



Jim McLoughlin is the founder of TMG Golf (www.TMGgolfcounsel.com), a golf course development and consulting firm, and is a former executive director of the GCSAA. He can be reached at golfguide@adelphia.net or 760-804-7339. His previous columns can be found on www.golfcourseindustry.com.

WEB SITES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Can there be a greater difference between night and day? I thought not until I noticed the difference between when a superintendent applies for a job with the support of a personal Web site and when a superintendent applies for a job without one. The availability of a quality, personal Web site transforms the job application process from an arduous, uphill climb to coasting down hill on a well-oiled bike. If you doubt me, read on.

STANDARD JOB APPLICATION PROCESS

The traditional job application process unfolds in the following, always-challenging manner:

1. From the start, trouble begins when candidates submit a cover letter with a resume because candidates have a bad habit of overloading their resumes with too many words, pages and supporting photographs that make it difficult for a search committee to evaluate their applications.
2. Once received at the club/course, the game of resume Russian roulette begins – applications are put into an ever-growing pile that frequently caps out at more than 100 resumes per job opening.
3. The glaring weakness with the search process is that search committees generally don't know how to identify the approximate six best candidates they want to interview. Consequently, search committees resort to what's tantamount to a lottery process to identify who will be interviewed and who won't, leaving most of the better applicants without an interview opportunity.
4. While the problem is over for those not interviewed, it's just beginning for those selected for an interview because now they face the daunting task of hard selling themselves cold-turkey to an uninformed search committee in a very few minutes. This results in candidates invariably committing interview suicide because (a) they generally wait to submit their plans of action until walking into the interview

room, which guarantees a bland interview; and (b) to overcome the handicaps of ill-defined resumes and late action plans, they talk more about their past jobs than where they would take the target maintenance program specifically if hired.

In summary, is it any wonder that the vast majority of superintendents and assistants applying for jobs not only get discouraged but also begin to doubt themselves seriously?

DEFINING A QUALITY WEB SITE

Before looking closely at the Web-site-supported job application process, it's important to identify what defines a quality Web site because weak Web sites will not get the job done. The simple logic that applies here is that quality Web sites require a quality inventory of links to the home page. For example, the following summary profiles should be linked when applicable:

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education history, assistant jobs, superintendent jobs, in-house construction projects, career summary, a consolidated resume, published articles, references and a possible wild card link to address unique situations. (See a model Web site at www.stevenrenzetti.com.)

The majority of the dozen or so Web-site drafts sent to me each month for my review are sub par. Therefore, anticipate it will take working through several drafts before a candidate will be able to finalize an effective Web site. (For further com-

mentary about this subject, read my March 2004 *Golf Course Industry* column.)

WEB-SITE APPLICATION PROCESS

The Web-site-supported application process is evolving in the following manner where applicants:

1. Prepare a more aggressive cover letter that will present the applicant's Web-site address together with a request for access to specific course data/information that will facilitate the preparation of a more definitive action plan.
2. Forward the cover letter with Web-site address via e-mail to the search committee chairman who will distribute the application upon receipt to the entire search committee electronically. Two strategic benefits quickly gain are that the candidate's submittal won't be put in the stored pile of more than 100 hard-copy resumes received and the search committee gains immediate access and time to preliminarily review the applicant's credentials comfortably.

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3. Prepare an appropriate action plan of comfortable length (less is more) that will summarize a candidate's approach to the vacant job should he or she be hired, and submit it electronically to the search committee 10 days prior to the interview. This will allow the search committee to become completely familiar with a candidate's action plan well before interviewing.

This benefits the candidate significantly because it eliminates the need to hard sell and precipitates a solid interactive question-and-answer session with the search committee that allows candidates to present themselves comfortably and effectively in their best professional light. This is how jobs are won.

Not only are quality Web sites the golden key to effective career advancement, they're also the key to elevating an entire profession, given the opportunity. **GCI**