



Don't worry... BE HAPPY

More work, more responsibilities... less time. GCI's Bruce Williams offers some keys to develop a plan that balances the scales in your life.

Growing up as the son of a golf course superintendent I've seen many changes over the last half decade. Most of our more-experienced superintendents can remember an era when superintendents and their crews worked seven days a week, from dawn until dusk. Weekends and holidays were a busy time as many golfers frequented the facilities superintendents managed.

The term "workaholic" comes to mind for many in this business. At a minimum, it was the norm to have 60-plus hour work weeks. While workaholics can't let their job go, it was more of a case of superintendents feeling obligated to be there. Anyone working a 40-hour work week was working a short week.

So how did this affect superintendents' family lives? No doubt many superintendents spent more time on their job than with their families. Most came home weeknights at the dinner hour and were in bed by 9 p.m. After reading the newspaper and watching the nightly news there was little time for quality family interaction. Saturdays, Sundays and holidays were a bit better as most superintendents only worked a half a day and came home after about six hours on the job. And then there were nights when a superintendent had to return to check on the night watermen or set the timers on the irrigation clocks.

Trends have changed over the years and are reflective of our society in general. Overall, parents are more involved in the family than ever before.

Our children are a greater focus in our daily lives. Couples often are both working and there are more shared duties with the home and the family than ever before. Many of my peers are now involved in their children's activities, such as coaching sports and assisting with after-school activities and programs.

The ancient Greek tragedian, Euripedes, said it is best and safest to keep a balance in one's life. Some 2,500 years later, the need and importance of maintaining balance in our lives has not changed, but the challenges we face certainly have, and they seem to be growing at an exponential rate.

Here are some keys to keep your life in balance.

WHAT'S SUCCESS? The definition of success is different today than ever before. Success is not just having the nicest house and the best car. Instead, it is having a wonderful family and having the time

to do and share the many things we love outside of our work. With the current economy there is more to do and fewer people to do things, which creates a challenge for all golf course superintendents. However, challenges are nothing new for us. We need to look at solutions to the

challenges we face.

Develop a schedule that creates balance. What is a reasonable amount of time to spend at work? While we all have a definitive start time do we have a specific time to complete our work each day? When one considers a defined workday it is amazing

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how much we can get accomplished in a set amount of time.

Build family time and personal time into your schedule. Some of us use a daily planner or other tools to organize our schedules. We place appointments, meetings and tasks on that list. Take the time to also place family activities on the same list and adhere to the list. Work may not always allow us to get to every single school-related activity but we can surely schedule the more important functions. Date night and family nights are in vogue and a wonderful time to wind down from the stress of work. If it is on the schedule it is likely everyone will look forward to these events.

While random activities are great, sometimes higher priorities with work tend to take precedence. Scheduling activities outside of

work also allows you to look forward to those events as the week progresses.

GET ORGANIZED. Often, organization leads to stress reduction. Getting organized is the key to managing your time. With so many tools to help get and keep us organized, we can accomplish so much more in less time. Today's technology provides us with some amazing tools. Much of our administrative work is accomplished and stored on computers. Payroll, HR, inventory and staffing records are all maintained and updated on computers. Weather station information, irrigation programming, soil test results and pesticide application records can all be managed online, as well. Budgets are easier to formulate using Excel spreadsheets allowing accurate forecast updates as the year progresses.

Filing cabinets are less utilized as we now store our documents and communication digitally. How many of you used to cut articles out of trade publications and file them away for future review? Now we can easily Google the topic and find a plethora of information on topics to help us do our jobs better.

SAYING “NO.” One reason we spend more time at work than at home is we often take on more than we can accomplish during any given day. Superintendents always want to please their golfers and employers. As a result, we have a tough time saying “No” when asked to take on more responsibility. There are several ways to overcome that.

Simply don't take on more than you can complete in any given day. It may not be essential that additional work be accomplished immediately. Rather, it can be completed over time allowing for adjustments later in the week. When other people's priorities become your priorities it leads to 60-hour work weeks.

Take some of the weight off of your shoulders by delegating projects and assignments to others. We should all have a team that we work with that can take on various tasks. In fact, it is healthy for those we coach, manage and lead to take on greater responsibility. So when any of us are stressed over more to do than we have time to do it in, then we should be delegating that to others.

Some alternatives to delegation might include assigning work to other departments when your plate is full. Outside contractors are another consideration to fill the gap when additional work is created.

ALLOW FOR PERSONAL TIME. Imagine a couple of decades ago when there were no computers, no cell phones, no blogs, no digital cameras and no PowerPoints. Information exchange took place in a very different way. The good news is significant advancements have given us the tools to stay in touch with our golfers and employers. Communication today is 24/7/365 and can be done in a variety of ways to better manage your time.

Recently, I visited a golf course that had received 5 inches of rain overnight that created some major play and maintenance issues.

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The golf course superintendent immediately assessed the damage and took pictures. He sent that info out on a blog to his membership and within minutes they knew the course would be closed that day while drainage and repairs were underway. That blog had pictures and was updated during the day. The info on that blog was also uploaded to a set of talking picture frames in the pro shop and locker rooms. This eliminated the need for the superintendent to spend time communicating his message at the various points of contact. His time was better spent out on the golf course managing the processes necessary to get the course open and functional again. It also allowed the superintendent to work a normal workday and be home with his family at a "normal" time that afternoon.

Cell phones allow us to stay in touch with our office, golf course and team while off the property. Every superintendent should play golf and check out the competition. This is much easier

while golf course crews may work long days that can still be done with 40-hour workweeks for both the staff and management. A scenario that might work is that the assistant superintendent comes in at 5 a.m. and gets the staff started. The superintendent might arrive at 7 a.m. and stay until 4 p.m. while the assistant goes home a few hours earlier. Weekends with days off can be exchanged for a weekday for not only staff but management, as well.

Schedule a vacation and make it work for both your employer and family. I had only taken one summer vacation until I moved to California and then realized that with a well-trained staff I could actually get away almost any time of the year.

As a matter of fact, my employer suggested that I have scheduled days off and periodic vacations. He knew I would be much more productive that way and avoid burnout.



BE HAPPY. Take the time to take a step back and evaluate your work and your life. What brings you happiness? Periodic evaluations of how you value your time and how you are spending it may reveal a lot. Be honest with yourself.

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The best summary I have is a quick story that I share in my Time Management seminar. When your career is over and done, and you are near the end of your life, what would you want your epitaph to say?

Many of us would qualify for a headstone that says "He Was One Heck of a Golf Course Superintendent That Wished He Would Have Spent More Time With His Wife and Kids." I would much rather have lived a life worthy of a tombstone that says: "He Was a Great Father and a Wonderful Husband." **GCI**

to do when you have the technology to stay in touch. The same is true when attending a baseball game or going on a family camping trip. We can actually check on the weather station at our properties and pump logs to have a greater comfort level that things went well on our days off.

DEVELOP A PLAN. Scheduling today is not the typical workweek it was decades ago. Flexible and rotating schedules are the norm,

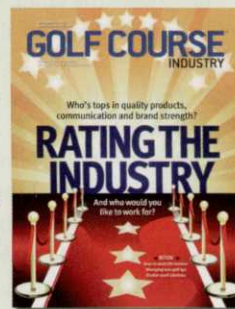
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