

4 reasons your members like social media

Many superintendents site the reasons for adopting social media is to use it as a communications tool for club members or regular players at their course. However, there are some other reasons why your course's players appreciate social media.

1

Allows them to make a connection to be engaged and immersed with the course.

2

Allows quick and easy comparison of what's happening at other facilities and clubs in the area.

3

Enables them to share opinions about the course.

4

Validates course conditions and decisions that may impact play.

— Adapted from 2011 research by advertising agency Leo Burnett Worldwide

Social media and the bottom line

Brian Benedict believes a solid social media strategy can help the bottom line.

"Through social media, I am able to look inside other facilities like ours and see the problems they face and how they solve them, as well as seeing how other guys are cutting back to try and save money," he says.

Benedict, superintendent at Seawane Golf Club in Hewlett Harbor, N.Y., is very active with social media, using a public page on Facebook to post pictures when he and his staff undertake bunker restoration or other capital projects. He also sends bi-weekly emails to the membership through the club website to update members on projects and cultural processes to the golf course. He says the mass email has been welcomed by the members because it makes them feel more involved and able to schedule visits with guests around course work.

"The biggest benefit is the communication factor," Benedict says. "Members feel more involved and actually ask questions and genuinely want to know and understand why we perform the processes that we do. I also think that it gives you more credibility because members actually know that you have a plan."

"It helps us do our job better because it gives the members ownership," he adds. "When they know what you're doing there is no second-guessing because everyone is on board with the program. And it can help the bottom line getting projects approved by members due to communication and the effect that it has on their understanding the necessity of the desired project."

When used judiciously and with a specific golf course-oriented focus, social media can be a valuable tool superintendents have at their disposal to "interface" with other superintendents, staff and members instantaneously.

he says. "Social media also helps address some of the issues you hear about through the grapevine quickly. I started last year and I am slowly getting other employees of my department involved since we are usually leaving when most golfers are coming out to play."

Marach is hoping to get onto Twitter soon, as it provides "instant information" to members.

"It really helps here in the spring or after a large rain event to explain why we are not able to open or why we are delayed," he adds.

Marach is convinced using social media has a positive effect on a club's bottom line. "You might have followers that have heard of your golf course but never been there," he says. "You can encourage them to golf or dine because they might be a little more curious. You also might have followers that are not golfers and may become interested in golf. Social media just gives your company and your department more exposure to the public."

Tim Johansen, superintendent at Palmer Hills Golf Club in Bettendorf, Iowa., uses several social media sites, such as Facebook, but he is "trending" more toward Twitter. He also relies on a blog to get the word out about what he

and his staff are doing, and course conditions. But the results have been mixed.

"After seeing an upswing in Twitter use over the winter, I am going to start an account specifically for the golf course and tie it into my blog. Twitter is good for those quick little updates but the blog is great to show pictures and videos and expound on them. I started the blog when I took over as superintendent 18 months ago, thinking that I would be adding something to it every day. We have had a lot of changes and projects that have taken place in the last year and another very busy year ahead. But I am not so sure that golfers at the local muni, as a rule, care about what really goes on on a daily basis."

He's hoping to change that through increased use of social media and making customers aware of the information.

"I have had a lot of viewers from all over but getting them to sign on as a (Facebook) friend is not as easy as it sounds. I really wish that members and customers of golf courses everywhere would look at what is being put out there for them to read. I know it would help them understand better why we do the things we do."

Oh, the horror...

Social media might not be all it's all cracked up to be.

By now you've heard the horror stories about improper use of social media.

John Ausen, superintendent at Hyperion Field Club in Johnston, Iowa, warns, "It's amazing what people will put on social media not realizing that anyone can view it. Don't say anything that you don't want your superior to see."

Sound words of advice.

David Smith, superintendent at Abbey Springs Golf Club in Fontana, Wis., says there is a temptation to play to a specific audience, which may water down the message.

"It takes discipline for me to limit my Twitter account to course-related information because I really have lots of opinions about all kinds of current events and matters not related to the golf course," Smith says. "Using this type of communication for those areas of discussions could be perilous for your career. You must remember your audience. When starting a Twitter account, other superintendents quickly find you and become part of your audience.

"There can be a temptation to play to the superintendent audience," Smith adds. "I feel that there is the potential for problems if you start to Tweet for your superintendent audience. Giving the type of details regarding daily (golf course maintenance practices) may expose you to criticism by members."

Ralph Kepple, superintendent at East Lake Golf Club in Atlanta, Ga., says with Facebook it is easy to get drawn into more social/friendly uses than for business.

"It takes a lot of focus to keep from doing that," Kepple says. "With LinkedIn, as you build-up contacts, you get more and more requests to connect. Sometimes it becomes almost overwhelming how many requests you may receive, and you start to question if it is worth staying involved in LinkedIn. I know of at least one superintendent who recently closed his profile because of how much time it was taking to accept/reject requests to connect."

He advises superintendent to fully think through what they post on a social media site. "Once it is out there you cannot retract it," he says. "Also be careful that you don't become 'addicted' to the social media outlets. Some people end up spending far too much time on social media that could be better spent on other phases of their job or with their family."

Sean Flynn, superintendent at Great River Golf Club in Milford, Conn., is a proponent of blogging as a way to get information out. But, he says, technology can take you only so far in the industry.

"I started using Facebook about three years ago," Flynn says. "I find it somewhat useful. However, to have it help the business of a golf course superintendent you need to invest time

filtering through nonsense to gather information you are looking for. I have found Facebook to be more personal than business-related. Facebook forces us to be more 'in touch' with people we are usually not in contact with, and conversely out of touch with people we are close to."

To be successful at a blog you need to be constantly updating and informing. "Although communication is the most important role in our success as superintendents, blogs take time," he adds.

Flynn prefers to hold informational sessions with members on the first tee on Saturday mornings. It is much more personal, he adds, and gives members the opportunity to ask questions face to face. "Members would rather talk to us about issues or problems on the golf course directly, not have to read them on a blog," he says.

While useful, social media hasn't made a dramatic pact on the way Flynn does his job.

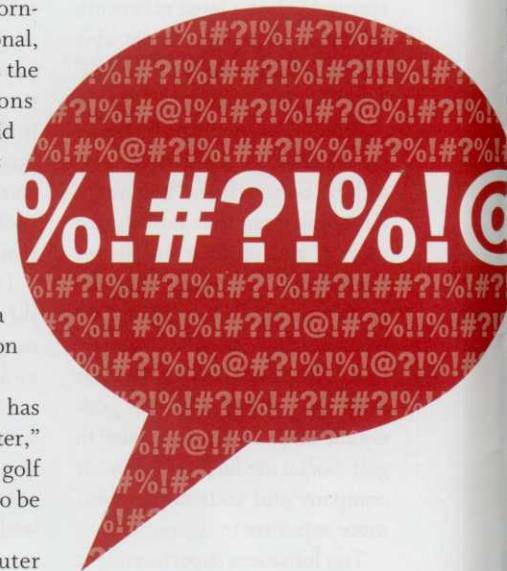
"Social media, as of now, has not helped me do my job better," he says. "We must be on the golf course as much as possible to be successful.

"Sitting behind a computer does not make us better superintendents," Flynn adds. "Continuing education, trade publications, research and networking (to a degree) make us better superintendents." **GCI**

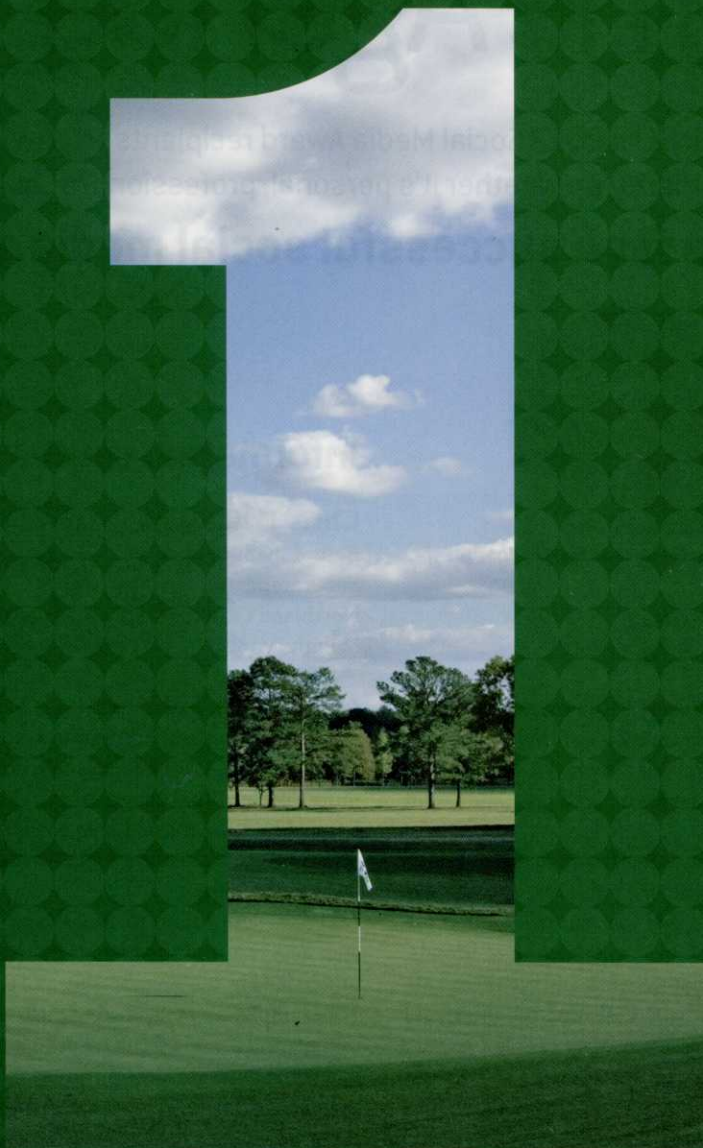


"It takes discipline for me to limit my Twitter account to course-related information because I really have lots of opinions about all kinds of current events and matters not related to the golf course."

— David Smith,
Abbey Springs Golf Club



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The Agenda

We ask GCI's 2012 Social Media Award recipients to provide some clarity on whether it's personal, professional or both.

What makes for a successful social media strategy?

Stay connected



Darren Davis

The Kaminski Award for Outstanding Social Media Leadership
Superintendent
Olde Florida Golf Club
Naples, Fla.

Information center



Chris Tritabaugh

Best of the Blogs
Superintendent
Northland Country Club
Duluth, Minn.

“Social networking is not a fad; it’s a way of communicating that’s here to stay. I feel I’m embracing technology that younger generations have grown up with and accepted as a normal and customary way to communicate. It’s the way of the future, and I certainly want to be ahead of that curve.

“One of the things I love about our industry is that even though we compete for members and play, as superintendents, we’re always there to help each other. One thing I feel that has made me more successful in life than I would have been is my network of friends. I’ve worked for 20 years to develop that network and communicate with it in many ways, and social media has allowed me to expand my network not only to the people already in it but people I haven’t met personally yet. I’ve embraced all the social media outlets out there, and each has a different group with different personalities and I enjoy them all.

“I have a bad habit of my living my life through my work, so my social networking is geared more toward my peers: superintendents and turfgrass professionals. But I do show a little of my personal side through social networking, too. Some of our members have embraced social media, in particular “liking” my old Florida Facebook page, so they see my postings and it’s a great to communicate with them, too.

“In many industries, being successful is often a function of who you know and how connected you are. I pride myself on that. Having met so many people by getting out there at chapter meetings or being online certainly is good. It’s a good thing when people are talking about you, and it never hurts to be seen and visible.”

“The main goal of my blog is to provide a source of information for the members, and so I write it with them in mind. But at the same time, I think it has the secondary purpose of making myself more visible within the industry. That wasn’t my original intent, but I would be lying if I said it wasn’t a huge advantage. But the primary purpose is to keep our membership up to date and educate them on what we’re doing.

“We’ve done some different things in my five years at the golf course, and, as a result of the blog, they were more well-received and well-understood by our membership and therefore able to be implemented. For example, we really made a push to increase bentgrass populations two years ago, and I think we got a little too aggressive. As a result, we had some dead grass on the greens. I was very forward in telling the members what was happening via my blog and posting pictures. I told them we were trying to figure out the best way to do this because we knew we could provide them with a better product at a better price, but we might make some mistakes along the way. As a whole, members got it, and the blog helped them.

“I write my blog as if every single member is reading it every day. The reason is because I feel that we don’t have to have everybody reading it, but if a certain percentage are, it will help keep the rest of the membership updated and informed. If one out of the four people in a foursome is an avid or regular reader of my blog, then I feel it’s doing its job.

Even though my blog was intended for members, the majority of the audience reading it are my peers. So I do try to include stuff for them, but I try not to write over the heads of those who aren’t turf people.

“I’m kind of on the edge of that generation of people who sort of use their computer but it’s not their life. I immediately saw the benefit the blog could have and didn’t fear it whatsoever. More and more, I see people realizing the benefits and advantages it could have.”

Educational tool



Steve Cook, CGCS, MG
Best of the Blogs
Oakland Hills Country Club
Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

Entrepreneurship



Bill Brown, CGCS
Best of the Blogs
Hartefield National Golf Club
Avondale, Pa.

I started my blog specifically to reach more members, but since then it has morphed into more than that. It has become an education for me, too, because when I post something about agronomy, it actually causes me to pull out the books and investigate to make sure I get it right. So it takes me back to Agronomy 101 and reminds me of the basics.

“Most of what I post, however, is for the members: what’s happening on the golf course, whether it’s hot-button issues or that we’re aerifying or whatever. My goal was to reach 50 to 100 members, and right now I probably have 50, with 25 who are pretty religious about reading my blog on a regular basis. But the good news is that two of those 25 are board members, and one is a greens committee member, so when another member asks them something, they’ll say go look at the blog. Or they’ll be armed with the information to answer their questions.

“Overall, it has been a big positive for me. I don’t want to be 60 years old and have the members say this guy isn’t up to speed. I don’t want to be one of those people who is 52 and acts like they’re 70. This dawned on me several years ago when I was trying to get a hold of my greens committee chairman, who is 10 years younger than me, by phone. He wouldn’t return my calls or e-mails, but he started texting me. I thought, well, if my greens committee chairman prefers to communicate by text, then I should be doing it, too. When I started my job at Oak Hill, I probably went through 10 phone messages a day. Now, if I get 10 a week, that would be a lot. About 90 percent of my communication with members happens at either the first tee, the pro shop or the men’s grill, and that will always be the case. But my blog is just an add-on for those younger members who want that style of communication.

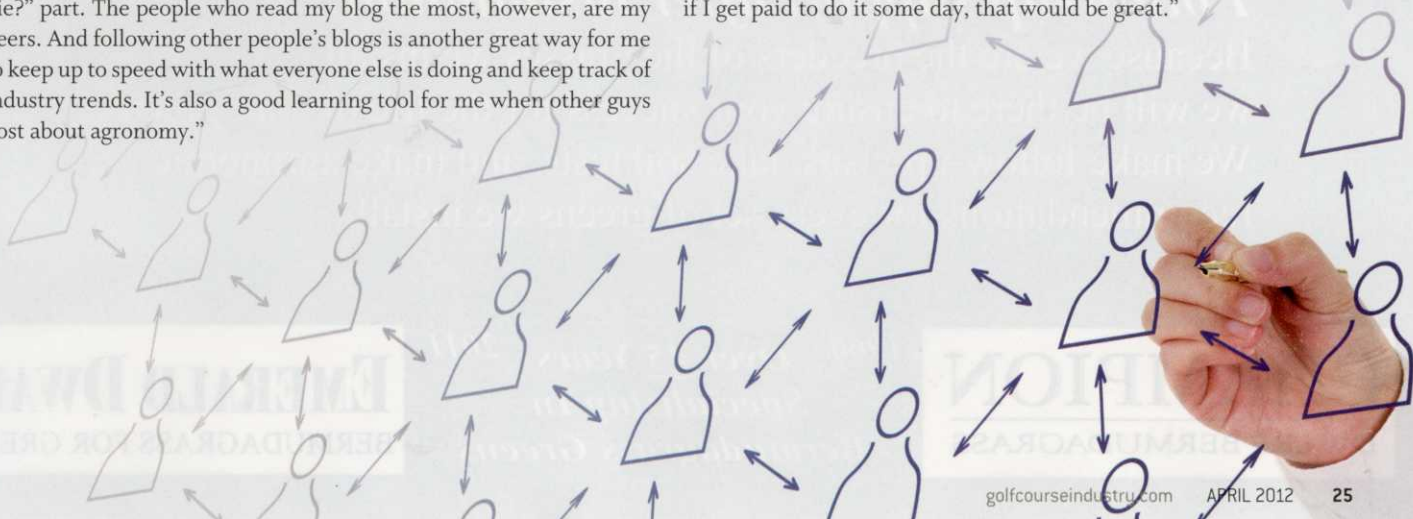
“The members really like my blog. Every once in awhile, someone will say, “I saw it on your blog!” But they really like the “Where’s Sadie?” part. The people who read my blog the most, however, are my peers. And following other people’s blogs is another great way for me to keep up to speed with what everyone else is doing and keep track of industry trends. It’s also a good learning tool for me when other guys post about agronomy.”

My goal with social media and technology is definitely a professional one. I started my own business, iTurf Apps, realizing there was a void in the industry and the interest in technology was overwhelming. I’ve always said if I could marry my love of turf with technology, I would have the perfect job. And I’m hoping it goes in that direction.

“I started my blog in 2009, recognizing that the industry needed a go-to technology person. So I wrote about how to best utilize technology in the industry, and so far a lot of the content has been about iPhones and iPads and using those apps and technologies on the golf course. People’s excitement really started picking up in 2011 right after GIS. I got slammed with people asking how do I set up my iPhone, so I started writing more about that in my blog. After GIS this year, it was even more overwhelming. I was up every night till 11:30 p.m. answering emails, Tweets and phone calls. The blog and technology consulting has almost become a second job at this point. I’ve become a conduit to help people build blogs and websites and integrate mobile technology into their businesses.

“The neatest part was that a superintendent from Oregon called me recently to ask how he could stream his son’s baseball games to his parents live. I set him up on how to do that, and I thought that was really awesome.

“iTurf apps has gone professional now, and I was recently picked to redo one of the GCSAA affiliate chapter’s websites, which will relaunch shortly. I have a whole list of services we’re going to start offering, and the best part of iTurf Apps is it doesn’t cost a lot. Technology doesn’t need to cost a fortune anymore. And now I’m branching into doing demos of Rainbird’s MI controller and ISS soil monitoring system. My ultimate goal is to make iTurf Apps the destination for people who want to know about Toro, Rainbird, Jacobsen or fertilizer technologies. And if I get paid to do it some day, that would be great.”



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Carthage Country Club - Carthage, TX

-No-Till conversion from other bermudagrass to CHAMPION

Castlewoods CC - The Bear - Brandon, MS

-No-Till conversion from other bermudagrass to CHAMPION

Celebration Golf Club - Celebration, FL

-No-Till conversion from other bermudagrass to CHAMPION

Cherokee Valley - Olive Branch, MS

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Coffee Creek - Edmond, OK

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Delaware Springs - Burnet, TX

-No-Till conversion from other bermudagrass to CHAMPION

Emerald Bay Club - Bullard, TX

-Greens renovation using EMERALD

Glenlakes Golf Club - Foley, AL

-No-Till conversion from other bermudagrass to CHAMPION

Harder Hall GC - Sebring, FL

-No-Till conversion from other bermudagrass to CHAMPION

Heddingham Golf Club - Raleigh, NC

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Heritage Golf Club - Oneonta, AL

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Highlands Ridge South - Avon Park, FL

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-Greens renovation using CHAMPION

Hope Valley Country Club - Durham, NC

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Inverrary CC - East Course - Lauderhill, FL

-Greens renovation using CHAMPION

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-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Legends at Chateau Elan - Braselton, GA

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Magnolia Greens Golf Plantation - Leland, NC

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Memphis National - Legends - Collierville, TN

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Mohawk - Pecan Valley - Tulsa, OK

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Mount Airy CC - Mount Airy, NC

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Myrtle Beach National - River Club - Pawleys Island, SC

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Mystic Creek Golf Course - El Dorado, AR

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Orange County National - Panther Lake - Winter Garden, FL

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Pauls Valley Golf Course - Pauls Valley, OK

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Pine Forest - White Course - Houston, TX

-Greens renovation using CHAMPION

Pine Valley Country Club - Wilmington, NC

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Pinewood Country Club - Asheboro, NC

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Pleasant Valley CC - Little Rock, AR

-Greens renovation using EMERALD

Providence Club - Monroe, GA

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Red Stick Golf Club - Vero Beach, FL

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

River Bend Links - Tunica, MS

-Greens renovation using EMERALD

River Landing - Landing Course - Wallace, NC

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Riverwood Golf Club - Clayton, NC

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

RTJ Trail at Capitol Hill - Senator Course - Prattville, AL

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

RTJ Trail at Grand National - Lake Course - Opelika, AL

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

RTJ Trail at Hampton Cove - River - Owens Crossroads, AL

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

RTJ Trail at Magnolia Grove - Short Course - Semmes, AL

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RTJ Trail at Silver Lakes (36 holes) - Glencoe, AL

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Sammons Golf Links - Temple, TX

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Sewell's Point Golf Course - Norfolk, VA

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Starmount Forest Country Club - Greensboro, NC

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Stonebridge Golf Club - Lakeland, TN

-Greens renovation using CHAMPION

Stonebridge Golf Club - Rome, GA

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Sun 'n Lake Golf Club - Deer Run - Sebring, FL

-Greens renovation using CHAMPION

Swan Lake Golf Club - Clarksville, TN

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

Tally Mountain Golf Course - Tallapoosa, GA

-No-Till conversion from bentgrass to CHAMPION

TwinEagles Golf Club - Naples, FL

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Woodlands Country Club - Tamarac, FL

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Just because it's fun

Greg Shaffer

Innovative Use of Twitter
Superintendent
Elcona Country Club
Briston, Ind.

“I started off using Twitter about a year and a half ago to interact with fellow superintendents and build a network where we could have quick-hit question and answer sessions on turf diseases, topdressing strategies and other topics. Then, throughout the course of the summer when everyone was struggling with the heat and humidity and everyone’s moods were down, it kind of took a little bit of a turn. I thought, hey, maybe we can not only use social media to build relationships but have a little fun by throwing some humor in there and putting some smiles on people’s faces. It evolved into a thing of its own with this group, and it seems to be getting larger and larger. Not only do we banter back and forth about what’s going on around the golf courses, but we beat the snot out of each other, too, just because it’s fun.

“In the winter, when nobody really has a lot going on, it’s geared more to the personal side. But then come spring it’s boom, like a light switch, everyone is asking, hey, is your course open? What applications are you putting out? What are you seeing? But still we manage to have fun with it. I’ve met a number of these guys I’ve built relationships with at GIS or at a seminar somewhere, and it feels like you already know them.

“Twitter has been an incredible tool to get to know people, 140 characters at a time and then also when you meet them face-to-face. A separate account I just opened up is geared strictly to members. It makes it that much easier to tell them, hey, we have a frost delay today so the first tee time will be 9 a.m., or we’re aerifying some tees or fertilizing roughs today. It serves as a daily update on stuff that’s happening that’s atypical from a normal day.”



The snowball effect

David Phipps

Innovative Use of Twitter
Superintendent
Stone Creek Golf Club
Oregon City, Ore.

“I started Tweeting as a way to promote my blog. I use Twitterfeed as a link to my blog post, so when I make a post it automatically goes out to the Twitter world. It’s a great way for people to see what I’m writing in my blog on a daily basis. I started writing my blog as a weekly report to my stakeholders. Originally, I was writing a Word document and sending it to them every week. Then, in 2009, I saw someone writing a blog and thought that would be a great way to do this weekly report. Now, every time I post it goes directly to their inboxes. If I didn’t do this, they wouldn’t know what I do on a daily basis. Then more and more people began reading my blog, and not just people from my golf course but from all over the country. I’m seeing that they’re really interested in what I’m writing, and they also enjoy seeing what kind of photos I’m putting on there weekly. It’s just a great way to share what I do.

“My pageviews and hits have greatly increased because of Twitter. My blog post also goes to Facebook now. I joined Facebook in 2007 as a way to find a friend of mine in Finland who had lived with me as an exchange student during my junior year in high school. Then I started getting friend requests from old high-school buddies and things snowballed. Now, it’s 50-50 work-related and friend-related. Social networking is not a full-time job, but once in awhile I’ll want to say something and I’ll put it out there if I think people can benefit from it.

“Social networking has also been a great way for me to network with my peers. This is a whole new arena that has come up in the last five years that we never had before, and now guys are talking about what they’re doing and sharing ideas. I’ve gotten to know guys that I might not have otherwise, and now I recognize them when I see them at shows. It’s kind of cool.”



360-degree strategy


Justin Ruiz, CGCS, MG

Excellence in Video
Indian Summer Golf & Country Club
Olympia, Wash.

“My biggest objective in using social media is to communicate with members. I feel like even on my blog, photos and video can say so much more than just a written explanation of what’s going on with the golf course. You can tell them that you’re doing a project on the No. 5 hole, but show them a photo and they understand it better. If you show them a video of the project actually happening or the piece of machinery actually doing the work, it explains it in more detail so people can understand what it looks like when we’re aerifying greens. When they actually see that machine going across the green and punching holes, it kind of gives them a third dimension.

“It seems like the videos and photos get commented on more than what I write. They catch members’ attention more. The way people are these days, it seems like they want instant information on the go rather than sitting down to read something. They can look at a photo and quickly get the gist of what’s going on out there.

“I also have the professional goal of networking. It seems like making relationships with other superintendents through blogging, Twitter and Google+ are valuable when dealing with certain issues on the golf course. You send out a Tweet on an issue and, nine times out of 10, someone Tweets back and says, hey, this is what I did to solve that issue. Plus, just seeing how other people do things by reading the blogs can really give you some great ideas. On one blog, I read how they put a wetting agent pellet inside a sprinkler head in an area that was dry, and it was just a unique idea I had never thought of. Hopefully, the things I have on my blog or my Tweets will also give someone a little nugget of information they can use.”



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WHAT IS SOCIAL ETIQUETTE IN SOCIAL MEDIA?

Each year, students in Penn State's golf course turfgrass management program must complete an etiquette course that culminates in a formal luncheon with faculty, staff and industry professionals. While the norms of social and dining etiquette are formalized in books such as Emily Post's "Etiquette," the uncertainty of etiquette in social media remains somewhat unclear.

At a recent conference presentation, an audience member asked about the proper use of social media and whether it was acceptable to not "follow" someone on Twitter or not accept a "friend request" on Facebook. After considering the question for a minute I realized I actually have some informal guidelines for this issue.

Some of these are hard-and-fast rules and some are just general guidelines to connect (or not connect) with others on social media.

WHY I DON'T "FOLLOW" YOU ON TWITTER.

Twitter is my favorite of all the social media sites and I often get called out for not following certain people within the turfgrass industry. I try to explain to them that just because I wasn't formally "following" them didn't mean I wasn't tracking what they were saying. I routinely check who my followers are and while I don't always follow back, nearly everyone is put on a list. I have lists for "turfgrass," "photography," "Penn State" and even lists for those who I find offensive. I put those deviants on my "Rude and Obnoxious" list. It's private so you don't know who these people are. So although I don't formally follow some of you, I often use applications like Tweetdeck to follow my "lists." Despite this organization, I still maintain some reasoning for dropping or not following you in the first place. Here are some key reasons:

- You don't have a profile picture. If

you can't take the time to upload a profile picture then you don't deserve to be followed.

- You don't tweet. There are plenty of "lurkers" out there and I encourage this, but if you don't say anything then there is no point in following you.

- You're inactive. I routinely check the activity of those that I follow and if you haven't tweeted anything in 2-3 months then you're out.

- You tweet too much all at once. I follow over 1,200 people on Twitter so this is a hard rule to break for my followers, but if I see five tweets in a row on my stream all from one person then I don't have time to deal with you.

- You've been hacked. Accounts are hacked all the time and if you send me some spam via a direct message then I am sorry to say, you have to go.

HOW TO "CONNECT" ON LINKEDIN.

This is a growing issue for me. I don't use LinkedIn all that much, but I do find it's the best professional social networking site out there. I frequently get requests on LinkedIn and many of them sit in the queue awaiting a decision. Since I find LinkedIn useful for professionals, I have rules for "connecting" with people there as well.

- You don't have a profile pic. See reasoning above for Twitter.
- You are not in the turfgrass industry. I have college friends trying to connect with me all the time. I send them a message and politely inform them that I use LinkedIn for professional connections only. I then direct them to my Facebook page.

- You don't include a personal message in your invitation to connect. While this isn't essential, if someone I don't know writes a personal message about why we should be connected I almost always accept.

- You're too commercial. If it's

clear your purpose is to sell or promote things, I will not likely follow you. We all have jobs and we all promote something, but I don't like it thrown in my face. Build yourself a "business page" and if I'm interested I will follow it.

SURE. WE CAN BE "FRIENDS" ON FACEBOOK.

I accept just about everyone on Facebook, but occasionally people do not make the cut. If you don't make the grade it's probably because I can't figure out who you are or even if you're in the turf industry at all. Put a little effort into your profile to let me know that you are or plan to be a golf course superintendent and you'll likely get in.

One rule I do have is I WILL NOT be "friends" with anyone who has an account setup as a business or entity. Businesses should have "fan pages" and not setup their personal profile account as anything other than themselves. My one exception is "Poa annua." Whoever that person is (and it's not me), I find the concept comical.

MY SOCIAL MEDIA. MY RULES.

So after reading this you may be thinking, "This guy's a real jerk." That may be the case (reread my intro in my inaugural column in the February issue), but basically I have to make some sense of all of the information being thrown at me. After all, these are MY social media profiles and MY guidelines.

Trust me, I encourage people to "unfollow" or "unfriend" me all the time. Not everyone likes to see my tweets about "checking in" to Starbucks every morning. I accept this and encourage people to come up with their own list of rules that will bring order to their social media life. If I don't make the cut, I won't be offended.

Do you have rules of your own that I didn't mention above? If so, tweet them to me at [@JohnKaminski](https://twitter.com/JohnKaminski). **GCI**