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THRIVING IN THE HEAT

July and August are the hottest months of the year. It can be too hot for turf, employees, golfers and you. In July, the average high temperature is 104 in Scottsdale, Ariz., 92 in Orlando, Fla., 87 in Valley Forge, Pa., and 84 in Chicago. So here's my top-10 list for making it through July and August with your job enthusiasm and work force intact:

10. Provide positive performance feedback. There's nothing like a great compliment to stay focused or keep going in difficult circumstances like the heat. Be certain the positive feedback reinforces specific actions or outcomes that meet and exceed your expectations.

9. Work alongside employees and lead by example. Seeing that you're able and willing to work in tough conditions motivates employees. When the going gets tough, it's even more important employees see your excitement, passion and willingness to work.

8. Play golf or other activities that refresh you. July and August aren't always the best months to take a vacation, but you can develop habits that relieve the stress of work and create quality time away from work. Research shows how you spend time with family and friends is at least as important as how much time you spend. Schedule time during the day when all family members are together. Talk about the day. Ask each person to share one or two positives from his day – a new friend, an accomplishment, something learned, an exciting experience with an old friend. Go for a walk. Don't look for weeds in the turf or problems with the fairways. Reflect on the serenity of nature.

7. Understand golfers. They can become frustrated more easily and overcritical of the course, your staff and you. Interact with them, work especially hard to understand them and always be empathic – understand their perspec-

tives. You don't always have to agree with them, but you must always understand where they're coming from.

6. Provide redirection and negative performance feedback if necessary. It's easy to justify overlooking inappropriate behavior or inadequate performance because of difficult conditions. Don't be tempted. Obviously, performance expectations have to be adjusted to reflect course conditions; however, continue to provide redirection or negative feedback when there's unacceptable performance. Redirection feedback is redirecting actions without any hint of a reprimand when the inadequate performance isn't caused by the employee. Negative feedback is required when the inadequate performance is because of lack of energy, focus, concentration and effort by the employee. In tough conditions, you should be more focused on redirection feedback and minimize the use



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of negative feedback.

5. Collaborate with others at the course. You're not the only one affected by the heat (although it is nice in the air-conditioned pro shop and clubhouse). Collaborate with course leadership – the golf pro, the clubhouse manager and others – to minimize how the hot weather affects golfers/guests and employees.

4. Have "informal formal" coaching sessions with employees. One of my most common suggestions to managers is to obtain information from employees by asking two questions: "What's going well with you?" and "What could be going better?" I call this an "informal formal" coaching session because it should be more than a time to BS with an employee but less formal than calling him into your office.

3. Spend time with family and friends. In this space, I've talked frequently about the importance of developing the relationship with employees, counterparts at the course or club and golfers. It's also important to develop and strengthen relationships with family members and friends.

Spend time with them; you need their support. As many of you know, children grow up mighty fast.

2. Listen. Listening is a powerful supervisory tool especially in stressful times. At this time of year, most of your employees have been with you for several months or more. Don't respond too quickly to their seemingly petty concerns or seemingly unreasonable complaints and requests. Often by listening and showing empathy ("I understand your frustration" or "tell me more about what needs to be done"), an employee will vent his frustration or anger, and the situation will resolve itself or be resolved easily.

1. Be fair. The key to supervision is fairness. It's easy, especially in stressful times, to just be nice. If being too nice to one person means others – who might be doing a great job – feel they've been treated unfairly, you have just unmotivated those you least want to negatively impact. **GCI**