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GETTING INVOLVED

I believe learning takes place everywhere – not just at work, but within your local or national association, church, community group or athletic team. It all comes under the heading of getting involved.

Getting involved is an excellent way to prepare you for the next level of being a golf course superintendent. By getting involved in golf industry initiatives you develop relationships with peers, superintendents, industry partners, golf course owners, managers and industry leaders who can serve as important connections in your career. Begin by getting involved with your local association. This involvement:

- Reflects your well-roundedness. Involvement in your local association shows employers that your skills extend beyond work.
- Provides you with unlimited opportunities to gain life and industry experiences, such as planning an event, running a meeting or building a team.
- Improves your time management skills. When you get involved in activities, you have more things to juggle and your time management skills improve.
- Improves your personal growth in areas such as leadership, interpersonal communications, problem solving and confidence.
- Secures future references. Networking develops relationships with other leaders who can assist you in your career development.
- Allows you to learn from association activities by sharing ideas and discussing industry trends that you can pass on to your team.

I have been an active member in my association for the last 10 years and I'm proud to be serving as an elected member of the Board of Directors of the Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Association (MiGCSA). My experience has provided me with many opportunities to gain an understanding of statewide governance, the issues affecting the golf industry locally and nationally, and the role of politics in our industry. I'm very fortunate to have 12 superintendents on the board as mentors who support my involvement and respect my opinion in board discussions.

Assistants who demonstrate leadership abilities have a leg up on the competition, especially when competing against hundreds of applicants for that one superintendent position. I recently applied for a superintendent position and found myself competing against 125 other applicants. I wondered if I was going to receive an interview, or at the very least be noticed as a strong assistant among a list of qualified individuals. Unfortunately, I did not get the job but I did get an interview. Leadership qualities are in demand and I truly believe this is what made me stand out from the other qualified applicants.

Involvement in community groups can incorporate many of the beneficial activities described above, such as building connections with other people, learning new things and volunteering your time. From sporting teams and faith-based groups to rotary clubs and athletic teams, there are many options for broadening your skills. If you're looking to make new friends, learn something new or gain or polish leadership skills, getting involved is a great way to accomplish these goals.

Getting involved has allowed me to interact with great people with different personal and professional backgrounds whether from being a member on the MiGCSA board, volunteering at my daughter's school, writing articles for GCI or playing on my hockey team. At the end of the day, balance of family, work and extracurricular activities is crucial so make sure you have the time, passion and resources to make it an effective endeavor. **GCI**

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