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SET YOURSELF APART

The off-season is upon us, and despite the current economic climate, maybe you're getting a bailout from the daily routine of your job. Hopefully, you're blessed with having a job or have been fortunate to find new employment.

One of the services my firm provides is assisting employers searching for new staff and assisting superintendents seeking employment. The market is tight, cost cutting is rampant, and an abundance of new people are entering the golf business. Those seeking to advance to the next level of employment are faced with stiff competition.

So, how does a golf course superintendent, a mature golf course manager, a senior assistant superintendent or equipment technician get the attention of a prospective employer? After reviewing hundreds of resumes last fall, here are observations and suggestions about how to – and how not to – formulate a professional, attention-grabbing resume.

THE COVER LETTER

Because the cover letter is the primary introduction to the search committee, consider the following:

- Be professional, neat and clean. Be organized and brief when stating your interest and desire of a position.
- If your current employer knows you're looking for a new position, use club letterhead. It demonstrates you're proud of your club and you work on its behalf.
- Be accurate about your interest and desire for employment. Don't gush with enthusiasm and praise of what a privilege and golden opportunity it would be for you to accept employment.
- Don't describe how much tournament experience you have and how many major championships you've worked. Unless you've been the golf course superintendent during a tournament, the search committee won't be impressed that you've raked bunkers or filled divots.
- Don't ramble on about the rich, glori-

ous golf history and tradition of your club or how many major championships have been contested there, unless you were intimately involved with them. The club's reputation will speak for itself.

- Make sure you have the correct name, address and spelling of the club, particularly the contact person's name who's receiving the resume. Don't send your resume to Club A when applying to Club B and vice versa.

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THE RESUME

In this age of technology, there are numerous ways to provide information to a prospective employer. Use these methods to your advantage:

- The traditional paper resume is acceptable. If this format is what you choose, use whatever shipping method will get the document to the club quickly and undamaged. If your resume arrives crumpled or folded in a standard envelope with postage due, it demonstrates a lack of preparation and is a red flag for the committee.
- Be brief with your personal history, background, education and qualifications summary. Focus on your career highlights and accomplishments.
- Use various Internet sources to post your information, including the GCSAA Web site, your local GCSAA chapter Web site, or even create your own Web site.
- Create a visual record that includes pictures of the golf course that can be sent easily, handled and stored easily by the search committee, and instantly provided to everyone. In many instances, the more paper sent, the less it's read.

• Recently, a superintendent candidate provided a DVD including an interview featuring himself, a virtual tour of the golf course and maintenance facility, an overview of staff training and daily golf course preparations. It included on-course dealings with the green chairman and committee, who were reviewing an upcoming renovation project. This was imaginative and showed initiative, setting the superintendent apart from his competitors.

KEY POINTERS

- If the application time is fixed and resumes are expected by a certain date and time, don't expect consideration if your information is received late.
- Include every possible way you can be reached, including addresses (personal or professional) and phone numbers. Don't provide your employer's number if he isn't aware you're looking for another position.
- Always provide a correct and current e-mail address. If I send an e-mail response and it's returned stating "failed mail delivery," the opportunity is missed.
- Realize the search committee may check every piece of information in your resume thoroughly for accuracy and integrity. Don't state you were employed some place or worked a championship event if you didn't.
- Do your homework about the club to which you're applying. Knowing the history and design background of the club, as well as its championships, turf concerns, past superintendent profiles and philosophies, will set you apart from the competition.
- It's fine to follow-up with an e-mail or phone call to verify your resume was received. Allow seven to 10 days before following up. Don't be overbearing.
- If you don't get an interview or the desired response, send a hand-written, thank-you note on club or personal stationery to the search committee. This indicates a thoroughness and respect for the position, your current club or employer and yourself. This simple gesture may keep you top-of-mind with those conducting future searches. **GCI**