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In the balance

PLANNING AHEAD AND HIRING COMPATIBLE ASSISTANTS CAN HELP SUPERINTENDENTS ACHIEVE STABILITY BETWEEN HOME LIFE AND WORK

by
JOHN
WALSH

Q Explain your typical day and work week.

I typically divide the year into two seasons—the off-season and the in-season. During the in-season, I wake up just before 5:00 a.m., and arrive at the course about 5:30 a.m. I live only a mile from the club, but I like to stop and get a cup of coffee and enjoy some private time before I get to work.

I don't believe I do anything atypical of any other superintendent. We have many projects going on at one time. I have a terrific staff of 17, and have two interns with us for the summer. I enjoy assigning the first task in the morning. We use a large board where jobs are listed and expectations are posted. I believe at least 70 percent of the

daily work is completed within the first four hours of the day, so it's important I set that tone. I delegate more to my assistants as the day goes on.

The work week can be flexible with effort. I can do a lot of family activities by taking off and coming back later to make up the time from being off property. The job offers a certain degree of flexibility. Typically, I work Monday through Saturday, I try not to come in on a Sunday unless a tournament or the weather dictate I should be around. Saturdays are usually spent meeting with members and being more visible.

In-season, we come back after hours several days of the week to do jobs that might interfere with play, such as pesticide applications, in-line irrigation repairs or getting a few extra acres of rough mowed, or when we want to be less intrusive. When I arrive early, it doesn't translate to leaving earlier, it usually just adds that time to the total day. I estimate I put in about 50 to 55 hours per week. During the off-season, I will adhere to a more traditional schedule and stick to 40 hours per week. Off-season days are full, similar to in-season, but without the intense pressure of getting things done now.

Q How do you manage your time?

I usually don't like to deviate from routines. I like to keep the staff focused and on task. After assigning the morning's first assignments, I will head back to the office to check e-mails and then tour the golf course. As mentioned before, as the day progresses, I delegate more through the assistants. I tend to return all nonurgent phone calls during one or two periods during the day.

We try to be efficient. We have a new maintenance facility, which is four-seasons old, that was designed with a conveyor-belt-type system, meaning it allows moving forward. I'm always saying little victories lead to big victories. I like to accomplish a lot of little chores first then tackle the more time-consuming jobs next. This builds positive momentum. Examples of this could be checking irrigation heads. We will focus on the small, mister-style heads first, knocking off 20 or so at a clip, then tackle the larger leaks later. Another quick example is mulching or weeding flower beds. We start with the smaller beds first and progress to the larger ones second. In general, people feel better with themselves if they accomplish something during the day. Again, it builds momentum. I share my philosophy, never preach, and we go on.

Q Do you consider your job stressful? How do you handle stress?

For me, there's an ebb and flow as it relates to stress. It all revolves around the greens. When the greens are healthy and ball roll is acceptable, life is pretty good. As the temperature and humidity rise, so does my stress level. I tend to internalize most of it.

Admittedly, during the past two seasons, I've struggled a bit. I began to question programs we had in place and the time they were taking to materialize. So I hired a turf consultant, Ed Etchells of Golf Turf, for a review. He has helped reduce my stress level.

I solicited advice from others often. When Ed leaves, I feel good. He gives me peace of mind. I have a touch of insecurity that keeps me motivated. These turf consultants are often negatively perceived, but I believe if used right, they're a great asset. I remind superintendents that the consultants work with you not for you, so be prepared for some blunt talk.

I created some self-inflicted stress by following Tony Savone. Tony was the superintendent at Quaker Ridge for 27 years and maintained this golf course as the standard for the area. During the transition, the membership also wanted me to transition the golf course to play differently—lower heights of cut, less water, lower fertility—all things you're "not supposed" to do. What followed were disease outbreaks that included Anthracnose. This devilish fungus created havoc for a few seasons on the turf. During this time the membership was tough, patience was tested, and rightfully so. I informed them with as much information as possible and gave progress reports. Other superintendents in the area were also dealing with the same problem, so communication among each other was vital for me. I really shook things up. I'm hoping for a less stressful summer this year.

Q Do you feel you spend enough time with your family?

It's vitally important to be able to balance work and family. I live in an affluent area, not because I can, but because I needed to live near to the course. True, I had to sacrifice a larger house by buying a smaller one, but I wanted to be close to home and not have to commute. It's a trade off.

I often bring my kids back to the course with me, and even my wife will come. It's a great feeling to be together like that. They're having fun with dad, and I'm making those mental notes getting ready for tomorrow. If I had a long commute, I wouldn't do that as often as I do. To make more time for my

GOLF COURSE NEWS
INTERVIEWS STEVE
RENZETTI, CGCS, GOLF
COURSE SUPERINTENDENT
AT QUAKER RIDGE GOLF
CLUB IN SCARSDALE, N.Y.



Photo: Regency Studios



Photo: Regency Studios

Steve Renzetti discusses a project with one of his staff members. Renzetti likes to review the day's projects early in the morning and delegate certain jobs.

family, I come to work early while they are still sleeping. Again this frees up time for them later on in the day.

My wife is the foundation of our family. She's the reminder for me of what's important in life and gives me reason to maintain a balance. While pregnant with our first child, she was diagnosed with cancer — Hodgkin's. Since then, she's been cured, but it grounded me and put what's really important in life into perspective. It was one of those life lessons learned.

I enjoy picking my kids up from school, attending all their school activities and coaching their little league teams.

Q How does work affect your personal life?

Most of the time, I can separate work from home life. When I'm at home, I want to give my family full attention. During hot summer nights, I might not be as good at that as I would like to be because I'm usually a little nervous worrying about the turf.

I tell my sons, if you're not going to give 100 percent, don't do it. Half efforts don't help anyone, advice I should heed sometimes. It's just my philosophy. Nothing is set in stone. They're guidelines if you will.

Q What is your opportunity like for advancement in this industry?

When I was an assistant, I remember hearing that when you become a superintendent motivation could be tough because the question becomes, "Where do you go from here? You achieved the goal, being a superintendent."

Success is an internal. I strive to be a better superintendent each day. Each opportunity

has its own challenges. I'm happy now. I'm at a great club, one that I could retire at and be satisfied with my career, or be pressed with an opportunity tomorrow. I'm always working, preparing for the next opportunity. I want the choice to be mine. Success is defined differently for everyone. For me, it's about choices and being in a position to not only have them but also be able to act on them.

I'm always encouraging my assistants and interns to be well-rounded and diversify their backgrounds — volunteer with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America or a local chapter, get involved with extracurricular activities, be active. I encourage them to open their network to a bigger audience, even though some of that might be calculated.

Jim McLoughlin's (McLoughlin is founder of TMG Golf, a golf course development and consulting firm) philosophy of career management is right on. I owe him so much. He opened my eyes to varying aspects of career management at an early age. He put examples of role models, such as a Ted Horton (a certified golf course superintendent and consultant) among others, in front of me to serve as examples. I have always taken admirable traits from others and incorporated them into my life when possible.

Q What is McLoughlin's philosophy?

I've participated in several of Jim's seminars and was lucky enough to have attended my first one early on, right out of college. He emphasized setting a broad and solid foundation for yourself, trying to diversify your experience, working for several different style courses, being self-sufficient, giving yourself a budget for clothing, education, etc. He has a saying, "be patiently aggressive," and keep pushing yourself in a professional manner.

I remember hearing Jim use the word "pedigree" 18 years ago. Now it's a buzzword I hear often when clubs are seeking new employees. He would point out that you will give yourself a competitive advantage ... All things being equal, most clubs will hire the candidate with the "name" club on the resume or if he/she worked for a prominent superintendent. Right or wrong, they're covering their butts.

I reiterate the same advice to my assistants and interns. It's easier to build that into a resume early in a career than later when you're less mobile and have fewer commitments.

When he took his seminar "national," I had mixed emotions, my immediate thought was ... now the secret is out and

my competitive advantage will be gone. I say that tongue-in-cheek of course. Jim "gets it." I have benefited from his advice and many others will.

Q How do you coach and mentor assistants?

One of the best means I have of reducing stress is having quality assistants. I always have sought and hired the best, most talented person available. I rely on them to help me meet the goals of the club. I hope I pass on sound agronomic practices. They will innately pick up many of those things anyway because they live and breathe turf, and they see what we do. It's the life lessons I hope to influence, even if it's just a little.

I'm not one to lecture. I talk situationally. I share fun, family stories about my kids. I want them to see that I enjoy my family and that you can be devoted to both, work and family, without sacrificing one over the other. One of my staple interview questions is somewhat probing. I ask what they do with their free time? I want to hear if they're active people or not, or if they're self-motivated. I'm extremely selective when hiring. Compatibility and attitude rank higher than ability. I can train technical skills, but it's hard, if not impossible, to train attitude.

I share club politics and historical perspectives on issues. I'm always emphasizing saving money. A repeated comment I always make is: "You will remember me in 30 years not for the top dressing technique you learned or how to hand-water a green, but hey, I'm glad Steve had me start saving early." It's a lot like father-and-son conversations. I'm flattered when a former assistant or intern calls for advice and some guidance about a particular situation or job. We all get caught up in our own glass-walled worlds, especially during the summertime. A happy employee is a good employee and that goes for me as well.

Q What are your thoughts about being a superintendent?

If a superintendent can manage their career properly, the family/work relationship can be very symbiotic; it could be a wonderful dynamic. There aren't many other careers that could allow the flexibility to make the most out of the two most important aspects of life. I have been faced with opportunities that were compelling, but after careful consideration, I always come back to the flexibility issue. I might not take two-week summer vacations like some other professions, at least not during the "in-season" period. Instead I get my fill in many little pieces. There are tremendous opportunities that makes being a superintendent stupendous. GCN



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Measuring Success

ESTABLISHING AN EMPLOYEE EVALUATION SYSTEM HELPS SUPERINTENDENTS MANAGE STAFF AND IDENTIFY LEADERS

by
PETER
BLAIS

Pinehurst grounds and golf course manager Bob Farren, CGCS, oversees eight courses and 800 acres of turf—everything that “grows or flows”—at the fabled North Carolina resort. Farren also is responsible for a staff of 230 people, and like the other department managers at Pinehurst, which employs about 1,200 workers, he reviews the job performance of his staff at regular, prescribed intervals.

“Employee reviews are very important, whether

you are a small organization of 12 people or, as in our case, a staff of 1,200,” he says. “It is a formality to make sure people are treated consistently and fairly throughout the organization.”

Fair and consistent treatment, coupled with appropriate feedback generated during employee reviews, helps employers attract and retain their most talented workers.

“It is either part of your culture or it isn’t,” says David Hayslette, senior vice president of human

resources for ClubCorp’s Pinehurst Resort Co.

Hayslette is responsible for personnel functions at Pinehurst, The Homestead in Hot Springs, Va.; Barton Creek in Austin, Texas; and Firestone Country Club in Akron, Ohio.

“Great employees have the option of being able to take their skills elsewhere,” he says. “If you want to attract and retain those top-quality employees, you need to develop an environment where they get feedback. Then, you need to make sure they know where they stand. Top-quality employees won’t be satisfied with going through the motions.”

Overseeing it all

Farren has been at Pinehurst since 1983. He was the superintendent at courses No. 2 and No. 4 before becoming assistant to Brad Kocher, CGCS, vice president of golf course management for Pinehurst Resort Co., in 1986. In the fall of 2000, Pinehurst promoted Farren from assistant director of golf course management to his current position. Farren also serves as vice chairman of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America’s career development committee.

The task for Farren and his staff is a monumental one. Among the eight courses is Pinehurst No. 2, the Donald Ross-designed course that successfully hosted the 1999 U.S. Open, which was won by Payne Stewart, and which is the site of the 2005 U.S. Open. There are 230 acres of fairways, 144 greens, 432 tees and more than 500 bunkers to be maintained throughout the eight courses. Farren’s staff also is responsible for 22 acres of hotel and clubhouse grounds, a park, eight putting greens, three croquet courts, marina grounds, a lawn bowling area, a 10,000-square-foot bentgrass nursery and a 17,000-square-foot greenhouse.

Farren’s overall \$6.1-million budget includes about \$4 million of payroll. Among the full- and part-time staff, 155 of them are for course maintenance, 25 are for grounds, 30 are for the maintenance center and two are for administration. In addition, there are a number of part-timers performing various duties.



Photo: Pinehurst, Inc.

Pinehurst grounds and golf course manager Bob Farren, CGCS, oversees eight courses and 800 acres of turf. Farren also is responsible for a staff of 230 people.

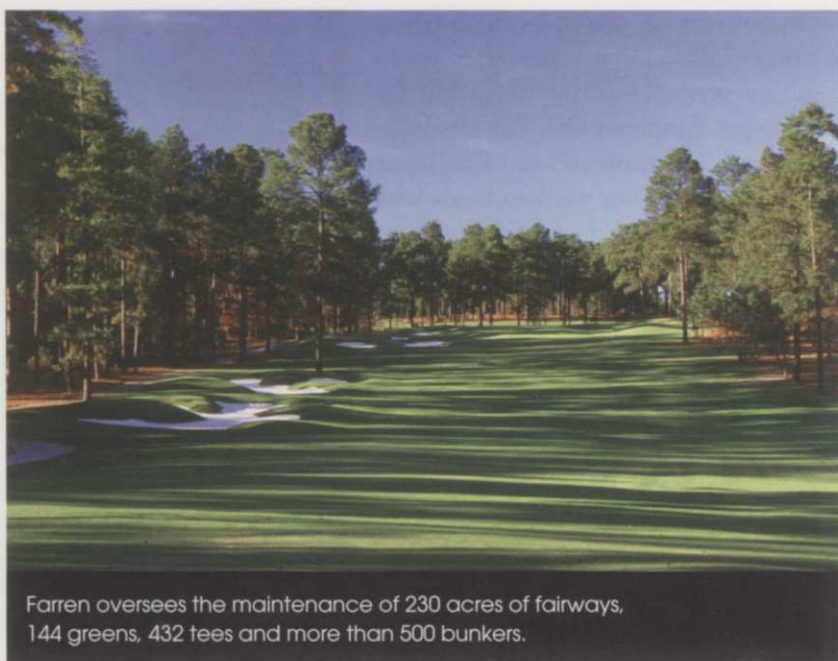


Photo: Pinehurst, Inc.

Farren oversees the maintenance of 230 acres of fairways, 144 greens, 432 tees and more than 500 bunkers.

Reviews for new, hourly staff

Course superintendents conduct formal, in-office evaluations of their assistants and all hourly employees 90 days after they're hired. Annual reviews are required after that. Both evaluation forms note: "An honest and accurate appraisal of performance is vital to self-esteem, motivation, efficiency and improvement within the individual's current position." It directs managers to devote enough time for the review—usually about 30 minutes, according to Farren—to ensure useful feedback is given.

The 90-day evaluation directs superintendents to use a scale of one (the lowest) through five (the highest) to rate the individual's general performance level in many areas. The first section addresses six skills and behaviors, including safety, compliance of policies, attendance/punctuality, quality of work, cooperation/adaptability and job knowledge. The six ratings are totaled and divided by six to yield an average rating. The second section of the 90-day report asks supervisors and employees to list specific goals to be attained by the annual review date.

Although not guaranteed, the evaluation usually results in a slight increase of the hourly rate for new hires. The average rating, which might be something like a 3.8 or a 4.2, is compared to a matrix to determine what pay-increase percentage an employee receives. If someone hasn't performed well enough to merit an increase at that point, that might be the time to say, "This job isn't really for you," and then part ways, Farren says.

ClubCorp is careful not to label the initial three months as a probationary period. "We don't want people to feel they are



Photo: Pinehurst, Inc.

Farren

under the gun those first 90 days," Farren says. "The evaluation enables us to develop a score sheet of their success to that point. For example, we can see what equipment they have been trained on and obtain an update of where they are in terms of job skills."

Regular annual review use ratings to describe the individual's general performance level in many of the same areas as the 90-day review. The highest rating ("world class") is overachieved expectation, which is described as performance unquestionably above established expectations. For an employee to receive this rating it must be documented with detailed explanations by the reviewer. The next rating ("role model") notes that the employee achieved 100-percent of expectations, described as "performance sometimes exceeding but consistently meeting established expectations." Next is "meeting minimum expectations," which acknowledges the potential for greater contributions. The bottom two ratings are "needs significant improvement" and "did not meet expectations."

During an annual review, the reviewer also can document specific observations, such as the number of accidents in the safety area, or certificates earned, seminars attended and education attained under job knowledge. The employee's success of meeting goals set during previous reviews are discussed and recorded, while new goals and objectives for the coming year are set.

To make administering the review process as easy as possible for superintendents, who typically evaluate 16 to 25 individuals per course, the human resources department schedules reviews on each employee's anniversary date rather than all at once. The human resources department also distributes monthly e-mail reminders to superintendents listing which employees will soon be due for reviews.

"There's no doubt it is an intense administrative responsibility," Hayslette says. "But in the end it pays dividends to inform people how they are doing and the status of their progress."

Reviewing salaried staff

Salaried staff are assessed on several levels. They're evaluated 120 days after taking over a position and annually thereafter. They're also reviewed every six months as part of the Blue Chip Goals program. The Blue Chip review involves project-oriented and quality-oriented items that are measurable.

For Farren, this means evaluating eight salaried individuals—golf course superintendents (some of whom over-

see more than one course), an irrigation manager, an equipment manager and a grounds manager—on goals tied to each individual.

"We talk in very specific terms about progress in certain areas, whether it be a renovation project or weed control," Farren says. "Generally, Blue Chip reviews are held in January and July and in detail—where we are, where we want to go and how close we are to getting there."

Blue Chip reviews are a combination of leadership competencies and discreet projects or activities the person would be responsible for during that time frame Hayslette says.

The company identified eight leadership competencies to determine how well managers are doing. The eight competencies are: drive for results; operating excellence; problem-solving and decision-making; customer focus, both internal and external customers; teamwork; adaptability; impact and influence; and grow-in talent.

As for specific projects, they rarely fall within neat six-month blocks of time, meaning aspects of evaluations often carry over from one period to the next. For example, a golf course superintendent who is responsible for a major reconstruction, might be evaluated on a planning and design phase for the first six-months of his or her Blue Chip review. That would blend into a construction phase for the second six months. Typically, individuals will be evaluated on three or four discreet competencies during a six-month period.

The Blue Chip program extends to other operations, as well. An accountant, for example, might be evaluated on the implementation of a new payroll system.

"We use a one-to-five point scoring system," Hayslette says. "The grades are then

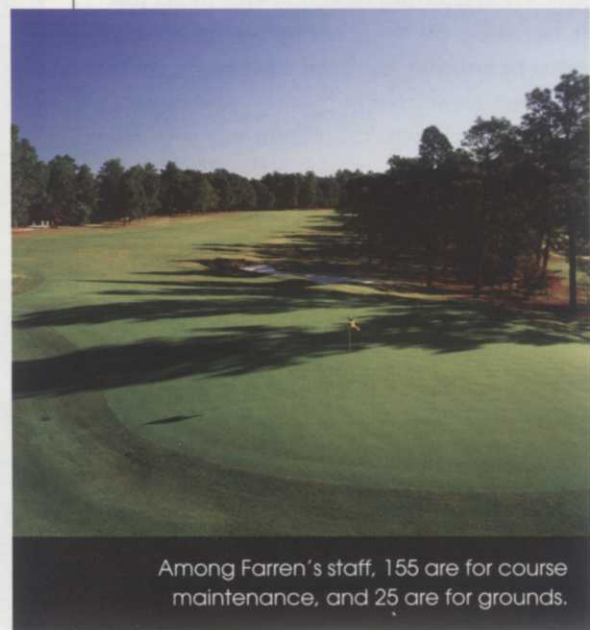


Photo: Pinehurst, Inc.

Among Farren's staff, 155 are for course maintenance, and 25 are for grounds.

weighted: 60 percent for Blue Chip projects and 40 percent for leadership competencies. Those scores are weighted and evaluated.”

Hayslette says the Blue Chip process forces managers to take a big-picture view of performance management.

“It isn’t simply holding out an expectation and doing a review once a year,” he says. “It should be a cumulative review of the feedback that has gone on throughout the year. If someone is a month into a project and behind the eight-ball, missing deadlines and having some struggles, and if the supervisor intervenes early on and encourages the person to regroup and try to save the project, that’s better than waiting until the end of the year and yelling ‘gotcha.’ That’s what we are trying to teach with our performance-management process. It is an ongoing dialogue during the six months that culminates with a review that shouldn’t be a surprise for anyone.”

As part of the yearly salaried reviews, managers document if individuals earned certified golf course superintendent status and continuing education units, attended leadership seminars or obtained training internally. This year, ClubCorp is offering a 1 1/2-day Leadership 101 seminar that all Pinehurst salaried managers must attend. Participation in the seminar will be documented in their reviews.

Hayslette and Kocher don’t sit in on the actual evaluations of salaried employees conducted by Farren or other Pinehurst supervisors. But they do review each evaluation from a big-picture perspective.

“What we are looking for is a consistency in the application of the process across the property,” Hayslette says. “The food-and-beverage department’s definition of what a 4-rating is shouldn’t be out of sync with what the course maintenance department says a 4-star rating is. If one area looks like it has been overly generous in its evaluations or another has been too tough, that’s what we are watching for.”

“What we try to do is train our supervisors to be objective and use the Blue Chip process as a way to lay out specific expectations and provide feedback. The review should not be a monumental event, but rather the culmination of a dialogue that has been happening over the entire six months. What happens in too many corporations is that supervisors tell someone to work on something and then walk in a year later and say, ‘I don’t think you did a very good job.’ The employee wonders why the supervisor didn’t say something earlier. With our approach, there is an established, ongoing dialogue. Management people, like

Bob Farren, think it is a useful tool and helps them in the long run.”

Making it a priority

Pinehurst keeps all written reviews on-site in its human resources office, and a human resources person is assigned to the course maintenance department.

Farren says his department has always been diligent with doing employee reviews on time.

“The departments that come up short in doing reviews on time also rank worst in our employee-satisfaction surveys,” he says. “We have been pretty good about doing reviews on time and have generally come up well in those surveys.”

Farren believes a properly executed employee review provides a good score sheet of an employee’s performance. It’s a chance to give and take feedback, whether it’s constructive criticism, praise or a combination of the two. More than 90 percent of the reviews are a positive experience for supervisor and employee.

“It is an opportunity with poor performance to hopefully counsel the person on how to improve, or at the very least document their performance,” he says.

“In our surveys, the main thing people say they want to know is how they are doing,” he says. “Unfortunately, you frequently get comments like, ‘My supervisor never pays attention to me.’ Employees want attention. They want to know what is going on and how they are doing.”

A well-designed evaluation-management system should highlight those people who are exceeding expectations clearly and consistently, Hayslette says. “That helps you identify the leaders of tomorrow. The star performers are the ones you need to reward and give more responsibility.”

Farren says he doesn’t know of any other company that conducts employee reviews as extensively.

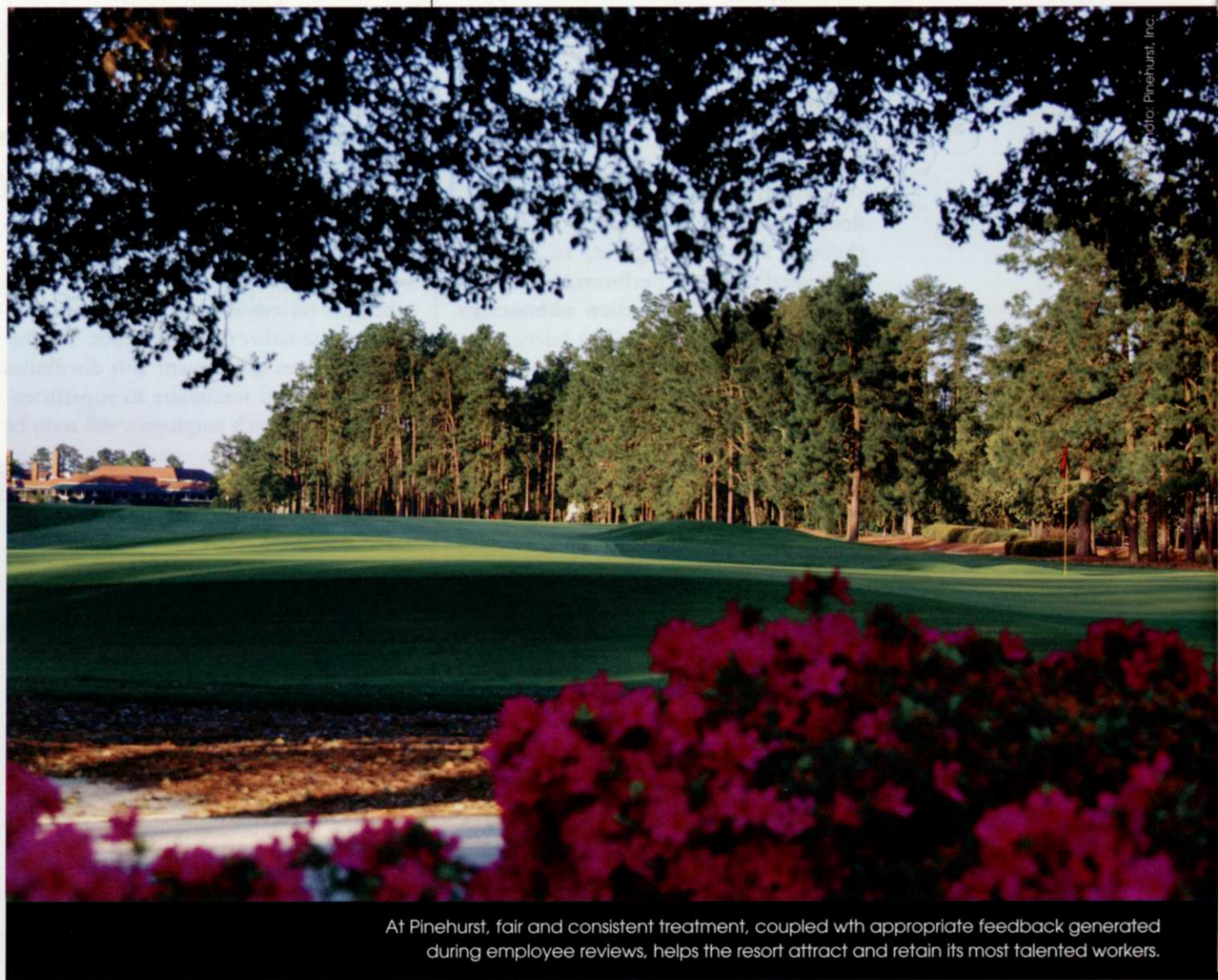
“But I would encourage other courses to consider the value of reviews,” he says. “Some people think it is too much of a burden. But if you put it on your calendar and make it happen, it really pays off over time in terms of discrete employee satisfaction.” GCN

Peter Blais is a contributing editor based in North Yarmouth, Maine. He can be reached at pblais@maine.rr.com.



Kocher

Photo: Pinehurst, Inc.



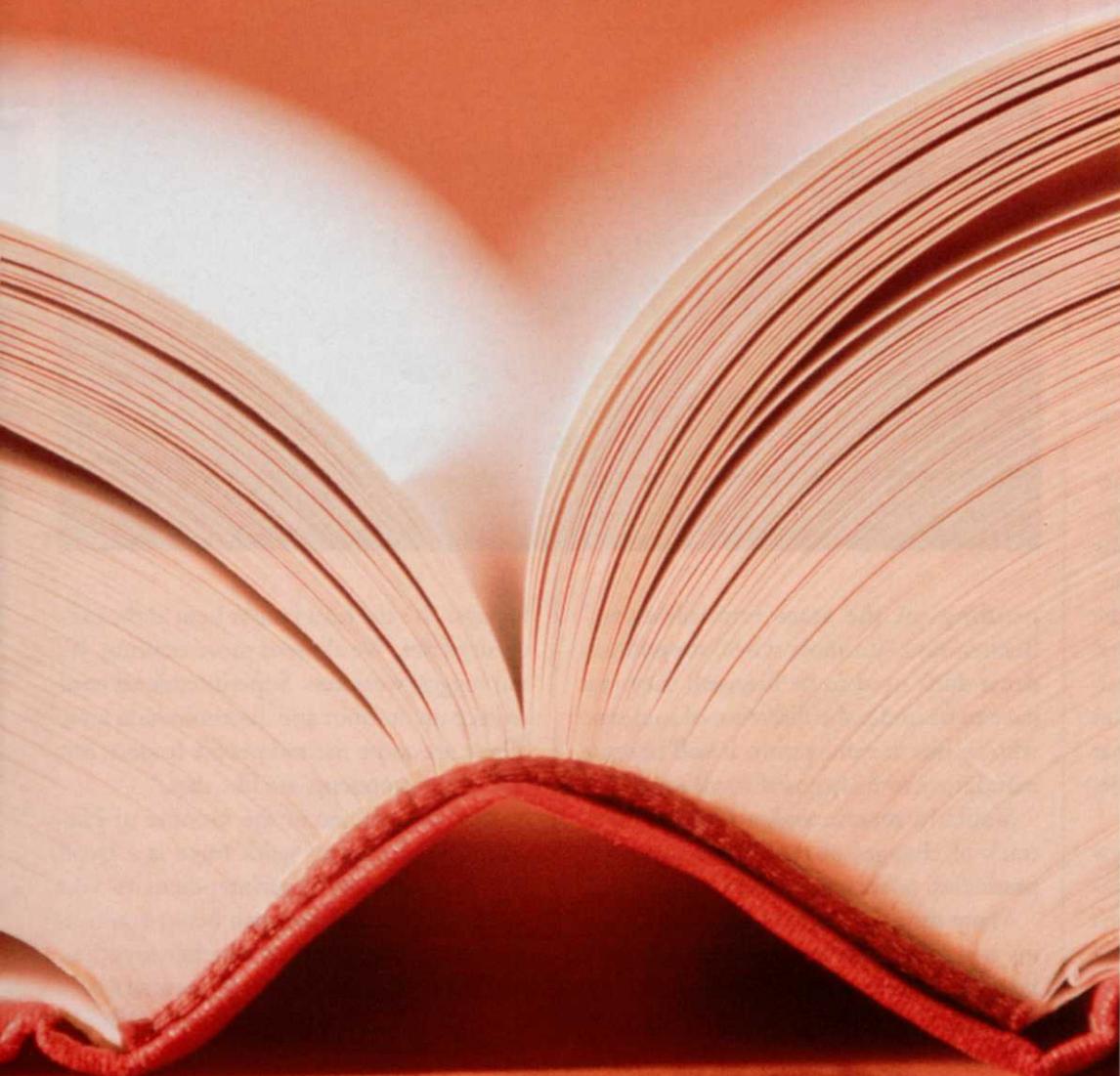
At Pinehurst, fair and consistent treatment, coupled with appropriate feedback generated during employee reviews, helps the resort attract and retain its most talented workers.

Photo: Pinehurst, Inc.

Up to snuff

SUPERINTENDENTS NEED TO FURTHER THEIR EDUCATION TO DO THEIR JOBS EFFECTIVELY AND REMAIN COMPETITIVE

by JOHN WALSH



To say continuing education is important for golf course superintendents is an understatement. A number of academics in the turfgrass field say education has become critical to the success of a superintendent's career because aspects of the job constantly change and competition for good jobs is stiff.

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) encourages its members to earn four-year degrees, according to Bruce Clarke, director of turfgrass science and extension specialist in turfgrass pathology at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

"While a four-year degree is no substitute for experience on golf courses, the basic level of professionalism has been raised," Clarke says. "The four-year degree programs are starting to become the foundation. It will be a trend for the next 10 years, definitely among the younger men and women who want to become superintendents. Sharp, young superintendents need to have four-year degrees, and there are a lot of four-year programs across the country to provide them with that level of education."

Nick Christians, professor at Iowa State University in Ames, says there's no substitute for in-depth training at any stage of a superintendent's career. Christians says the GCSAA's continuing education program, which has more than 100 offerings, is the most recognized in the industry.

"Continuing education gives the superintendent advantages," he says. "Some employers value continuing education more than others, but it has always been important. It's more important now because technology is changing things so rapidly."

"We all work with more rapid change," adds Terry Buchen, president of Golf Agronomy International and a consulting agronomist. "We're in a business that is very professional. As a result, in the last 10 to 15 years, there has been a need for more education. There is a constant learning process about pesticide use and regulation."

Education has become more important because the golf course industry is dynamic and education is the only way to keep abreast of the changes, according to Milt Engelke, professor of turfgrass, breeding, genetics and management at Texas Ag Experiment Station at Texas A&M Systems in College Station. Education also exposes superintendents to different operational philosophies.

"I really credit the GCSAA," Engelke says. "Its curriculum has done a good job of bringing quality education to superintendents. But GCSAA has gone overboard with some issues. The program needs a core curriculum before it can get into other topics, but overall, GCSAA made a very important contribution to the industry through its educational programs. GCSAA educational programs have brought the quality of superintendents up well beyond being just greenskeepers."

GCSAA education consists of several components. Hannes Combest, senior director of membership and professional development for the GCSAA, says superintendents can learn using online resources, attending seminars in person or reviewing programs for external use (nonrelated GCSAA education). Superintendents are responding to these options. During 1997, fewer than 60 partici-

pated in GCSAA training. Last year, from January through May, there were less than 100 applications for education programs. This year, for that same time period, there have been more than 600 applications.

Agronomy and beyond

Because agronomic change is constant, a priority for many superintendents is working to keep abreast of new technology. Biocontrol systems—genetically modified organisms in turf—is one popular topic, Engelke says. But more basic education also is necessary. For example, the industry doesn't educate superintendents enough about the process of what equipment does to grass and soil. Grooming and aerification are examples of cultural practices that have effects on soil agronomically, physically and biologically.

Superintendents should take refresher courses about the basics because they are what help them keep core job knowledge in agronomy up to speed, Engelke adds.

"Superintendent jobs are lost when the golf course fails," he says. "Superintendents need to reconnect back to the roots—root-zone maintenance. We tend to lose contact with that over time, but we always need a basic understanding of the way things are and how we can get out of balance. We need to understand the turf life cycle better. For example, diseases don't occur under natural circumstances, we create many of them."

"It seems like there is always some new disease and new approaches to controlling the older diseases," Clarke says. "Yes, there are new species of fungi and new mutations. In many cases, it's the way superintendents change their turf management that exacerbates diseases."

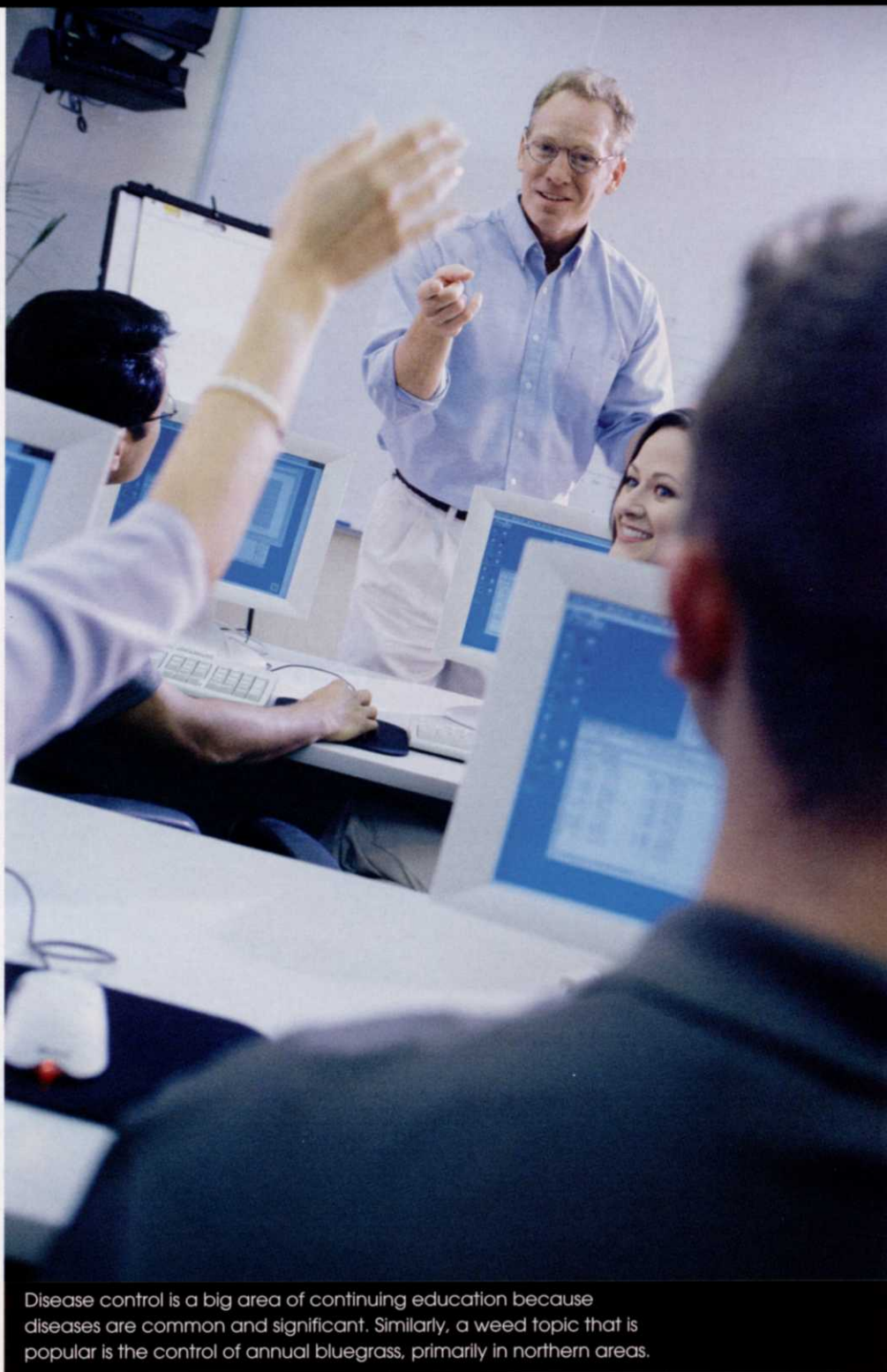
An example is the height of cut that's being lowered dramatically because of the demand for faster green speed. Lowering the height of cut reduces the amount of nitrogen and water in the soil and weakens the grass, making it more susceptible to diseases.

Disease control is a big area of continuing education because diseases are common and significant. Similarly, a weed topic that is popular is the control of annual bluegrass, primarily in northern areas.

"*Poa* is a major issue," Clarke says. "New control measures are popping up. Superintendents will be left behind if they don't keep up."

Additionally, Buchen says weed-, disease- and insect-related continuing education often counts toward the recertification credits superintendents need to maintain their pesticide licenses.

"Every one to three years, superintendents need to get a new license for pesticides, de-



Disease control is a big area of continuing education because diseases are common and significant. Similarly, a weed topic that is popular is the control of annual bluegrass, primarily in northern areas.

pending on the state requirements," Buchen says. "In most states, superintendents don't need to be licensed, they just have to be under the direction of someone who is. But at some point, it will become mandatory to be licensed in all states."

Similarly, superintendents need to keep track of changes of pesticide labels, new pesticides, fertilizers and turf seeds.

Many times, superintendents' core training is in an area like agronomy, so most need help with business fundamentals, such as accounting and personnel management.

Buchen says personnel management is the hardest thing many superintendents have to do and the aspect of their jobs of which they spend the most time.

"We can't do anything without people,"

he says. "It's the least taught item at the university level. We all need more training. It's our biggest weakness. Superintendents need to keep up on labor and discrimination laws. There are some natural people leaders, but few superintendents are like that."

Also, an increase of the number of Hispanics in the green work force is a trend that has led more superintendents to take Spanish lessons so they can better communicate with their workers, Buchen says. Do-it-yourself Spanish language seminars are a popular way to learn enough to communicate day to day.

Water usage is another important topic in which education is needed. Bob Carrow, professor of turfgrass science at the University of Georgia in Athens, says the No. 1 issue facing