bring value to the position.
- You must communicate an understanding of the necessary resources and support required to make any candidate with this

company successful.

A good decision combines a) your selection as the best candidate, and b) the necessary resources and support for you to succeed in the job. Employers may not immediately recognize that this second element is as important to them as it is to you.

The employer with limited technical understanding of turfgrass management may not know what competencies are required for

success on a golf course, but you can count on their knowing the results they require. This will very directly affect the strengths they are seeking in your candidacy. You can learn their needs by listening closely to the questions they ask, their sequence and phrasing. Your success depends on discerning what is important to the interviewer and your ability to relate your com-

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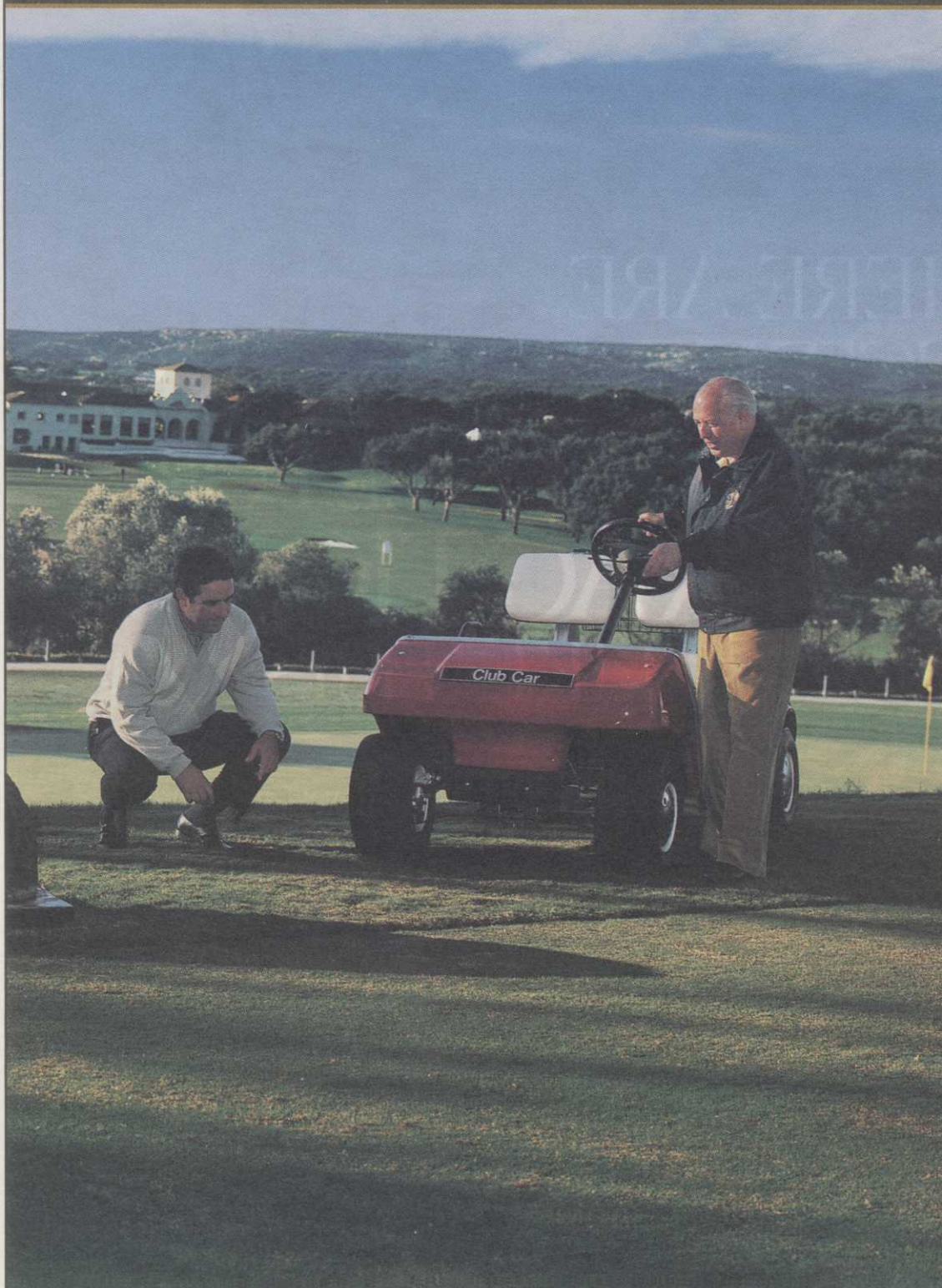
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