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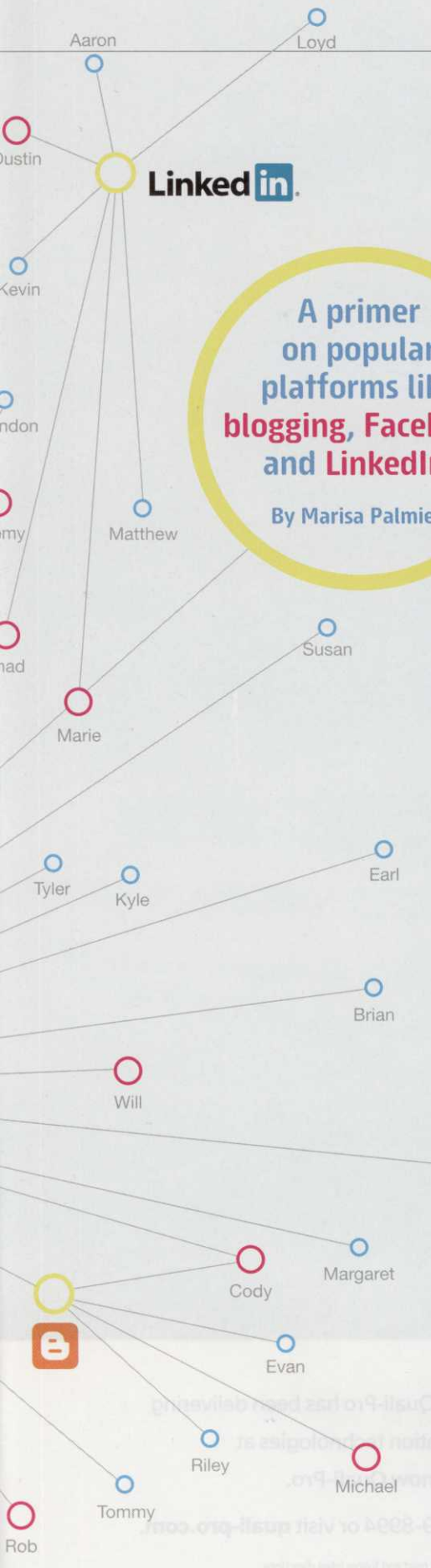
CAREER MANAGEMENT



Is social media right for your career?

You





LinkedIn

**A primer
on popular
platforms like
blogging, Facebook
and LinkedIn.**

By Marisa Palmieri

It's fair to say there won't be a deluge of superintendent jobs opening up any time soon. Considering the dismal state of the U.S. economy and the fact that 2008 was the third year in a row with zero or negative net growth in the number of golf courses in the U.S., few would dispute the job market for golf course superintendents is a tough one.

In tight job markets, experts talk about the importance of personal branding, thought leadership and networking. Now more than ever, getting a job is as much about who you know as what you know.

At the same time, thanks to the Web, now more than ever we have a number of free, easy-to-use tools at our disposal to maintain relationships, demonstrate our expertise and project our best selves to the industry – and the entire world.

Social media platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn and various blogging applications are examples of tools superintendents are using to brand themselves and stay connected online.

You've probably heard of these applications – about 17 percent of you have even joined (see "How social are supers?" on pages 36 & 37). As for the rest of you, there's a good chance you're unsure of exactly how these programs can power your career. Read on for advice from some of your perceptive, well-connected peers.

BLOGGER, WORDPRESS & OTHER BLOG SITES

These free or inexpensive Web platforms allow anyone to publish a blog. A blog – short for Web log – is like an online journal, with entries appearing in reverse chronological order.



Golf industry applications include:

- Communicating with the golfing public or club members.
- Demonstrating to golfers or peers what you're working on by posting photos and project descriptions.
- Offering commentary on any niche in which you'd like to be perceived as a subject-matter expert.



Someone who makes it work

Sean McCue
Golf course superintendent
The Country Club at Castle Pines
Castle Rock, Colo.
www.cccpgcm.blogspot.com

McCue founded his blog in early 2008 as a tool to show members what takes place behind the scenes in the maintenance department.


"It's given me an opportunity, through pictures and text, to describe what we do every day to create the end product," he says.



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**Tom Leahy, Superintendent
Sleepy Hollow Country Club
Scarborough, New York**

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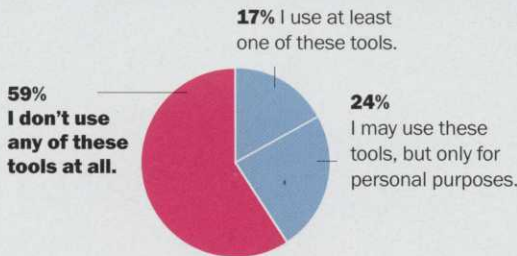
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HOW SOCIAL ARE SUPERS?

SUPERINTENDENT USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, BLOGS, LINKEDIN, ETC.) FOR PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES?

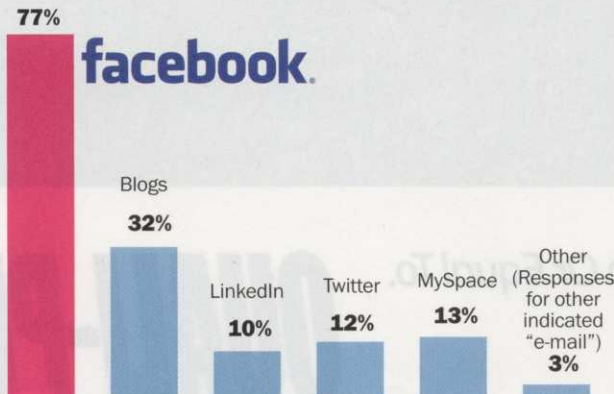


SOCIAL MEDIA USE CROSSED WITH RESPONDENTS' AGES

Age	Yes; I use at least one of these tools.	No; I may use these tools, but only for personal purposes.	No; I don't use any of these tools at all.	Response Totals
18-25	5%	8%	1%	3%
26-35	40%	30%	19%	26%
36-45	37%	27%	24%	27%
46-55	13%	24%	38%	30%
56+	5%	11%	18%	14%

WHAT SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS DO YOU USE?

Asked only of the 17 percent who indicated "I use at least one of these tools."



McCue's blog started as a basic means of member communication, but it's evolved to much more. It became a valuable tool to sell the need for a new irrigation system by documenting the numerous problems the maintenance staff had with the old system.

"Once there was a document trail that showed the struggles, it really helped bring things to life and help the members understand the reasons we needed a new irrigation system," he says.

Once McCue sold the need for the new system, the blog chronicled its installation on a near daily basis. It can be difficult for members to understand what they're getting for their money – especially with an underground investment like an irrigation system. The blog helped them see all of the components and details. It also serves as a historical tool for McCue. If there's ever a problem, he has the photographic evidence organized in one place.

Those reasons alone justify the blog's success for McCue, but he's also pleased with the traffic and – most importantly – the response he receives from members. Though he can't track exactly which members view the site, he does know it averages 300 to 400 hits per week. The club has 450 members, and McCue markets his blog's URL to them via the club newsletter.

"The only way I know which members are reading it is when I get specific comments from them, and I often hear 'I enjoy reading the blog,' or 'It's been helpful,'" he says. "The people who do frequent it appreciate the information."

Several regular readers spread the news to other members, McCue says.

"A couple of guys in particular are frequent visitors and act as an information conduit to the other guys in their foursomes," he says.

Also, the blog has boosted McCue's capacity for networking. Via the blog, he's interacted with industry members from as far away as Scotland and Australia.

From a career standpoint, McCue sees the blog as another resource he has above and beyond a resume. If he were searching for job, he'd have an accessible list of his accomplishments at the ready – something he believes would give him an advantage against other candidates with just a black-and-white resume.

McCue commits about 15 to 30 minutes a day to his blog. His posts are more frequent during the season – six or seven times a week. He scaled back to several per week during the off season. Relevance and timeliness are

imperative, he says, so his initial goal was to post something every day.

"I didn't want to just do something every couple weeks," he says. "I knew when I started that I would have to be committed."

He typically starts the week with three or four topics in mind, but many of his ideas pop up on the job. He often starts a post in the morning before the crew arrives – jotting down ideas or a sentence or two. He'll add some more at lunch and finish it by the end of the day.

Some superintendents might fear the commitment or exposure of blogging, McCue says, but he encourages them to overcome those obstacles to help golfers better comprehend maintenance practices.

"You can talk to people about maintenance every day and they may have some understanding," he says. "But if you can document it in writing and pictures, then it really helps."

LinkedIn

LINKEDIN

Unlike Facebook or MySpace, LinkedIn is a social networking site designed specifically for professionals. It's been described as "a resume for the 2.0 world" or "a virtual Rolodex." It's both.

Golf industry applications include:

- Networking with peers, researchers, vendors and other industry members.
- Creating an online presence for your work history and resume, including recommendations from employers, peers or customers.
- Searching for jobs, either through the site's job postings or through people you know in your network.



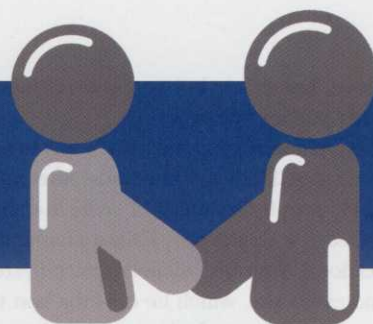
Someone who makes it work

Scott Hillyard
Assistant superintendent
Lake Shore Country Club
Glencoe, Ill.

Hillyard learned about LinkedIn several years ago from his sister, who's a human resources executive. She encouraged him to create a profile, which he did, and since then he's been exploring the social network's benefits.

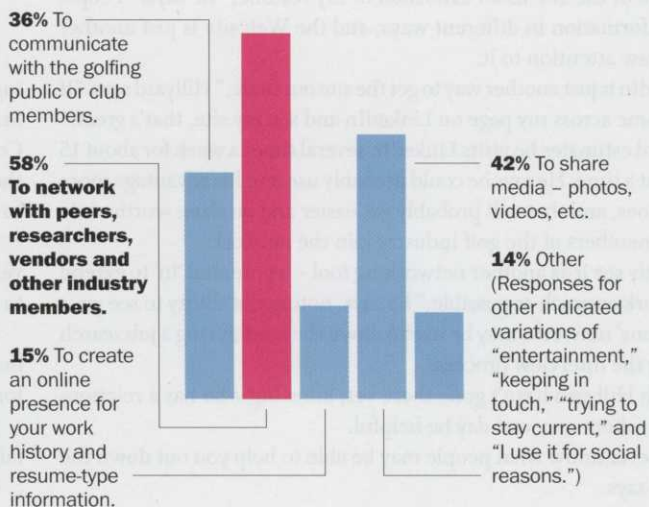
Among the most important ones for Hillyard, an assistant superintendent who's ready to take the next step in his career, is getting his name out there.

"For a long time all I had were some family and friends



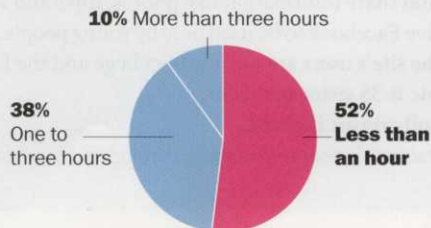
WHY DO YOU USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

Asked only of the 17 percent who indicated "I use at least one of these tools."



HOW MUCH TIME EACH WEEK DO YOU SPEND USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES?

Asked only of the 17 percent who indicated "I use at least one of these tools."



Source: The data for "How social are supers?" was collected by Golf Course Industry through a survey of 359 superintendents and assistant superintendents, conducted in April 2009 via an online survey program.

on there, but slowly but surely there have been more people in the industry pop up,” he says.

Hillyard describes LinkedIn as a way to make a “mental note” of who he’s met at golf industry functions. After an event, he might type in the names of people he’s met and invite them to connect.

LinkedIn is also the way Hillyard found the designer who created his professional Web site, nicholascotthillyard.com. It’s also one way he promotes his site, which he calls the best thing he’s ever done for his career. In addition to the basic resume-type information, Hillyard’s site features project-management experience (with photos) and his professional philosophy in an attractive, appealing format.

“I think of the site as an extension of my resume,” he says. “People absorb information in different ways, and the Web site is just another way to draw attention to it.

“LinkedIn is just another way to get the site out there,” Hillyard says. “If people come across my page on LinkedIn and see my site, that’s great.”

Hillyard estimates he visits LinkedIn several times a week for about 15 minutes at a time. He says he could probably use it to his advantage more than he does, and that will probably get easier and be more worthwhile as more members of the golf industry join the network.

“I mostly see it as another networking tool – a potential ‘in’ to extend my network as much as possible,” he says, noting the ability to see your connections’ networks may be useful down the road during a job search or during the interview process.

Though Hillyard hasn’t gone there yet, knowing who has a relationship with whom may one day be helpful.

“You never know what people may be able to help you out down the road,” he says.

He’s right. As everyone says, “It’s all about who you know.”

facebook

FACEBOOK

A social networking site originally designed for college students, Facebook is now open to everyone. Participants use Facebook to keep in touch with friends and share information like photos, links and videos. Though some perceive Facebook to be used only by young people, more than two-thirds of the site’s users are outside of college and the fastest-growing demographic is 35 years and older.

Golf industry applications include:

- Staying in contact with people you meet throughout your career.

- Networking with peers, researchers, vendors and other industry members.

- Sharing media – photos, videos, etc.

For Batsky Facebook is somewhat of a reunion.

“The biggest use for me, from a professional standpoint, is connect-



Someone who makes it work

Darrin Batsky
Golf course superintendent
Chartiers Country Club
Pittsburgh, Pa.

ing with the university professors who are on there,” he says. An Ohio State alumnus who’s a board member for the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council, Batsky likes to stay in touch with his former professors and those at Penn State. Professors tell him they’ve caught on to Facebook to stay connected with their students.

“To me, it’s important to keep an eye on what’s going on at the university level,” he says. “So I use Facebook from a research standpoint to keep that networking going.”

Not to mention, that network – and the fact that researchers are remaining connected with their students – may one day come in handy for Batsky if he’s ever seeking interns.

Aside from turf-school relations, Batsky, who joined Facebook last fall, also uses the platform to communicate with peers and vendors.

In one case, he was able to cut down on travel costs because of a Facebook interaction with an industry contact, Craig Porovne, vice president of Professional Turf Products based in Belle Vernon, Pa.

“I had mentioned on Facebook that I was going to the Eastern Pennsylvania Turf Show, which not a lot of people from the Pittsburgh area go to,” he says. “Craig saw that, we got in touch and we were able to share travel expenses. If I hadn’t put that on Facebook, we would have never known and never saved that money. Stuff like that can really help – especially in these economic times.”

Another perception of social media is they’re time-wasters. Any Internet-related activity can eat the time, Batsky says, so he’s careful to spend a total of about 20 minutes or a half hour a day online – including Facebook, LinkedIn (which he rarely uses) and the blog he started in January (dmbturf.blogspot.com).

The blog has become a great tool, he says – a way to disseminate the information that was previously relegated to the club newsletter.



ARE YOU WEB-CHALLENGED?

For more information about how these sites and applications work, or for tutorials on how to participate, HowStuffWorks.com provides easy-to-understand descriptions. Visit:

<http://computer.howstuffworks.com/blog.htm>

<http://computer.howstuffworks.com/linkedin.htm>

<http://computer.howstuffworks.com/facebook.htm>

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- Join our LinkedIn group (Search groups>Golf Course Industry magazine)
- Follow us on Twitter (@gcimagazine)

“By the time it gets printed, a lot has happened,” he says. “The blog keeps the membership updated in a more timely fashion.”

Batsky acknowledges that some people consider Facebook to be a social medium only, and they may be concerned about mixing their personal and professional lives. For example, he sometimes banters back-and-forth with

his brother – something all of his Facebook friends can see.

“I know people get freaked out – they’re worried that photos or things they post can be misconstrued, but I’m not hiding anything from anybody,” he says.

For people with these personal vs. professional concerns, one option may be to use

LinkedIn only for professional networking. Another option is to explore Facebook’s privacy settings, which allow you to create separate friend lists with different levels of privacy (see “Facebook tutorial,” below).

Batsky offers a good rule of thumb: “If you wouldn’t let your mother see it, then you probably shouldn’t be putting it online.” **GCI**

FACEBOOK TUTORIAL: Separate the personal from the professional

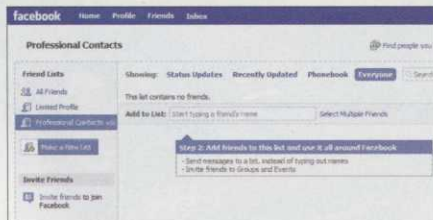
Many people, especially those who were high school- or college-age when they created their Facebook profiles, don’t want to give up the social medium they’ve been using for years, but they’d like to be able to network professionally, too.

Facebook’s Friend Lists are the perfect way to restrict specific content from a group of people, such as co-workers, peers, vendors or prospective employers. Here’s how to create a Friend List to restrict what a designated group of friends can or cannot see.

1. Select the Friends tab from the top of the page.

2. Click on the “Make a new list” button and name your list. (You also can send messages to Friend Lists and invite them to groups and events.)

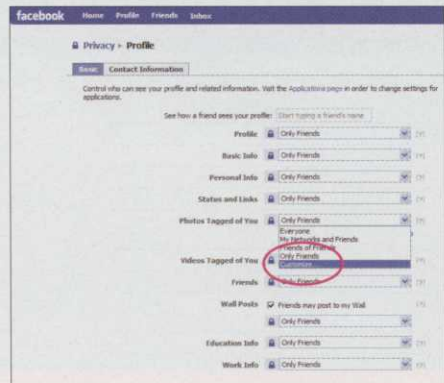
3. Add friends to your list.



4. Go to the “Privacy Settings” page and click on “Profile.”



6. Click the drop-down menu next to the setting that controls the content you want to restrict and select “Customize.”



7. A pop-up box will appear with the section “Except These People.” Add the name of a Friend List or individual friends and click “Okay.” The people on this Friend list now aren’t able to view the restricted content.

8. To check how any person can view your profile, type their name into the tool at the top of the “Privacy Settings>Profile” page that says “See how a friend sees your profile.”

