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## EASY TALK, DIFFICULT WALK

**M**y last column (May 2008) addressed the unnerving fact that golf course superintendents generally don't have access to written contracts and suggested how golf course superintendents might help themselves in this regard. As promised, this column will focus on the important role GCSA chapters can play within an evolving national campaign to address this pressing issue. The key observation to note again is that clubs presumably are able to deny superintendents written contracts primarily because their members (almost 100 percent of whom enjoy the privilege of written contracts or grant them universally to management level employees they hire) aren't aware of the situation. Once club memberships are educated about this situation effectively, the picture will begin to change.

Unfortunately, chapters aren't organized peoplewise to undertake this educational assignment effectively because short-term rotating chapter presidents aren't on the scene long enough to command enough attention to make clubs listen. The situation calls for the continuing presence of an articulate, informed professional to fill the role of chapter executive director. Easy talk, but a difficult walk as the following comparison of the way the GCSAA and PGA fund their chapters/sections will show.

**Cost.** There are 41 PGA sections that concentrate golf professionals within a 300 to 600 range of annual dues-paying members per section. Conversely, there are 101 GCSA chapters that concentrate members within a much lower range of dues-paying members (150 to 400), which makes it difficult for most chapters to self-fund an executive director.

More interestingly, the national PGA dues format rebates \$500 of each member's \$600 annual dues fee back to the sections. This provides the average mid-sized section with an approximate \$225,000 stipend each year, which is enough money to allow PGA sections to hire executive directors comfortably within a salary range of from roughly \$60,000 for the smaller sections to more than \$125,000 for the larger sections. GCSAA members pay an annual dues fee of \$320 the association

### GOLF ASSOCIATION SEEKS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

An established, member-based regional golf service association is looking to hire a retired corporate executive, military officer or the equivalent as its first executive director to serve as c.o.o., to direct a one-person administrative staff and become the spokesperson for the organization. Candidates must play golf with a USGA-approved handicap and be familiar with a private golf club environment. The successful candidate will be responsible for managing/promoting the association; converting to chapterwide electronic communications, including Web site management; scheduling and managing events; and optimizing revenue flow. Respectable starting salary with the opportunity to increase as the chapter grows. Send resume with cover letter electronically to (insert chapter e-mail address).

keeps without rebating to chapters.

The GCSAA should consider adopting the PGA dues model, but this would take some time to implement if the GCSAA is willing to go down this road. While waiting for the GCSAA to adopt the PGA dues format, or in case the GCSAA never does adopt the PGA dues format, chapters would always be able to generate adequate funds to self-fund the hiring of an executive director themselves provided they (after appropriately increasing their annual dues fee):

(i) partner, if necessary, with one or more neighboring chapters and/or independent regional associations to hire a common executive director; and

(ii) look to hire qualified retired corporate or military men and women with solid retirement portfolios who would be willing to work for less initially. For some chapters, the time to consider hiring an executive director is now; for others, later.

**Workload.** A fundamental decision chapters must address when considering hiring an executive director is whether to replace or retain a presently employed executive secretary. Circumstances suggest that the larger member-based chapters with heavy workloads, especially those that publish a magazine, retain executive secretaries to insure covering the work base. Conversely, smaller chapters with lighter workloads need not retain an executive secretary when hiring an executive director. This key decision will have to be measured carefully on a chapter-by-chapter basis.

Three meaningful benefits immediately accrue when hiring an executive director to complement, not replace, an executive secretary:

(i) it would cost less to hire an executive director because

of the shared workload;

(ii) the number of candidates qualified for the job would increase; and

(iii) candidates would look more favorably at a job they are considering. Chapters might use the model media on this page when soliciting candidates.

My next column (July 2008) will discuss this subject in more detail and present a definitive job description that will profile the wide range of valuable services a qualified chapter executive director can deliver. **GCI**