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DO YOUR HOMEWORK

It's no secret the economy is in tough shape, and golf is a want, not a need. As you prepare to take the next step in your career, understand the context in which your future employers are operating. Finding ways you can bring value to an operation and help cut unnecessary costs or generate revenue from unexpected sources can help you go a long way in your career.

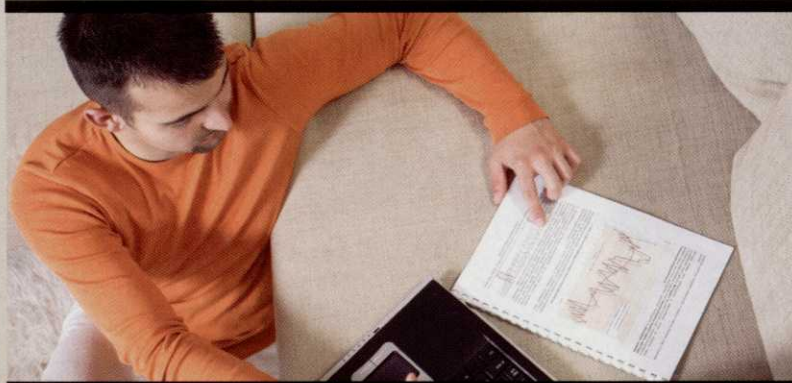
Whether you're a student, an assistant superintendent, or somewhere in between,

what you're getting into. Superintendents who take an active role mentoring their staff, involving them in the decisions they'll make one day, will become employers of choice. It's also important to understand a superintendent plays an important role in all areas of an operation's success, including player development, marketing, finance, membership communication, etc.

As you prepare to interview, look for resources such as Interviewstream.com,

out the professional development resource on the GCSAA Web site. The self-assessment tool will help identify your strengths and areas for improvement. It covers all areas of golf course management, including communication, leadership, operations, personal skills and resource utilization.

Chuck Noll, the former Pittsburgh Steelers coach, is quoted in Tony Dungy's autobiography, "Quiet Strength," saying "Get the work done so you can enjoy the other parts of your life." Strive to achieve work/life balance, find a hobby you enjoy and are proud of. During the past two years,



Whether you're a student, an assistant superintendent, or somewhere in between, each of us can benefit from understanding the financial performance of an operation in 2008.

each of us can benefit from understanding the financial performance of an operation in 2008. Find out the primary sources of income for your operation or one you're considering working for. Did it meet financial goals last year? What's being done to meet these goals in 2009? What can you do to ensure resources aren't wasted and are being used as efficiently as possible? What types of out-of-the-box ideas will be implemented in the upcoming year? Why should customers choose the facility over competitors?

As you set out to take your first job after college, understand it's your job to find out everything you can about the facility to which you're applying. Find out exactly what's going to be expected of you: hours worked, job functions, skills needed to succeed, the leadership style of your supervisor and the culture within the organization. Knowing these aspects of the job is important to make sure you know exactly

a site that allows you to practice your interview skills in front of your computer (you'll need a webcam and microphone). The site provides a comprehensive list of interview questions to choose from. Once the questions are selected, you're given two minutes to respond to each question. Your responses are saved and promptly e-mailed to you. You can go back and watch your responses and improve your answers. The site is a great tool that allows you to practice real-life interview questions and improve your communication skills and body language.

Set personal goals in 2009. Maybe you want to learn Spanish, become an assistant superintendent representative in your chapter or take classes part-time to earn an additional degree. Whatever your goal, go for it. The off-season (for those of us in the North) can be a great time to learn new skills that'll separate us from the competition. If you're not sure where to start, check

I've had the opportunity to climb Mount Rainier in Washington and complete the Des Moines Marathon. Both took many hours of training and preparation, but they are memories that will last a lifetime.

The importance of a mentor can't be overstated. Mentors are those who've been through good times and bad, who've made mistakes, and are willing to share their expertise and experiences with you.

Mentors know you and your situation and many times what's best for you. Often, their message supersedes whether you agree with what they say or not. Seek them out as you prepare to take the next and biggest step in your career.

You may have to work harder than your peers who came into the business a few years ago. It may take patience to get the job you're seeking. Keep in mind, there will always be a job for the candidate who has the skills and willingness to work hard and produce results. **GCI**