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KEN MCCRAY

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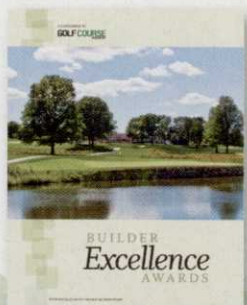
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CHRIS HAMILTON

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Did You Know?

The No. 1 cause of on-the-job deaths for golf course workers is being struck by a piece of equipment – almost always due to a rollover, according to Howie Eberts, OSHA compliance assistance specialist.

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Look for these articles on our home page and in our weekly e-newsletter.

SAFETY IN NUMBERS

OSHA figures from 2004 to 2008 shed some light on how workers most commonly get hurt on the golf course and what violations facilities are most frequently cited for.

SET AN EXAMPLE

A Florida golf course superintendent shares an environmentally responsible grow-in method.

PREDICTING FERTILIZER PRICES

Experts help make some sense of fluctuating fertilizer prices and predict what might happen next.

MANAGING A MORE PROFITABLE ORGANIZATION

To stay afloat during the recession, golf course operators look to reduce costs and increase revenue wherever they can.

PREVENT GOLF CART GAFFES

Take note of how golf cart injuries occur and ways to reduce the incidents.



EDITORIAL MISSION STATEMENT:

Golf Course Industry reports on and analyzes the business of maintaining golf courses, as well as the broader business of golf course management. This includes three main areas: agronomy, business management and career development as it relates to golf course superintendents and those professionals responsible for maintaining a golf course as an important asset.



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PERCEPTION VS. REALITY

A few weeks ago, I was talking to a few superintendents about the official postshow numbers released by the organizers of the Golf Industry Show. Before, during and after the show, there was incessant talk about show numbers, specifically the number of attendees, suppliers, booth space and qualified buyers. That last one struck a chord with one superintendent because he didn't believe there were 7,012 qualified buyers at the show. He suggested the host associations were trying to paint a prettier picture than what really happened in New Orleans. (An aside: No matter what picture of Bourbon Street you paint, it's not going to be pretty.)

Whether there were 7,000 qualified buyers or not, too many people get hung up on the GIS-related numbers. The big show's numbers shouldn't be used to define the industry's performance because:

- The GIS, as well as all regional and local trade shows and conferences throughout the country, should be looked at as a whole for a more well-rounded perspective.
- There always will be people who don't go to the show each year for one reason or another. It's unrealistic to think show attendance is going to increase significantly year after year.

- Few qualified buyers actually purchase products at the show.
- Total revenue from all the golf-industry-related business' (manufacturers, distributors, service providers, architects, consultants, builders, etc.) is a more accurate gauge.
- The Internet, where one can access plenty of product information and research, has reduced the need to attend trade shows.

That said, I'm not suggesting the industry isn't in the doldrums right now. It's just that much more than the GIS needs to be considered when gauging the state of the industry.

Another superintendent said the GCSAA has perpetuated the perception the GIS is a significant industry metric, and perception is reality in the marketplace. Well, if perception is reality, the industry is in deep trouble because people should be making decisions based on reality, not perception. There's a difference between the two, and the difference can be considerable depending on the situation.



John Walsh Editor

To start, perception is defined as a result of attaining awareness or understanding, or to become aware of through the senses. Reality is defined as the quality or state of being real, or the totality of real things and events.

There's an important distinction between the two. Here's an example: I might perceive someone in the office as one who doesn't work hard based on what I see of that person. That's my perception. However, reality could be different. That person might be an exceptionally hard worker; but, because I don't work closely enough with that person or see him as often as other coworkers, I don't see the whole picture, or the reality of his job.

Smoke and mirrors can be part of perception. They're not a part of reality, unless you're not healthy mentally.

What are your perceptions compared to realities? How many of them are one in the same? How many are different, and to what degree? I'm sure you've had perceptions of coworkers, companies, golf courses, etc., that turned out to be incorrect after learning more about that person, business or facility. There's nothing wrong with having perceptions just as long as you understand those perceptions might not be reality based on your

knowledge of the subject, which might be incomplete or lacking. In other words, you don't know the whole story.

Now, think about the perceptions of your coworkers, management, maintenance operation and golf facility. Have you heard perceptions about yourself or others in the organization that aren't accurate? Have you done anything to change that? Did you find out what the perceptions were based on?

If you're operating in a business environment where perception is reality, work to change that as quickly as possible. Because decisions made based on perception are foolish ones sometimes, and decisions made based on reality are intelligent ones all the time, make sure the people in your organization know the difference. It's in reality, not perception, where you'll find the truth, which, in turn, is a solid basis for decision-making. **GCI**

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with your thoughts
and opinions.

Lean thanks

"Lessons in Lean" (page 30 in the January issue) is an outstanding article. I was so impressed with the way Marisa Palmieri presented the concepts. It was simply fair and unbiased journalism. I've had several great e-mails and comments, and the team at Lexington was thrilled with how well the program was presented. Thanks again for Marisa's tremendous work and putting the Working Smarter Training Challenge out there as an option and a resource to help golf courses learn more about the potential of lean.

Jim Paluch
President
JP Horizons
Cleveland

Real world vs. ivory tower

John Stier's comments about research funding cutbacks vis-a-vis grant preparation time, energy and cost are what the real world often views as typical ivory-tower thinking (golfcourseindustry.com/news/news.asp?ID=4854).

First of all, a different economic world existed in September when calls for proposals went out. If you don't think that's true, check your retirement and investment portfolio values then and now.

Second, I'm sure Stier has applied for competitive grants in the past and been unsuccessful. Chalk it up to the cost of doing business. As a business person, I'd love to be in a position in which my downside potential was limited to my due diligence incurred costs.

Finally, recognizing the reality of the current funding climate, offering ideas to enhance it in troubled times and encouraging existing partnerships will probably go much further in the future than "poor me" complaining.

Dane Gamble
Head greenkeeper
Bridger Creek Golf Course
Bozeman, Mont.

Editor's note: We agree – offering ideas to improve the current funding climate is a step in the right direction. We encourage readers with thoughts about how individuals or associations can aid research funding efforts during these difficult economic times to com-

ment on our message board (golfcourseindustry.com/messageboard) or contact mpalmieri@gie.net.

On target

Pat Jones' column, "Plan C for the GCSAA" (page 90 in the January issue) was most enjoyable and hit the nail on the head. The GCSAA board is made up of superintendents with college degrees, and this is the best they could do? Also, the famous celebrities are overpaid. Good work.

John Wantz, CGCS
Retired
San Antonio

GIS success

I've attended every Golf Industry Show since Atlanta and have a much different take on the success of the show than just passing my superintendent in the airport as mentioned in the article "Team time" (golfcourseindustry.com/news/news.asp?ID=4888). Building a relationship with your fellow managers doesn't start at the GIS; it's just an extension of a successful partnership. Being at the Kansas City Country Club for just seven months has provided me another perspective into the superintendent/general manager relationship. Our superintendent, Loren Breedlove, has been at the club 30 years and has been a great support for me. The club is investing a lot of money in the two of us attending the GIS. As such, we scheduled how we were going to work together, spending time with certain vendors well before the show.

Mark A. Bado, CCM CCE
General manager
Kansas City Country Club
Mission Hills, Kan.

Correction

Since 1983, the USGA has funded more than 400 research projects at land grant universities, at a cost of about \$30 million, to improve playing conditions and enjoyment of the game. As the result of budget cuts implemented this year, the information appeared incorrectly in "Follow the money" (on page 56 of the January issue).

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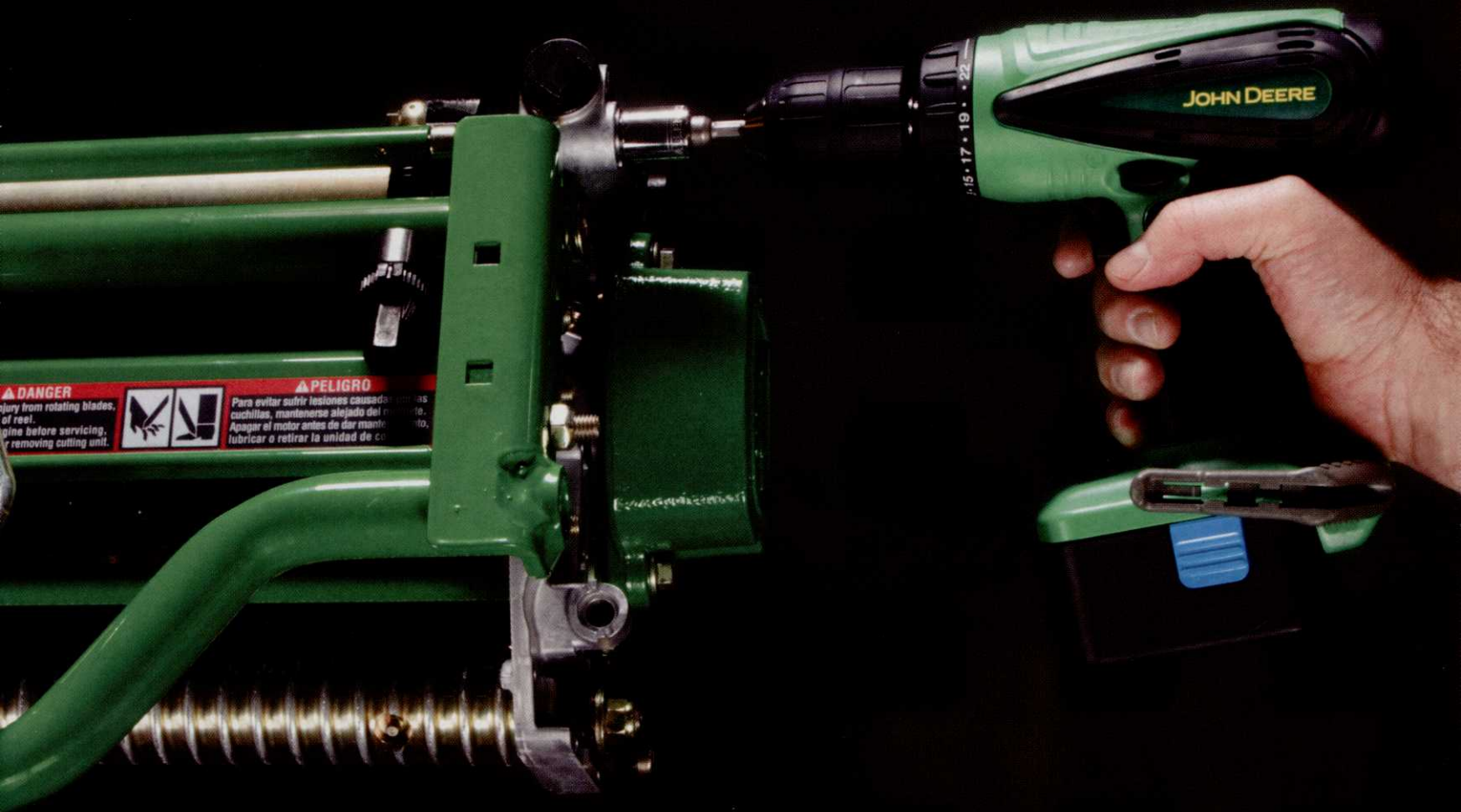
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Tavis Horton is an assistant superintendent at Birmingham Country Club in Michigan. He can be reached at horton31@aol.com.

PREPARING A PORTFOLIO

For many people, interviewing for a job doesn't come naturally. Many assistant superintendents, including me, haven't had the experience selling themselves and drawing attention to their strengths and qualifications. Whether you have the experience or not, having a well-prepared portfolio can be a confidence-builder, distinguish you from other applicants and help you earn a job.

As I prepared for my first interview, I reached out to my friends in the industry who began interviewing for their first superintendent positions. I asked for their advice about many aspects of the process and what they did to stand out. Most of them had prepared a portfolio that was tailored to each specific job interview. There's no single correct way to prepare one – a different presentation is appropriate for each person, situation and interview.

A portfolio is a show-and-tell resume, a sophisticated scrapbook. It's the first opportunity you have to market yourself. It'll indicate your value, portray your experience, serve as a creative asset to intrigue prospective employers and leave a lasting impression. A portfolio can become a large collection of items, but remember to take your cues about what to include from the job advertisement. This is important because your portfolio will demonstrate you have done your homework and understand the characteristics and skills an employer seeks.

There are many advantages to investing in a portfolio. A well-prepared portfolio will distinguish you from candidates who don't bring one. It shows initiative on your part, suggesting you're prepared and organized.

A thorough and well-organized portfolio does more than just add appeal and information. It gives you some control over which topics will be discussed during the interview. I've found it shifts the meeting from the interviewer to the interviewee. It makes me feel more relaxed and confident, easing me into the more difficult or technical questions. It helps set you apart from the people who simply respond to inter-

viewers' questions.

Developing a portfolio helps you prepare for interviews by allowing you to think critically about your career experiences and accomplishments. While compiling your portfolio, you'll rediscover the many accomplishments you might otherwise forget during an interview.

Don't skimp. A nice binder or professionally bound package may set you back a few dollars, but **consider the impression your portfolio will make.**



The first step to building a portfolio is to understand the skills a position requires. Focus on including relevant support for the skills outlined in the job posting. To enhance the uniqueness of the portfolio, request a visit or tour of the facility so you can tailor what you include in your presentation to what you saw on the course and at the maintenance facility.

Draft a table of contents to guide you to narrow the scope of the documents. Most portfolios include a table of contents, resume and cover letter. Some include letters of recommendation. They also may include agronomic plans, project experiences or work samples, articles demonstrating communication skills and organizational documents, such as job sheets, pesticide records and labor-tracking forms.

Consider using pictures. Remember, the right picture is worth a thousand words. If you're trying to document an agronomic plan, using pictures to demonstrate an aeration or topdressing program will help put your description into context. No matter how well written or comprehensive your agronomic program may be, a white

page filled with black text is boring.

Make sure the items you include add to your credibility and celebrate your ability to work on different types of projects. Include recent documents and those that show you in a position of leadership and strength. Your documents and/or pictures should illustrate traits such as taking initiative, resolving a wide range of problems and managing projects. Before and after pictures can show off your skills effectively.

Other documents may include work samples that show your ability to handle various tasks. If a prospective employer advertises it's seeking someone with strong communication and organizational skills, include a section with samples of articles you've written and reporting templates you've developed or assisted with developing, such as a template for monitoring monthly finances or the daily job schedule. You also can focus on a few of your accomplishments and projects from around your golf course that may be relevant to the job you're interviewing for.

Finally, organize your portfolio into a professional presentation. Don't skimp. A nice binder or a professionally bound package may set you back a few dollars, but consider the impression your portfolio will make. Try to keep your presentation package to about 25 items.

The process of assembling a portfolio doesn't just give you a great marketing tool for that interview, it also serves as an effective technique for managing your career. If kept current, it will assist you in working toward your education and career goals. **GCI**