



## DISCOVERING YOUR STAFF'S STRENGTHS

I have written many articles on building relationships for the simple reason that success in any business – golf-related or not – stems not only from how you treat people but also your ability to build relationships.

At the most basic level, a manager is defined by how well his/her staff is at doing their job. While I am a fan of being in control of my destiny, you have to depend on others to get things done. In the past I have had quite a few experiences with bosses that have different personalities. On the one hand, I have experienced bosses that I have been friends with in and out of the work place. On the other, there have been those who walk away while you're

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talking to them and are more concerned with their own agendas. I know my willingness to do good work vs. great work. When you care about your employees they will go to the ends of the earth to ensure they do the best job. And when you don't, they are going to give you only what you asked for and no more.

So how do you get to know your staff? You don't have to be friends with every staff member but you do need to have some interest about them as a person. The best way to do this, which seems to work for me, is to get them a book called "Strength Finder 2.0" by Tom Rath. I am not much of a reader unless the subject is something I really care about. I am more of the guy who flips through the pictures until I find an interesting topic. However this is not a typical book. It introduces you to what peoples' strengths are and how to interact with people who have specific strengths.

I know you're asking, how do I know what their strengths are? In the book they give you a Website

to take an online quiz, so to speak, that will lead you to identifying your top five strengths. Each one of these strengths is outlined in the book and will give you a great tool to better identify with your staff. We purchased these for all the board members of the IGCEMA when we started building the association so we could better understand each other and how we thought. This is a tremendous help.

Going to college you probably thought, I need to learn as much as I can about managing turf or equipment or whatever your professional focus was going to be geared toward. However, they don't teach how to manage people and this proves to be the deal breaker in a lot of situations. Whether you can't get your staff to be on time to work, produce quality or be more efficient, the majority of the time it's going to be a personality issue. I am not saying in every case this will improve the product you are offering but I am saying if you don't show that you care for your employees you will have a lot more work moving up the ladder than those that do. People want to know they matter whether they are raking bunkers or edging cart paths. They want to know that someone cares about the job they are doing and how well they do it. People want to know you care about their careers, professional advancement, education and family.

Typically, in life you will spend more time at work than you will with your family. In the golf industry this is no exception. A typical full-time employee working 40 hours per week will spend eight hours at work, one hour traveling back and forth to work, eight hours sleeping, and seven hours a day with their family. The more hours worked the less time spent with their families. So it is safe to say that most of the time an employee will be spending their time with you. Shouldn't we, as managers, do what we can to give our staff a workplace environment they want to come to and not one they dread? If you dreaded coming to work, then how productive would you be?

Remember, all things are relative to every situation. People will always work hard for those individuals whom they feel a connection to, while others will buy time until the next job comes along. Try "Strength Finder" and see if learning more about what your staff do well will help you have better success at managing people. **GCI**