

Most golfers are not in favor of tree removal, but competition for water and nutrients require that we pick and choose what is most important for high-quality playing surfaces.

Using the list above and by adding a few plans of your own should get you headed in the right direction in your first week or two on the job. There will be crisis to deal with and there will be fires to put out. That is a part of what we do.

Through evaluation and analysis of the aforementioned items it is time to set up the game plan for the future. This takes place by creating a clear vision of the goals and objectives for the golf course and facility. Adequate resources in manpower, equipment and other resources must be considered to move the process along. **GCI**

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BE ALL you can be

By Bob Lohmann

Superintendents who arrive at a new golf course posting have plenty to keep them busy. Way too busy, in most cases. The same applies to an assistant who has been newly promoted to the facility's top spot. The last thing they need is more to think about, but I'm going to tax your brains anyway.

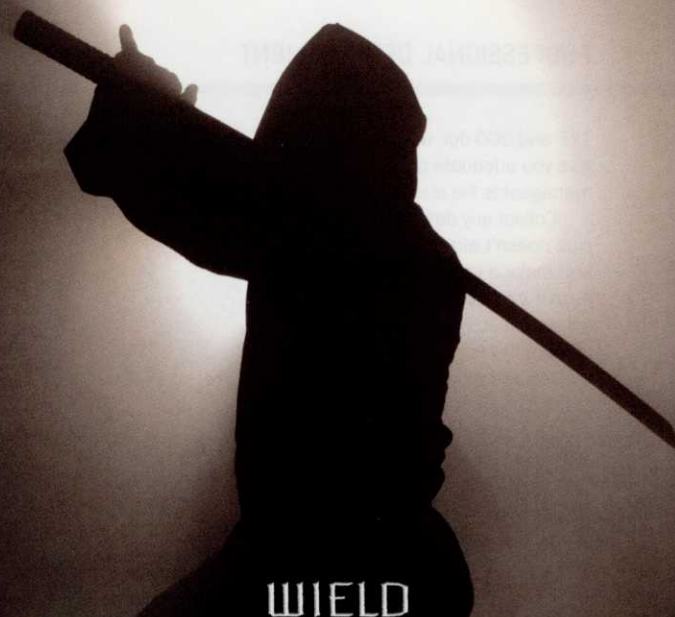
I've outlined several constructive ways to think about yourself in your new job. With more than 30 years in this business, as an architect and contractor, I have seen literally hundreds of "transition" situations where a new superintendent comes on board. It's tough duty - so much to absorb and so many people to impress right away. Aside from piling even more on your full plates, however, these calls to action will help you better adjust to and take control of your new course. In time, they will give you an edge in dealing with staff, superiors, vendors and golfers. They will also chart a wiser course for the facility that now depends on you.

Be an historian. Collect and organize all the course data you can find. Lean on staff and your new boss in order to gather all of the documents relevant to your facility. Review them, understand them and archive them. In short, take on the role of course historian.

Why? Well, because that information is the stuff you'll need, eventually, to do all sorts of important things, mainly strategizing effectively about how best to maintain key aspects of your course and making the case internally for future improvements.

Take your paper plans and have them scanned into digital format for ease of organization, space and future use (invest \$100 in a 1-terabyte external hard drive to store it all). You will learn a ton about what's gone down prior to your arrival. What's more, these are the first things architects, contractors and consultants request when working with a course client, and digital is the way to go these days for ease of sharing and, let's face it, digital is built to last. Paper is not.

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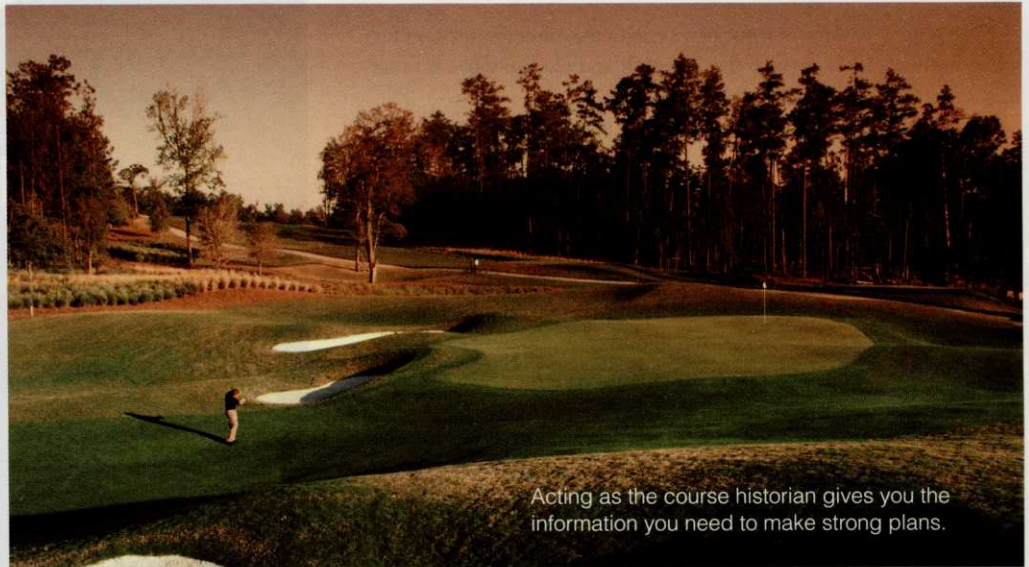
175 and 200 dpi, which will give you adequate quality at a manageable file size.

Collect any data your new club doesn't already have stored and make a record of it, digitally, even if it's a simple Word file or spreadsheet. For example, gather the information currently stored in the brain of your inherited irrigation technician, especially if he/she's the only connection to that info – then get it recorded using GPS. Hire a consultant to help, someone who understands how things are installed so they can interpret the data accurately. Request all future information in paper and digital format.

The value of archiving this sort of information is manifold. It allows you to make immediate connections to the past, which in turn allows you to understand the story behind your new club. This was vital at Poplar Creek Country Club in Illinois, a municipally-owned facility where we recently wrapped up a major storm water management project. Prior to approval, we illustrated the incredible increase in development around that golf course over the last 30 years, using documents we and the owner had archived. Our data helped paint a picture for the Park Board commissioners and the permitting agencies, so we could illustrate the value and need of our project. More important, it expedited the approval process.

Be a paparazzi. Take photos of everything. The best way to tell and/or understand a story is to illustrate it. For us aging folks, it's also the best way to remember those stories! Proper photo imaging of problem areas will make a stronger impression on your board or to your new owner better than words ever will.

Photos also allow an architect, for example, to demonstrate proposed changes to a particular hole with alarming realism. Say your first summer on the job you notice a number of areas where trees are impacting turf health. Simply removing, or even suggesting their removal could be a political nightmare, or even job-threatening. But having someone assist you in illustrating how things might be improved with them gone, via photo imaging, is a great way to sell your idea without the risk. Think about



Acting as the course historian gives you the information you need to make strong plans.

how much time, trouble and money that can potentially save.

Of course, there are all manner of projects that superintendents may wish to undertake to affect positive change. All of these projects need to be paid for and staffed. Again, this sort of digital documentation helps a superintendent sell a project to higher-ups. It's a great tool for marketing and presenting to your boss, or to your stakeholder golfers, allowing you to validate your first impressions and support your ideas on future course-improvement opportunities.

This type of imaging also allows you to start exploring materials and

proposals.

It's important to document where and when you took your photos, too. The simplest way is to mark and locate this info on a course map, either by hand or digitally. This allows you to go back later and take the "After" picture in the exact same position. It sounds tedious, but trust me, it'll add a level of authenticity to your story and presentations.

Be an executor. I think most supers develop a list of goals for their course in their heads. New superintendents need to get that list going as soon as possible.

Write those goals down in a strategic plan that stretches from daily management to long-term management to future renovation. With this list of goals, you can prioritize them, adjust them according to events, and start strategically building your case for funding and logistic support.

One helpful way to think about this planning is the living will. Create one for your new course that focuses on key features. Trees are a good example: Hire an arborist to survey and categorize your trees and assess them for value. More important, do your own assessment that includes a plan of action in the event of a course renovation or severe weather event.

This plan is essential to have on hand for discussion and remediation purposes, and the more prepared you are from the start, the easier it is to turn anything – even a tragedy – into

an opportunity. Jefferson City CC in Missouri is an example of how a tragedy jump-started an improvement project. While our firm was gaining approval for a renovation program there, which required significant tree removal, the club was hit with an ice storm. The damage was devastating, but it opened up an opportunity: the cost (and shock) of tree removal was covered by insurance money, thus freeing up some dollars in the project budget – and the newly cleared spaces allowed us to reinstate some long-held, long-planned ideas that had been nixed due to the cost of tree removal.

We turned those ideas into some of the members' new favorite holes. And that's the last bit of new job advice I'll burden you with: Be curious, because that's what leads to good ideas.

Be inquisitive. Engage your new staff, members and management in discussion and research. Reach out to your colleagues, architects and builders and exchange ideas. And try, when you can, to do all this in person. Technology is great but once you've succeeded in becoming the historian, paparazzi and executor of your new course, you can best bring to bear all you've learned in face-to-face contact with others and all their ideas. **GCI**

"Unfortunately, the previous superintendent had not blown out the irrigation lines and most of the smaller lines had frozen and broken over the winter."

aesthetics well in advance of any construction. If you're lucky (and we all know that most luck is "made" by those who are best prepared), you'll ultimately get to enact your ideas after you've settled in at the club – then go back and review how they compare to your initial

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