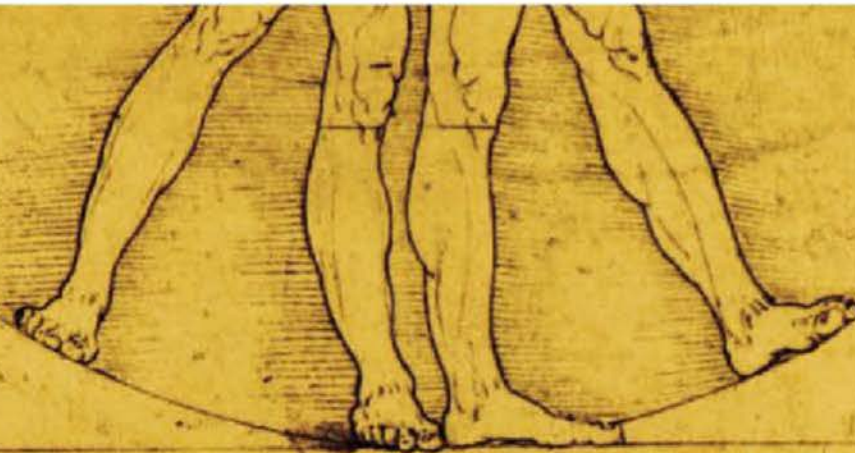


Anatomy of Negotiation

How to influence, lead, and get your way: Our experts dissect successful negotiation strategies to protect your personal and professional interests.



by Frans Jager

Getting results

Negotiating is part of everyone's life. Only thieves – if they don't get apprehended – get away with getting what they want without negotiating: they just take what they want.

If you are a golf course superintendent, you have a lot of negotiating to do, because you have to interact with a large number of people in different constituencies; and none of these people will always, automatically do what you want to get done. Some might say: everything is a struggle for the superintendent. Maybe that is how it is perceived; certainly the superintendent knows that you don't always get what you want and you certainly do not get what you want without negotiation. No denying that it is a tough job to be golf course superintendent. Almost like being President of the United States: you are being held responsible for anything that happens under your watch and yet, by yourself, you can only do so much and influence the outcome only to a limited extent. You need a lot of cooperation from the weather and from a lot of people, who each have a mind of their own, to arrive at the desired result.

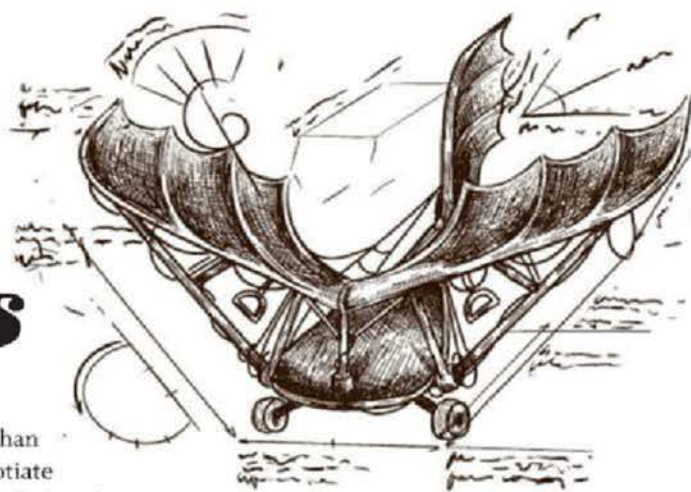
When it comes to negotiation, people automatically think about a buyer/seller relationship. The old fashioned horse trading or deal making. So, the perception is that it is in the procurement process that the superintendent really needs to bring his/her negotiating skills to bear. But is it? The procurement part of the job may, in fact, be one of the simpler ones to negotiate.

Yes, there are situations in which some buying savvy comes in nicely. But not very often. Just like in our personal lives, the buying routine has much more to do with making sure that you get exactly what you want than with getting something at a bottom bargain price. We pride ourselves when we make a "super-good" deal, but if we are honest with ourselves, what did we

really negotiate? More often than not we let the supplier negotiate with himself, knowing full well that if we wait a little longer, the product we want will go on sale. Getting a good deal, even the best deal, is probably more a matter of timing than a matter of negotiation.

The superintendent is in a pretty good buying position. If you are an industry supplier, it is your business to know every superintendent in your market. As superintendent, you are easily identified and

easily located, which means every supplier in the business will come to you and will want to work with you. You can hardly ask for a better competitive scenario. The hardest part of the procurement job of the superintendent is therefore not the negotiation of the best price; it is in separating the chaff from the kernels and determine



BY THE NUMBERS

Interpersonal relations

We queried superintendents about their purchasing philosophies and relationships with suppliers and distributors. Here's how they weighed in:

Number of local/regional suppliers/ reps you purchase products from annually

5

Number of turf-chemical suppliers you purchase from

3

Top 5 criticism of suppliers in your area

1. Only contact me when they need to sell something
2. I feel pressure to do early order
3. Call too often, pester me
4. I feel pressure to buy products I don't need or more than I need
5. (tied) They don't offer agronomic support
5. (tied) They don't understand my needs

Changed who you purchase chemicals/fertilizers from in recent years



Do you have a primary turf-chemical supplier?



Percent of turf-chemical supply purchased from this primary supplier **75%**

Source: GCI research

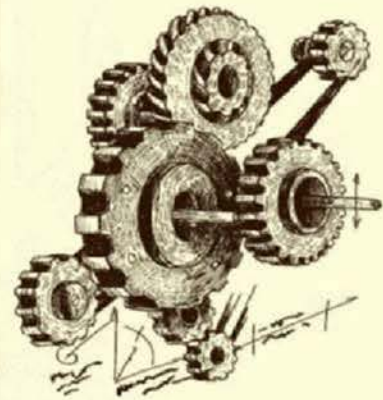
who the suppliers are that have your best interest at heart, that have what it takes to make you and your business successful and are willing to serve you day and night when the chips are down.

The procurement process for the superintendent, like for any other business buyer, has a strategic and a transactional component. The strategic component will consist of determining how many suppliers you want to have involved in your business, who they are and what you expect from them. I have been a buyer long enough and often enough to know that picking the right supply partner addresses most of your challenges. If you pick the right

Rules of engagement

For a superintendent to "negotiate for results" following rules need to be observed:

- Decide what is crucially important (imperative) to you in the procurement process
- Make sure that these imperatives actually serve the business, not you personally
- Let your suppliers know what your imperatives are and invite them to compete on that basis
- Award your business only to suppliers who are able and willing to meet your imperatives
- Hold your suppliers accountable for meeting your imperatives in full, all the time
- Don't deal with any more suppliers than you need to get all of your imperatives met, in every aspect of your operation, all the time
- There is no room in a productive, lasting supply relationship for any dishonesty, half-truths, white lies, or renegeing on a commitment



- The best supply relationship is a two-way street that respects the legitimate interests, including the right to make a profit, of the seller as well as the buyer
- Make sure whatever deal or commitment you make cannot be overruled by a higher authority at either side of the transaction

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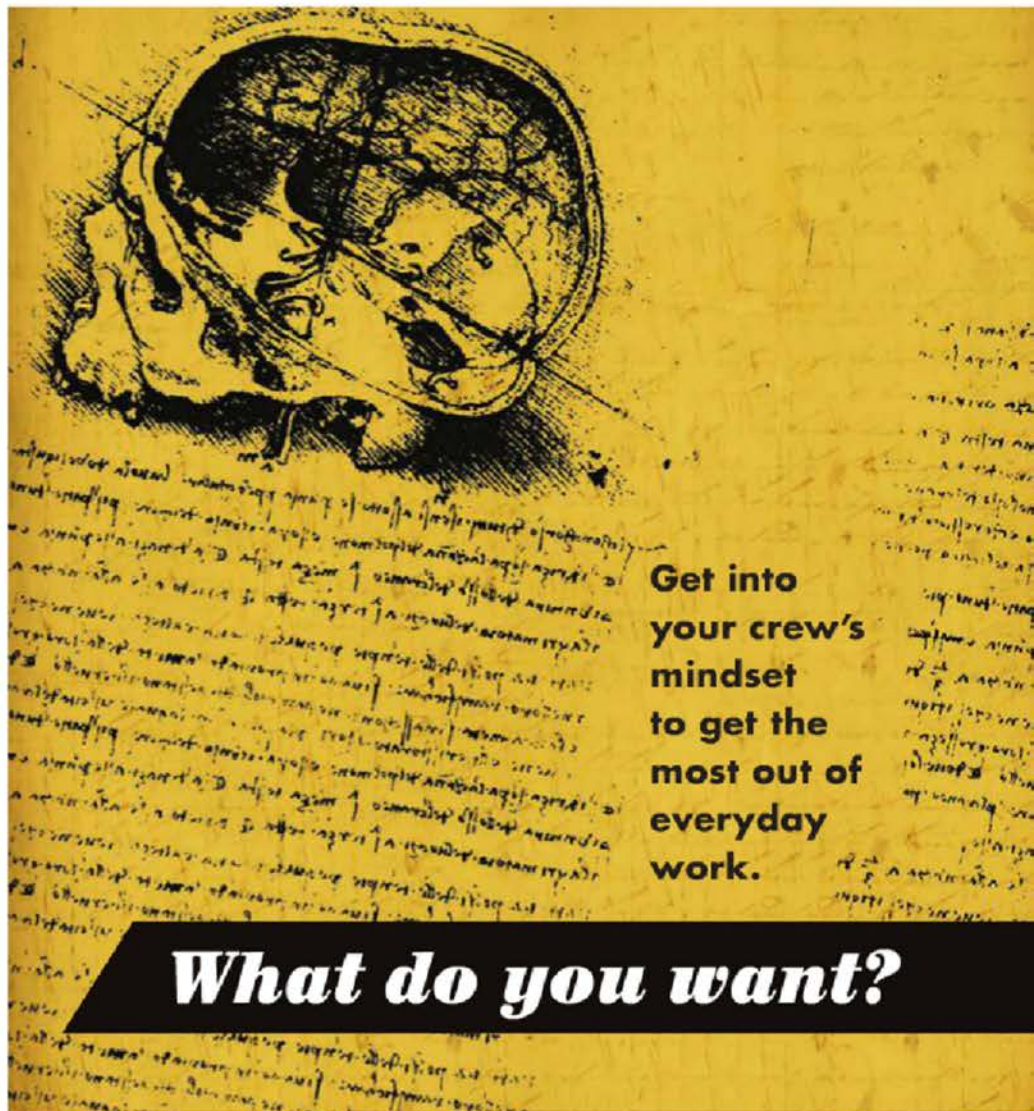


partner, you don't have to worry about getting a fair price and you can count on the fact that he will be there for you when it counts most. The strategic component of the procurement process will determine the success or failure of the supply side of your business. You would not want to pick a supply partner who is not willing or able to keep you competitive. You would not want to pick a supply partner you can't count on to come through when it matters most even if he puts the lowest price on the table. You would not want to pick a supply partner who will quickly let you know that he has more important customers than you to take care of.

For the superintendent, the key to successful procurement is in articulating in detail what it is that you expect from your supplier and then sticking to your guns, holding your supplier accountable for one hundred percent fulfillment. I call it "negotiating for results." Negotiating the price may very well be the easiest and least important part of this process. Nowadays, with the internet and the consumer blogs, there is so much price transparency that you have to be lazy or dumb not to have a pretty good feel for where your cost will be shaking out. And it is questionable how well served you are going to be when setting out to find where the bottom is. You may be wasting a lot of time and alienate the supplier who stands ready to service your true needs. "Negotiating for results" cannot be measured by a single price point; only by achieving a competitive price over the long haul with a supplier who meets all of your expectations, all the time.

The transactional component just deals with the detail, including price, payment terms, discounts, rebates, delivery conditions etc. The stuff that shows up on the P/O and the invoice. The transactional component should be routine, emanating from the agreement or understanding the superintendent has reached with his/her supplier and can typically be delegated to an administrative assistant. **GCI**

Frans Jager is principal of Castnet Corp, a business consultant for the green industry and an executive coach. He can be reached at www.castnetcorp.net.



**Get into
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What do you want?

By Kyle Brown

When you're trying to influence an individual or a group to do something that is in both of your best interests, certainly there is negotiating at work.

But there's a certain amount of finesse to get people excited about doing their job well, says Amy Wallis, professor of practice in organizational behavior at the School of Business at Wake Forest University.

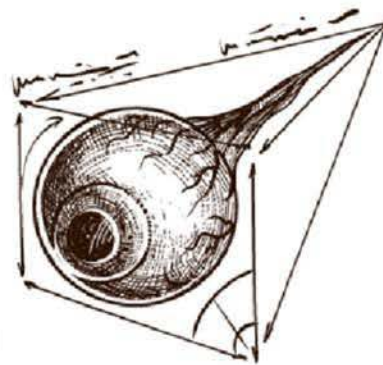
"As a supervisor, you can say to someone, 'You have to do this because I said so,' and they'll do it because you have a power dynamic," Wallis says. "But if you want to motivate them to do it well, you've got to think about 'How can I make this a win-win? How can I make this something that the person will be motivated to do well and see the value in?' And that becomes a negotiation. But even further, when you are talking with your employees about things that need to be done, how to get them done as efficiently as possible and how that will benefit them and the organization, you're negotiating with them to figure out how they're going to create the best possible outcome."

WHAT CAN USING NEGOTIATIONS DO TO MOTIVATE YOUR CREW? It can bring peo-

ple's highest potential to the workplace. Fundamentally, when you tell someone exactly what to do and how to do it, that old-fashioned model of supervision – here is your job, do it exactly this way – what you get is exactly what you're asking for and typically nothing more and hopefully nothing less. But if you can create a situation where people feel as if you are collaborating, figuring out how to create the best possible solution, then what you get is people who are willing to share their ideas with you, who might actually have a suggestion for how to do it even better than you might've come up with.

So the old-school model of managing people that says "I'm the boss, I'll tell you what to do and you do it," has the assumption underneath it that "I'm the boss, I know exactly how to do every job the perfectly right way." Rather than, "I know

"Don't kid yourself into thinking that you can treat your employees like employees for a year and then when it comes time to negotiate salary for example that suddenly they're going to be open to negotiating." – **Amy Wallis**



how to do your job, but I respect that you also know how to do your job and you may bring knowledge or skills or inside information to that job that I may not have access to." And creating an environment where people feel comfortable negotiating creates an environment where there is openness to having that kind of conversation. It's creating the best possible result rather than just creating the result you wanted.

HOW CAN YOU WORK NEGOTIATING INTO YOUR MANAGEMENT STYLE?

A lot of it is about asking questions and either asking questions of the individual or simply engaging in a questioning mindset yourself. Asking yourself what motivates these folks? What is it they're trying to get out of this job or this situation? What are the benefits to them of doing what I'm asking them to do?

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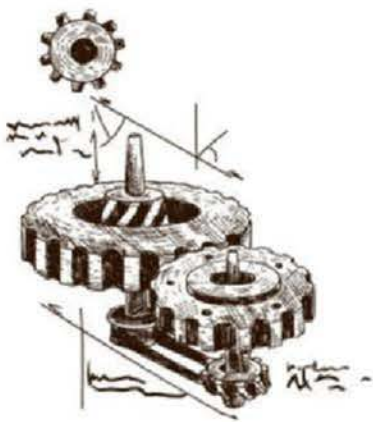
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"A lot of it is about asking questions and either asking questions of the individual or simply engaging in a questioning mindset yourself."

— Amy Wallis

And if you can start to think about things that way, then you're a lot more likely to be able to offer someone a solution that excites them as much as it excites you.

You can ask them in some situations, "Help me understand what it is what you're trying to accomplish here. Help me understand what you value and what's important to you." But sometimes it's also about simply observing people and taking

a mindset of seeking to understand them and their goals and their desires and then working within that. The examples we use are often pretty simple. If I'm assuming that because I like chocolate cake you must like chocolate cake, and I offer you chocolate cake as a reward for something, you might like lemon pie. And if I'm not paying attention to that, it's harder for me to offer you something that has value to you.

A LOT OF SUPERINTENDENTS HAVE TRIED MOTIVATING THEIR CREWS USING MONEY, BUT THERE'S ONLY SO MUCH THEY CAN OFFER THERE. I think that most people would love to make more money. There's very few people who would say, "No, you're paying me just right, there's no reason for you to give me any more than what I'm getting." So that's a given. And certainly, being able to offer someone money that represents the value they add and that they offer to the organization is important. However, organizations do struggle with reaching a point where there just isn't extra money lying around and so the question is "What do we have that has value?" And in many cases, that is simple. It's things like offering recognition. It's things like creating an environment where people acknowledge what someone else has accomplished and

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makes them feel good about that. A sense of feeling great about the work that you're doing and having that acknowledged knowing that someone's paying attention makes a big difference in people's motivation.

A thank-you note from a manager. Some sort of public acknowledgement. Those kinds of things can make a big difference in motivation.

But also really fundamentally, we find

that people are motivated by having a certain sense of control over the work they do, having the opportunity to make some decisions about the work they're doing. It doesn't necessarily mean that you have to say to someone, "Hey, you get to make all the decisions, go do whatever you think is right." But to say, "Here's what we're trying to accomplish, what suggestions do you have for how we can do that?" or "Hey, do you have any ideas on how we can improve upon this?" It's incredibly motivating for people to feel like they have a sense of some control about the work they get done and how they get it done.

To revert to the old-school model that says "I will tell you exactly how to do everything, exactly how much time it should take to do everything, exactly what the end result should look like and check in on you frequently," is essentially reducing someone to a machine in a sense. To say, "You're going to do the things I control," versus being engaged in figuring out the process with you and deciding and making suggestions which tends to create a much more human work environment and again often results in better results than you would've done on your own.

SO WE'RE TALKING OPENING THE FLOOR DURING THE MORNING MEETINGS? That can certainly be a place to do it, though one of the things you want to be careful of is, you can lose a lot of time and momentum by engaging too many people in that discussion. So if the people in the room are all stakeholders in a particular project then having them all involved in the discussion will be helpful. In that case it probably makes more sense to consult with the team leader, have the team leader have that discussion with their employees and to sort of separate out, even get out there with the team, say "OK guys, here's what I'm trying to tackle, what ideas do you all have?" It's difficult to have a bunch of people in the discussion that don't really have skin in the game. So you really need to figure out who are the stakeholders, who you need to be engaged in the process and then conduct those discussions individually or in small groups.



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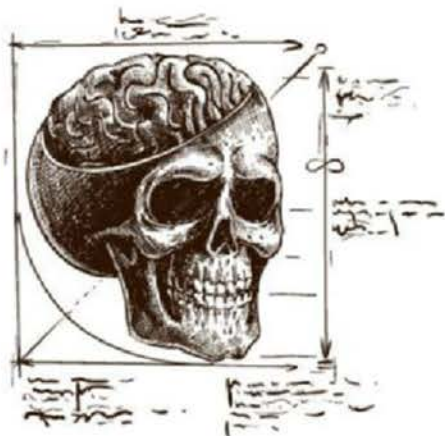
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COVER STORY



SO IS EVERYTHING WE DO A NEGOTIATION?

I think it's important to recognize that every interaction you have is setting you up for some future negotiation. Some people would say every interaction is a negotiation to some degree. And I don't think that's entirely true, and I think sometimes we're just having a conversation. But I think that one of the fundamental things that we know about negotiation is that having a strong relationship already enhances your ability to have a successful negotiation. Don't kid yourself into thinking that you can treat your employees like employees for a year and then when it comes time to negotiate salary for example that suddenly they're going to be open to negotiating. Build the relationships throughout and build that collaborative mindset and collaborative mentality every day as you have your day-to-day discussions and meetings and interactions so that when the time comes that when you need something and you are entering into a negotiation, you've already got the relationship established. You've got the goodwill and you've got the mutual trust. In a sense, everything that we're doing day-to-day is preparing us for a potential high-stakes negotiation in the future.

WHAT ARE SOME MISTAKES WE CAN MAKE

IN GETTING STARTED? Making an abrupt, complete change in your work style is actually going to undermine trust, even if it's a positive change. People will be looking at you, going "What the heck happened to you?" And it makes it difficult for them to trust you. So what you want to start with is setting a goal of changing something about the way you interact that's going to get you closer to that

integrative bargaining kind of mindset. So rewarding people and acknowledging people for the work they're doing, asking a few people each day for their input into something, or demonstrating to people that you're willing to offer some kind of reward for working with you and working collaboratively.

And if you can start putting down those kinds of foundational building blocks, then over time you can set goals of gradually changing your own behavior and you're going to find that it also gradually changes your team's behavior so you get what we call a "virtuous cycle." So that I do something that helps you to feel good about your job, and that gives you that little bit of extra kick so that you're willing to put in a couple extra minutes or a couple extra hours when needed to get something done and that means we accomplish something even bigger. We've got success to build upon. Starting to create that virtuous cycle and then gradually adding more collaborative behaviors into it is the way to do it, though you probably want to do it over a series of months and not try to change everything all at once because we know that trying to change everything all at once just doesn't work. You can't lose weight, quit smoking, quit drinking and start exercising on the same day and think that you're going to be successful at all of those things.

One last important thing: If you are going to commit to what we're talking about, you've got to be willing to let people make mistakes, and you've got to be willing to say, "When you make a mistake, I've got your back and we're going to work through this together." If you expect people to immediately know exactly how to do everything and you don't give them any opportunity to make mistakes, then this is going to fail because the moment that a stressful situation arises, you're going to step in and go back to your old management style. You've got to be willing to accept that mistakes are going to happen and that helping people to learn from that is going to enhance everybody's ability to do their jobs.

Kyle Brown is GCI's associate editor.

by Bruce Williams, CGCS

You can always get what you want...

... you just need to negotiate. Bruce Williams outlines the aspects of your professional life where you should wheel and deal and how to come out on top.

Every day of our lives we are involved in negotiation of some type. It may be with families, employees, employers or our members. Highly successful superintendents embrace negotiating because these skills serve them well in many areas of the profession.

COMPENSATION. There is an old adage that you should get an honest day's pay for an honest day's work. While it's doubtful anyone would refute this notion, the real question is how to position yourself financially in a vast market of superintendents.

First, know your market. What are the highest paid positions, the lowest paid positions and the median? What was the compensation of the former superintendent at your facility? What is the compensation of the pro, manager and any other key employees? Knowledge is power in any negotiation. Don't guess. Some of the best compensated areas for turf managers have had decades of sharing information between superintendents.

Timing is everything. Why would you want to negotiate a contract in the winter months if you are in Chicago? Pick your high season when golfers and employers most value your skills and negotiate then and when the course is in top condition.

If your course is one of the top courses in the area, state, or country then use the GCSAA Compensation Survey data to back up your side of the negotiation. Once you convince your employer that you are not being paid a fair and reasonable wage beginning working on the right number. Just like in football, don't try to go 95 yards on one play. Instead, develop a strategy to

get where you should be over a couple of years. If you are \$30,000 behind the average, then consider a \$10K per year raise over three years. If they balk, then indicate the out-of-pocket cost of this raise will be absorbed into the overall budget.

Remember, compensation is not always about money. It includes benefits, too. Don't overlook non-cash compensation. I have negotiated housing allowances for superintendents and even equity in homes to lock them into long-term agreements. If your club indicates they are not giving out raises and you counter with taking another month of paid vacation in lieu of a raise, then imagine the value of an extra month off during the length of your contract.

CONTRACTS. Contracts, when properly written, protect both the superintendent and the employer. Contracts should specify the details of employment and, most importantly, the length of employment. If you have a 3-year contract that expires in 30 days, then you have a 30-day contract. Add an automatic rollover into your contract so if neither party chooses to end the contract, it will roll over for another year or more. In essence, this gives you a year's notice of any end to the contract.

If the club doesn't do contracts, then know that as many as 80 percent of club managers reported to CMAA that they had contracts. So if you work at a private club it is likely the club has at least one contract and should be willing to have one with you.

Clubs and lawyers don't tend to like the word "contract," so an alternative is letter of agreement. Remember, it is best to have a document indicating separation terms should this occur down the road. It's always

best to negotiate severance when you are hired rather than when you are fired.

BUDGET. A budget is a guide for the cost to run the golf course. It dictates the course's overall plan and conditioning. All too often I visit clubs with champagne dreams and a beer budget. The budget must mirror your ability to provide the desired conditions. If all are to be happy, it is imperative to either raise budgets or lower expectations.

Consider programmatic budgeting. When trimming the budget it is difficult to trim programs than to trim dollars. When asked to eliminate a couple of full-time employees counter with the fact that X-amount of annual man-hours will be lost and that will be visible in specific areas.

Superintendents are great at doing more with less. However, there comes a time when there is no more fat to cut. If a you doesn't negotiate what you need to get the job done, then it is a matter of time before someone new fills your spot and the budget he needs to please members.

NEEDS FOR THE GOLF COURSE. Undoubtedly you will find occasions in which you will need to work with other departments at your facility. The kitchen wants an 8 a.m. shotgun so they can serve lunch at 12:30. The pro shop wants it even earlier so they can turn another group out at 1 p.m. and maximize tee times for the best revenue. What matters most is the success of the facility and not any one department.

Can you get the course ready by 7:30 a.m.? Where there is a will there is a way. Find ways to make things happen and negotiate the purchase of equipment or extra manpower and equipment to accommodate the needs of other departments.

Each day provides an opportunity for superintendents to negotiate. If you find yourself coming up on the short end of such negotiations, then it is time to learn how to walk away with a win-win outcome in most negotiations. Read a book, watch a video or take a seminar on negotiation. If you only come away with a few ideas, then you still are much better off in the long run. **GCI**

Bruce Williams, CGCS, is GCI's senior contributing editor.