

YOUR NEW ROLE

Do you really know your role? I mean, do you understand the extent of the role you need to play at your facility that extends beyond turf care, mowing greens and troubleshooting irrigation issues?

It's an interesting question, one that was reinforced throughout the recent three-day Green Start Academy I was privileged to attend. Green Start is a great continuing education program put on by Bayer and John Deere for the top assistant superintendents in the industry from the U.S. and Canada.

It was pretty interesting to serve as a fly on the wall with 50 razor-sharp 20-something men and women, each with a solid 10-year career plan and gunning for your jobs. It's "superintendent-by-30 or bust," and that's no joke.

At Green Start, nearly each of the guest speakers – both industry experts and veteran superintendents – hammered home the idea of the greater roles a superintendent must play in the overall operation of a club or golf course facility. The intent was to better prepare these up-and-comers for greater career success.

However, I thought there were some key points being made that every superintendent – regardless of length of tenure in the industry – should be thinking about as you ponder your own career and your own role within your organization.

Here are a few of those key points:

Be the go-to guy. Agronomics is just one tent pole. You need to be an expert in other areas and establish yourself as a problem-solver. Regardless of the issue at your facility, you want your name to be one of the first ones called. While it may seem like a hassle to be consulted when the clubhouse fryer is on the fritz, being someone who is the source for solu-

tions and good ideas only adds to your value as a key member of the staff.

Know the numbers... all of them. Not just your own annual maintenance budget, but have a sense and general understanding for every department's line items and income statements. Understanding how other areas of your club or facility operate financially not only gives you a greater sense for how your department fits into the bigger fiscal picture, but also better prepares you to offer suggestions and solutions when numbers and budgets are being scrutinized.

Understand the total value you bring. While turf care is your key asset, there are other intrinsic values you bring that are more nuanced and difficult to calculate, though they're no less critical to a facility's overall success. For example, you are a team leader who provides management stability. And, you have a shared interest in providing comparative results – providing golfers with the best experience possible.

And finally, surround yourself with good people.

Great golf courses are cared for by great people, and a superintendent can't manage this all by him- or herself. While finding and managing the right crew is an ongoing labor challenge, it is essential to continued and sustained success. This also means putting up a good fight to not let great people slip away from your course.

If you're not considering these points in the overall role that you play at your golf course, then I'd suggest that you change the way you look at your role as superintendent. This is vital in driving the value that you bring and ensuring your continued success and employment.

If not, I know of 50 eager candidates looking for an opportunity to fill that role. **GCI**



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Editor

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