

to be in a given meeting. It is a powerful tool that can promote individual productivity because it reminds everyone involved of the financial significance of the time spent in the meeting.

THE MEETING LASTS FOREVER.

Now, that might be an exaggeration, but that exact thought will be crossing the minds of those attending a meeting that seems to be going nowhere. When the eyes of attendees start wandering to watches in an attempt to see exactly how much time they've spent in the meeting and to estimate how much more time will elapse before they can get back to their long to-do lists, you're in trouble.

Providing a meeting agenda will go a long way toward solving this problem. When attendees know exactly when a meeting will be over, they won't spend their time internally speculating about when they can leave.

Create a reputation for yourself as being a meeting leader who starts and ends on time, every time. And if you do need to extend the meeting's length, ask the group's permission before doing so. The ideal maximum meeting length is 60 minutes.

Use time boxes for each agenda item. That means a certain amount of time is allotted for each agenda item. Bring a kitchen timer that you can use to enforce the time limits.

THE MEETING IS A FREE-FOR-ALL.

Anyone who's ever attended a meeting or led a meeting knows that it doesn't take long for things to get off track. The best way to avoid losing control of the conversation and the meeting as a whole is to set some conversational ground rules – everyone participates, or don't ramble – right away.

Make it clear to those in attendance that the ground rules will be used to ensure that everyone's time is well-spent.

BIG TALKERS EAT UP ALL THE TIME.

Every meeting has them: those people who love to let everyone know they are the most important people in the room, have the best ideas and have a comment to make on every subject. Your conversational ground rules should help keep your big talkers in line, but there are other ways to ensure that one person doesn't dominate.

First, don't let big talkers sit at the front of the room or the back center of a U-shape. This definitely gives them a feeling of being on stage. In fact, you may even want to use assigned seating for the meeting.

CONFLICT KILLS PRODUCTIVITY.

Keep in mind is that effective meetings aren't necessarily free of conflict. In fact, conflict can be a good thing, and it should be valued by those attending any given meeting. The key is not letting it get out of hand.

Try viewing conflict as "creative abrasion," a phrase coined by the president of Nissan Design International, Jerry Hirshberg. Here's a metaphorical explanation of how it works: Picture two tectonic plates on the Earth's surface – your way and my way, perhaps – grating against each other. Many people

be making the final decision from the get-go. The quickest way for a leader to lose his team's respect is for him to make a decision that his team thought they would be making. If you just want your team's input and will be making the final decision on your own, let them know that ahead of time. They will be happy to weigh in and will feel good that you respect and want their opinions.

NO DECISIONS ARE CAPTURED.

Too often, meetings end and everyone simply goes back to business as usual without putting

A common problem with many meetings is that **they're scheduled with seemingly no clear objective** in mind.

know that when this kind of friction occurs between plates, earthquakes often ensue. But what happens when these two plates – or viewpoints – come together? If the environment is right, they create a mountain – a third viewpoint that is a product of the first two approaches and that is grander, loftier, and more powerful than either one was on its own. In other words, conflict is turned into synergy.

If – or when – things do get heated, ask everyone to take a break for a couple of minutes to think things over. Reinforce the ground rules and ask team members to listen to each other and consider what a possible compromise might be. Remind everyone of the meeting's ultimate goal and ask, given that goal, how you all can move forward to achieve it. You might hear from your team that more information needs to be gathered. That would make for a good reason to stop the meeting right then and set a date for a future meeting.

If the knowledge is in the room, it's likely people just aren't listening to each other.

WHO'S MAKING THE DECISIONS?

So your meeting is nearly over, you've discussed everything on the agenda and you're ready to send everyone on their ways. Unfortunately, no one is quite clear about what they're supposed to be doing. As the leader, you don't have to be the one making all of the decisions, but you do have to make sure the decision-making process is clear to everyone.

Make sure everyone understands who will

anything that was discussed in the meeting into action, or without even knowing what they personally should do.

If you keep the format for capturing what went on in the meeting simple, you have a much greater likelihood of getting it done and getting it distributed quickly. There is no simpler way to record what went on than by writing on a flip chart the who, what and by when outcomes of the directives discussed in the meeting.

EVALUATIONS ARE NOT DONE.

For many organizations, meetings have simply become something that employees feel like they have to get through.

They think that all they need to do is sit through the meeting, and then they can get back to the task at hand. A great way to ensure that this isn't the mindset of those in your organization's meetings is to do proper meeting evaluations.

Have everyone assess the four Ps:

- Progress. Are we achieving the goals we set out?
- Pace. Are we moving too fast or too slowly to achieve those goals?
- Process. Are we using the right tools/methods?
- Pulse. How is everyone feeling – frustrated, satisfied, energized?

By implementing a few key tools, you can breathe life back into your meetings. **GCI**

The author is president of FireFly Facilitation and author of "The Firefly Effect."

STORIED GOLF COURSE trees

Mark Twain infamously called golf “a good walk spoiled.” Maybe his course never had any trees. If Twain had tried one with tree-lined fairways, he’d have heard more than his share of stories – and how could the American fiction master have resisted that?

Because, for the layout with trees, or ones that used to have a few, or even those with one lonesome pine (or oak, cypress or willow), a tale of how they got there, how they’re cared for or how they went the way of all flesh are as common as the weekend duffer dreaming of the Amen Corner or the bonnie links o’ Scotland.

Twain might have especially liked the one about the putter that fell to earth. So read on for a variety of tales at some sweet layouts. The real story of trees on golf courses is, well – the trees.

**WITH GOLF COURSE
TREES, THERE’S A STORY
IN EVERY BRANCH – AND
SOMETIMES A PUTTER.**

By Paul Hughes

PRESIDENTIAL PRIVILEGE

Augusta National, Augusta, Ga.



Augusta's Big Oak



Augusta's 17th hole, Eisenhower Pine

Augusta National Golf Club is arguably the most storied, exclusive and tree-story-laden golf course in the world. The permanent home of The Masters tournament begins and ends in tree lore.

Augusta opened in 1933, reportedly built on grounds formerly housing a tree farm. Each of the 18 holes is named according to a tree or shrub. Since The Masters is played in the spring, these are often fully flowered during the event.

A tree known simply as "the big oak" stands near the clubhouse, and is approximately 150 years old.

But perhaps the most famous tree is the "Eisenhower Pine," a loblolly pine on hole 17, some 200 yards from the tee box. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who often played and stayed at Augusta, hit into the tree almost as often, and the pine has long been called in his honor.

There is also a pond, named Ike's Pond, in honor of Eisenhower. Ike reportedly told Augusta Chairman Clifford Roberts he'd found the ideal spot for a dam, if the club would like a fish pond. The dam was immediately built, and the pond was born.

Augusta is reportedly getting more tree-like recently as well – news reports noted that as of 2007 the course had added more than 250 trees, to create new angles on shots and make some holes more difficult.

ICONIC GRANDEUR (OR THE "CHARLIE BROWN")

Chambers Bay, University Place, Wash.



Chambers Bay's Lone Fir



Vandalism at Chambers Bay

For 110 years it was a sand and gravel pit – reportedly the most productive one in the country in the 1970s – so you wouldn't expect many trees in the area. Now a top-flight golf course called Chambers Bay, there still aren't many trees. In fact, there's one. Folks around there are growing fond of it, too.

"During construction the golf course architect loved it and threatened the lives of any worker who damaged it," says David Wienecke, director of golf course management at the course. "It's not a specimen tree. I call it the 'Charlie Brown' tree."

The Douglas fir is upward of 40 feet tall, Wienecke figures, growing in a hilly dune section on the Puget Sound side of the course, behind the 15th green. It's become an icon for the golf course itself.

"It's in the ads and articles, and almost every photo has that tree," he says. "That tree has become the image of the course in everyone's mind."

But not everyone likes it. Or perhaps some people are just jerks. In April 2008 vandals hacked portions of the trunk with an axe.

Wienecke says people have significant access to the area because a public walking trail runs through the course.

"We are in the public eye," he says. "It makes security hard."

In the aftermath of the attack, he received e-mails, calls and even letters advising him how to care for the tree. He brought in an arborist, putting in braces to support the tree but opting against a fence to prevent access. "The wounds weren't life-threatening, and we didn't want to harm the aesthetics," he says.

Instead, there is now an 8-foot-tall, black, cyclone-fence wrapping padlocked to the tree. Wienecke can unlock it to care for it, but it is invisible to the eye from a distance.

"It's near the championship tees on the 16th," he says. "You won't even know it's wrapped."

Wienecke figures the fir is only 50 to 75 years old – but may not have many years left. It grows where trees don't, and it's been attacked.

"The growth rings are compact so we know it's been stressed," he says. "There's a lot of cone production – so it might be saying it won't be around much longer."

TWO TREES (OR "RETURN TO HISTORY")

Oakmont Country Club, Oakmont, Pa.



Oakmont's No.14 before



Oakmont's No. 14 after

“They started planting trees here in the 1960s and 1970s,” John Zimmers says. He’s superintendent at Oakmont Country Club, which, beginning in the 1990s, started removing those same trees.

He figures plantings began as part of a “beautify America” program following the post-WWII building boom that saw functional but ugly buildings thrown up all over the country to accommodate the fast-growing population. Further impetus came from club members to “beautify Oakmont” – and the club added several thousand trees – some 40 years ago.

They were indeed beautiful trees, and it was a nice, shady course. But it was wrong for the golf course long-term.

“It was way overgrown,” Zimmers says. “There were more than 5,000 trees on the course. It affected how it looked and how it played.”

The trees had been a big problem for the greens, he says.

“Trees and grass don’t grow well together,” Zimmers says. It also wasn’t true to Oakmont history. Henry Fownes drew it in 1903 as a links-style course with windswept greens and grasses – no trees. “We were trying to restore the golf course to its original design.”

Oakmont started removing evergreens in the mid-1990s, he says, just to “clear some space.” As work progressed, they got more aggressive.

“They realized, ‘The more we open it, the better it looks and plays,’” Zimmers says.

Because the membership at the time liked the trees, a lot of the work had to be done in the early morning or late at night.

“At the beginning, it was a sensitive issue,” Zimmers says. “Now if you surveyed the membership, 98 to 99 percent would approve.”

Trees that had overgrown bunkers and greens – gone. Trees for an idea, someone’s idea, of beauty – gone. Nearly all the trees – gone. By 2005, they were done.

“It was a big undertaking,” he says. “Now the course is restored.”

So much so, that Oakmont hosted the U.S. Open in 2007. The course, brand new and wonderfully old at the same time, wowed the observers, players and attendees who came to the Open – with an estimated 10,000 more of the latter able to come because removing the trees added so much room. Oakmont’s revivalist return to tradition raised the club into the top echelons of Golf Digest’s Top 100 courses, and the USGA advised golf courses that were considering tree removal and course restoration to visit Oakmont to see how it’s done.

Only two trees remain: at the third tee and near the 4th and 5th holes.

“They’re staying for now,” Zimmers says.

A SHORT CUT (OR “NO SLOW GROWTH”)

Inverness Club, Toledo, Ohio

Designed in 1903 by Donald Ross, it was 75 years later that Inverness became known for “the Hinkle tree.”

Courses are often changed and improved in various ways prior to major golf events; all are spruced up, dressed to the nines, to accommodate excellent golfers, galleries of spectators and television cameras. In 1979, Inverness hosted the U.S. Open, and something one golfer did is remembered today.

Lon Hinkle studied the course intently during a practice round, and noticed the 8th had been changed from a long par-three to a par-five, to make room for spectators. He saw that by playing the 17th fairway instead (it ran next to the 8th), he’d get a 50-yard shortcut.

It wasn’t against any Rules of Golf, and the fairway in question was clear of golfers, so during the first round he nailed his shot just that way. He birdied the hole, gaining a stroke on his competition.

Overnight, the USGA fixed his caddy wagon. They planted a 25-foot spruce to block the route.

Several golfers that second day, including Hinkle, nonetheless tried the same strategy as before. Some didn’t make it over the tree, some did, and one did – only to land in the ravine opposite. Hinkle found the green in two that second round – another good performance.

In the final two rounds Hinkle played the 8th the conventional way. The tree still stands.

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Conventional images of Oklahoma suggest the place where God decided to collect all the dust from creating the world. In fact, the state is heavily forested – not to mention mountained and laked – and very little is the “Dust Bowl” of old.

“This is green country,” says Russ Myers, CGCS, former superintendent at Southern Hills Country Club.

It’s a native oak area, he notes, along with sycamore, and the private club has a full-time horticulturist on staff.

In fact, Southern Hills has some 4,000 trees on its 27 holes. It’s a far cry from the two dozen first planted near five greens – for shade – when the course was built in 1936.

Occasionally, the trees cause trouble. A state champion American elm on the second green was one of them. About 150 years old, Myers had to remove it in February 2007.

“It was either the largest or the oldest in the state,” he says. “But we battled with that green for years.”

TREES GROW IN OKLAHOMA
Southern Hills Country Club, Tulsa, Okla.



Tree removal at Southern Hills

Myers worked with a tree care company to survey the course, mapping each tree in a shade analysis study to find which ones were causing problems. He found the green in question was getting less than an hour of sun per day.

The choices were to move the green, accept the poor grass or remove the tree.

“The membership did not want the tree removed,” Myers says. “It was a whole mind-set to go through, and it truly took facts and data to show them the need.”

When they took it down – the elm was at least 5 feet in diameter – Myers learned the tree was almost entirely hollow inside from disease.

The result since its removal? “It turned that green into one of our strongest,” he says.

Myers also lost about 100 trees to an ice storm in winter 2007-2008, and has replaced many. In fact, the club, with just fewer than a thousand members, is working on its vision of what the course will look like for the next 30 years.

People usually throw their clubs into the lake. James Ward, golf manager for the Los Angeles department of parks and recreation, was managing one of the city’s golf courses, Wilson, in 1997. A popular layout at Griffith Park, Wilson Golf Course plays more than 90,000 rounds a year. After one of those rounds, Ward says, a golfer came up to the starter with an odd request.

“He said, ‘I need your help recovering a putter,’” recalls Ward.

At the par-5 15th, the golfer had quarreled with the foursome playing behind him. Golf balls were tapped out of the way, tempers flared – and a player in the foursome threw the man’s putter into a eucalyptus globulus (blue gum).

“It was 80 or 90 feet tall,” Ward says of the tree. “The putter was 30 feet up.”

The golfer explained the putter – a BullsEye, with a brass blade – had been his father’s; he needed it back.

He left his name and number, and the next day, a tree crew knocked a putter out of the tree: a BullsEye with a brass blade. “We called him, he came down, looked at it, and said, ‘This is not my putter.’”

Yes, when the crew went back into the tree, they found another putter – a BullsEye with a brass blade. “One tree on one hole had two putters in it,” Ward says. “Nothing that crazy has happened since.”

The man retrieved his dad’s putter. But, Ward says, “I still have the other one.”

MEASURE ONCE, PUTT TWICE
Wilson Golf Course, Los Angeles



Blue gum trees at Wilson



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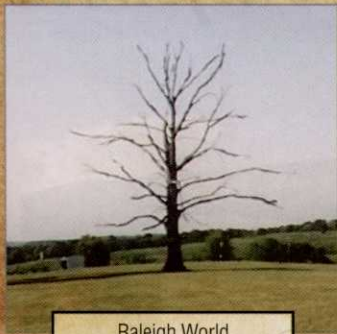
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THE OLD OAK TREE (OR "IF YOU BUILD IT – DON'T TOUCH THE TREE")

Raleigh World Golf Course, Norwood, Iowa



Raleigh World

Raleigh Dunston has spent the better part of 20 years building his golf course. He started it in 1990, opened it in 2002, and improves it a little bit every day.

"I'm trying to make it a full-time thing, but it's not yet," he says.

But Raleigh World is more than just "pasture golf," with a few holes in a field and a box to collect greens fees on the honor system. Dunston has a full 18 holes, flags, rental golf cars, a 3,000-square-foot clubhouse (a converted barn) – even advertising. The greensmower goes out every day.

"The only difference is I don't have bentgrass," he says. "So it's more like early golf."

It plays about 5,000 to 8,000 rounds a year – he's not quite sure, since it's more a labor of love than a labor of economics and spreadsheets. But his wife loves the tree.

It was there, on his family's land, when he was 5 years old; it was there when he was building the golf course and it's there now, right on the 14th green.

"That tree has been standing for about a hundred years," Dunston says. "My wife kind of adopted it when I was working on the course, and she wouldn't let me cut it down."

An old oak tree, sans yellow ribbon, it doesn't bloom or grow or die.

"It doesn't do anything," Dunston says. "It just stands there."

Right in the middle of play.

"That just makes it a little bit more fun," he says. "We put up a sign that says if you hit the tree, it's a three-stroke penalty."

This article originally appeared in Tree Care Industry Magazine. It's reprinted here with permission from the Tree Care Industry Association.

TREE HUGGER

Abington Country Club, Jenkintown, Pa.



The willow tree at Abington's 5th hole

You can't miss it, much as they'd like to. The 5th hole at Abington has a willow tree on it – right on it. The tree, about 40 feet tall, is smack dab in front of the green. It blocks at least one-third of the landing area at the hole, making viewing it – let alone access to it – a challenge, to say the least.

"It's a par 3," says Timothy Walker, superintendent. So, on such a short hole, "You have to go over it or around it. And, in the evening the hole plays right into the sun."

The owner won't cut it down, he says.

"He's not into cutting trees down," Walker notes nonchalantly. "He just likes trees."

The course was built in 1913 and Walker believes the tree was there at that time, though he's not sure of the history of the tree itself. Complicating matters is that the course owner is actually long-term leasing the land from a Pennsylvania Quaker group, he says.

"It's the Abington Friends," Walker says. "Maybe we can't actually do anything with the tree."

It's a nice looking tree, he notes, that presents a practical problem.

"It's funny to have it there," Walker says. "Golfers actually like the tree; I have no idea why." **GCI**



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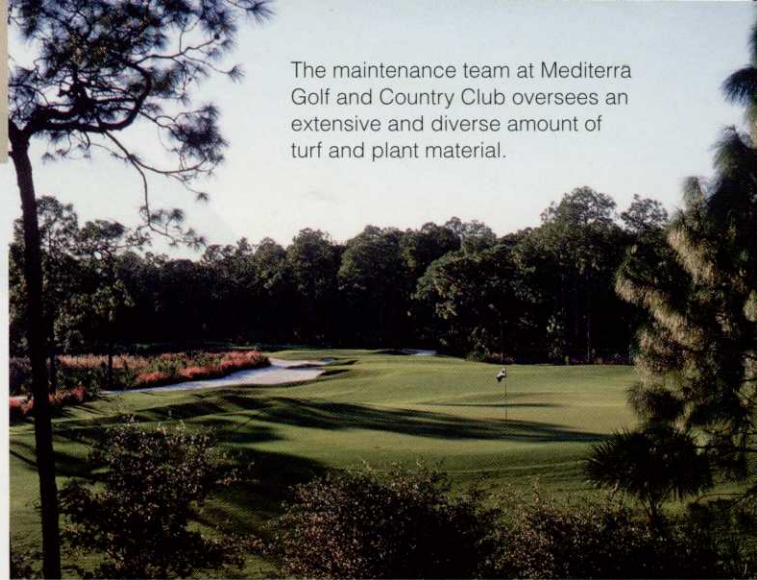
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BROKERING A DEAL



The maintenance team at Mediterra Golf and Country Club oversees an extensive and diverse amount of turf and plant material.

Scott Whorrall's relationship with a plant broker ensures both efficiency and quality when acquiring his facility's unique needs. *As told to Mike Zawacki*

Scott Whorrall requires a lot of plants. As the director of golf course and grounds operations at Mediterra Golf and Country Club in Naples, Fla., Whorrall not only oversees the maintenance of the facility's two 18-hole, Tom Fazio-designed championship courses, but also 100 acres of plantings around the residential community and its common grounds. This translates into \$1 million in plant material purchases annually.



Whorrall

Whorrall reconciled this need two years ago by forging a business relationship with a local plant broker who scours the nurseries around South Florida for the unique, hard-to-get plant material Mediterra needs to maintain the upscale, gated golf course community's Mediterranean theme.

"Working with a plant broker saves me a lot of time and hassle when it comes to purchasing our plant materials," Whorrall says. "It's been a good relationship and I'd say working with a broker has exceeded our expectations."

Whorrall shares with GCI the process of forging that relationship and the advantages of working through a plant broker.

big-box or retail outlet. This is a huge asset to us.

It's a unique theme here – a Mediterranean theme – and the residents and members bought into that theme. So not all of the plants needed to complete that theme are readily available to us. Our broker seeks out those types of plants that you don't see very often. For example, our broker has been able to track down very large agave plants and very large bromeliads and anthuriums, which allow us to complete that Mediterranean-style look.

SOLID RELATIONSHIP. We spent a lot of time together at first. I showed him various areas of our property that we wanted to address with certain types of plantings, and I even showed him pictures of looks that we were trying to accomplish on the property and around the courses.

Our broker makes regular trips two to three times a week to Homestead and South Miami where he finds that strange stuff at those little nurseries tucked away down there. Over two years of working together, our broker has gotten a really good feel for the types of plant material that we're looking for, even if we haven't requested it. He comes in a few times a month with plant samples and to see what I think. Sometimes they work and sometimes they don't, but that's the best part of our working relationship. He has a really good sense for what we're looking for and when he comes across some unique material he knows to pick it up and to see what we think. **GCI**

Both of our courses are 18 holes with 419 bermudagrass everywhere except on the greens, which are ultradwarf bermudagrass. From an aesthetic point of view, these two courses are polar opposites. One course is about 80 percent native plants – everything from Mersin plants to pines and cypresses. The other is more ornate with 122 acres of maintained landscape beds, about half of which are ornamental plants like jasmines, arborcolas, viburnums and green island ficus. These courses project a tropical, South Florida kind of feel with a lot of annual flowers and flowering shrubs – just a lot of flowers. I'd say our annual budget for plant material and color is more than \$1 million.

FIRST CONTACT. To be honest, I don't remember if I sought out the broker or if he sought me out. Actually, I may have just stumbled across the guy two years ago. We'd been

dealing with two different nurseries in the area, but they couldn't find the odd, unusual plants we were looking for. They could supply us with the basics and they had good prices, reliable delivery and good customer service, but they just couldn't find the specialty items we were looking for.

GOOD BUSINESS SENSE. We're planting 12 months out of the year and we're bringing in new plant material all of the time. It's not practical for us to go out to the local big-box store for our plant needs. First of all, those are retail prices and we're buying at wholesale prices. This alone is important to us because we're buying plant materials in large quantities. So we're looking at a cost savings of more than 50 percent in most cases.

Also, the plant broker we use will find the things that you usually can't find, or in the quantities that we need, at your typical

Scott Whorrall provides tips for forging a relationship with a local plant broker. Find them at the March Online Extras section of golfcourseindustry.com.

