



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@roadrunner.com or 760-804-7339. His previous columns can be found on www.golfcourseindustry.com.

READERS ARE LISTENING

This is the 35th consecutive column I've had the privilege of writing for this magazine, which suggests this is an appropriate time to summarize reader reactions to my columns.

PERSONAL CAREER WEB SITES (See November 2004, May 2007 and September 2007 columns)

Once this concept was introduced in November 2004, it triggered immediate interest throughout the GCSAA membership. But, few knew how to develop a Web site or where to find the necessary counseling. The initiative of several GCSAA members cured this problem when they produced model Web sites and were willing to share their methodology with interested parties. Sample evidence of the high level that Web sites can attain can be found at www.stevenrenzetti.com, www.michaelmumper.com and www.michaelmongon.com. Early history now is showing definitively that quality Web sites not only guarantee interviews but also are winning jobs against highly competitive candidate fields as well.

Despite this wide acceptance, several problems persist.

1. Many assistants and superintendents wait until job openings surface before committing to Web-site development. Because it takes as long as three months to produce a quality Web site under normal conditions, these job applicants miss the mark and quickly learn Web sites should be developed during the quiet times before jobs open.

2. Early in their careers, assistants and superintendents fear their job experience is insufficient to justify a Web site. This is a mistake because search committees always will respect a job applicant's taking the initiative to develop a well-organized Web site no matter what a candidate's depth of experience might be at the time.

3. Veteran superintendents dismiss the need for a personal Web site because they feel the major part of their careers are behind them. This is also a mistake because

a personal Web site will serve as a safety net should a superintendent have to, or want to, look for another job late in a career.

4. Too few job applicants write for publication. Because search committees respond favorably to candidates' writings, everyone is encouraged to get published early and often in their careers – initially for chapter newsletters, then for regional and national publications.

WRITTEN CONTRACTS (See October 2007 column)

No column I've written has generated a quicker response throughout the GCSAA membership than the issue of so few superintendents having access to written contracts when so many managers and golf professionals do. Association members also note disappointingly there has been no effort to address this pressing but addressable

issue. The good news is that superintendents are learning how to earn job security, i.e., negotiate or earn three months of job security with pay for each year of satisfactory employment up to a maximum of 12 months. This approach negates employers' primary concern about written contracts, i.e., the risk of a bad hire.

JOB SECURITY THROUGH THE RULES (See August 2007 column)

Once considered a necessary evil throughout the superintendents' world, more GCSAA members are quickly learning the Rules of Golf can become an unexpected friend to all those who embrace them because job security can be enhanced, a commitment to the Rules provides unique career marketing opportunities and the Rules present an enjoyable opportunity to engage the game of golf at a high intellectual level.

GOVERNANCE POLICIES (See October and November 2005 columns, as well as January and February 2007 columns)

Without question, core GCSAA members prefer individual voting to block chapter voting, want input into the nominating process, wish the GCSAA board would function more transparently and are disappointed board members' perks separate board culture from members' culture. However, while the association's chapter-oriented national power base acknowledges these membership priorities, it prefers to maintain the status quo, at least for the moment. Stay tuned.

SABBATICAL LEAVE (See July 2005 column)

Many might be surprised to learn the GCSAA members' collective interest in the sabbatical leave concept has been as strong as the expressed interest in personal Web sites. However, the difference between the two is that the need for a sabbatical leave occurs less frequently and much later in one's career. Consequently, live models of sabbatical-leave applications will evolve at a slower pace over the coming years. Accordingly, superintendents are advised to keep the sabbatical leave concept on their long-range radar screens. **GCI**

