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## PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

**T**he new year is a time to assess your golf course, budget, labor, finances and future. This assessment may lead to exploring other employment opportunities.

The outlook for the 2009 job market may be bleak, but a well-prepared resume may separate you from others. If you advance to the interview process, be creative, politely persistent and as professionally detailed off the golf course as you are on. Your agronomic knowledge and talent may not guarantee success, but other factors might.

Here are a few examples:

### 1. Identify when, where and who is conducting the interview.

- Use the Internet to research and learn about the background and personal characteristics of those conducting the interviews. Study their backgrounds to establish traits and philosophies that may assist you with your preparation and help determine if you wish to pursue the opportunity.

- Check the references of those interviewing you.

- Plan travel time appropriately to avoid unexpected delays.

- If the interview is in the clubhouse, find out if it will be in a large board room, small office or both. This will aid you when presenting your information. Practice your delivery in a similar environment.

### 2. The adage, "You never get a second chance to make a good first impression" is vital to your preparation.

Review your personal traits, characteristics and etiquette for meeting and greeting people.

- When meeting people for the first time, demonstrate initiative, passion and energy for the position. The individuals will know immediately if you're interested and honest in your pursuit of the opportunity.

- Honestly review your personality shortcomings and avoid having them surface at an inopportune time. Look people in the eyes, speak slowly, keep your hands still and quiet, avoid terms such as "you know," "like" and "um," and allow people to finish

their sentences without interrupting.

- Know hand-shake protocol and respect certain guidelines. If the person is older than you are, wait until his hand is extended, firmly grasp the hand using a light grip, give a modest pump and let go. In a business setting, the rules are the same whether the person is male or female. Always shake a hand that's extended to you.

### 3. Review and establish your nonagronomic qualifications.

More interview committees wish to determine your qualities beyond turf knowledge.

- Be prepared to discuss and outline personal management philosophies about your staff, the club's professional staff, other employees and club membership.

- Be fluent when discussing finances, ordering protocol, record-keeping, employee/member discipline and membership reactions to your plans and objectives.

- Understand the protocol of conducting a meeting, whether it's a green committee meeting, board meeting or staff meeting.

- Focus on organizational skills – they'll identify you as a professional manager.

- Often, a committee's first interaction with a candidate is through the computer. Being well versed in all aspects of electronic management and communication options is critical to advancement.

### 4. Be one step ahead of the competition.

If the club forwards you a package containing its history, background, design philosophy, budget and operating information for your review, read it thoroughly.

- If the club sends you its operating budget, review and revise it to meet your forecasted operational needs.

- Become as familiar with the property and golf course as possible before the interview. If possible, visit and walk the property in advance. Download an aerial image of the property from Google Earth to review the topography, especially if it's raining, to observe surface run-off.

- If the incumbent superintendent is no longer employed, visit the maintenance

facility, pump station, irrigation controllers and turf nursery.

- Investigate perimeter properties and the club neighborhood to determine if there are any potential outside agency impacts or intrusions.

- Bring a compass for determining sun angles, shade cast from trees and where you may encounter winter damage if in a Northern climate.

- Bring a soil probe and turf thermometer to uncover any malady not unveiled in the interview process.

### 5. Clothes can make or break first impressions.

- Determine when and where you'll be interviewed, and dress accordingly. Many interviews involve a walk around the golf course with committee members. Don't wear a suit in this situation. Bring your suit if the walk is followed by the interview. Request the host club allow you to change in its locker room.

- The attire for the walk is business casual. Wear dress slacks, a collared shirt with a tie and your logoed club sweater or wind shirt, plus clean footwear.

- The formal interview is the time for a business suit. Make sure it's current and stylish, with no loud or unusual patterns or colors. Most importantly, your suit must fit. Poor-fitting attire indicates lack of concern or discipline.

- Match shoe color with belt color.

- Shine your shoes. If you pay attention to detail on the golf course, do so off the golf course.

### 6. Personal grooming is the final touch for the dress-to-impress aspect of the interview.

- A timely haircut allows your crop to be at its best. Don't head to the barber the morning of the interview.

- Be clean shaven. If you have facial hair, be sure it's trimmed and neat. Always trim nose and ear hair.

- Remove soil underneath your fingernails.

Being prepared professionally off the golf course requires logic, forethought and consideration of others. **GCI**