

The Greenkeeper As A Master Salesman

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Did you ever hear the story of the lad who applied at the personnel office of a large company for a job? The office manager asked him what he could do and the lad replied "anything". This busy business man politely showed him the door but the kid came back time after time.

Finally the manager, who feeling quite good after shooting his "life-time low", took time with the boy. "Look," he said, "is there not some sport or activity in which you are just a little better than some one else?"

"Well," replied the lad, "when I was a kid on the farm in Iowa we used to go out behind the barn and throw what we found there at the barn door."

"So what," said the manager.

"Well, said the lad, "I was the one who could make it stick."

"You're HIRED"—roared the manager.

Hired he was, and became an outstanding salesman.

Every manufacturer and merchandising firm is looking for salesmen who can make the points of their products or service stick with the prospect.

The greenkeeper is both a purchasing agent and salesman. As a buyer he has to be very keen and open-minded to learn the good points of various goods, (tools and supplies) or services that he wants, to make his a better club or publinx. Once he has made a decision on the product he has to sell this idea to his course owner or manager, who in turn presents it to the Green Committee who in turn presents it to the board of directors. Therefore the idea must be presented in a form that will stick!

Remember that the men with whom you are trying to make your ideas STICK are most often busy, successful business men. Your ideas must be presented in a clean cut business like manner.

The following is a dummy letter that may help you get started to writing your requests for major items in course maintenance.

TO THE GREEN
COMMITTEE

Mr. Joe Dokes
Mr. John Smith
More John Smiths
All listed

May, 1947

Subject: HOW TO GET FAIRWAYS
YOU'LL BE PROUD TO OWN
AND PLAY

- 1) When you were over at so-&-so's course, did you notice how few dandelions and weeds were on their course? Did you notice how kind the turf was to the feet? You can have just as good if not better here at
- 2) We would like to kill the weeds but if we do we might get a lot of crabgrass. You see our turf is thin, it needs fertilizer-plant food. Our soil tests 5.0 to 5.2, showing it needs lime too.
- 3) We won't have to buy a pound of grass seed to thicken our turf. The grasses we have are adapted to our soil and climate, they will spread if we feed them properly. The lime will help make longer roots and the grass will be more drought resistant—stay green longer.
- 4) One pound of fertilizer to each 44 sq. ft. will do us a good job, applied in early spring and late fall. It will take tons to cover the course on each application, and tons of limestone to be put on this winter when the ground is frozen.
- 5) Our labor cost to apply fertilizer is about the same if we put on a ½ lb. to 44 sq. ft. or 1 lb. The higher amount will be more apt to meet the plants' needs from spring until fall. Then the fall application will thicken the turf and we will be ready to spray out the weeds with 2,4-D, which you have read about.
- 6) The cost of fertilizer is \$ per ton. We need tons. Lime is \$ per ton, or \$ for 80 tons. I hope you will see your way clear to appropriate funds for this much needed improvement and it will be an inspiration to all.

(Signed) John Doe
Greenkeeper

Now let's tear this letter apart and see what would make it STICK.

First the names of the committee were all listed as MR. Every man likes to see his name in print. Use his full name and call him MR. no matter how well you know him. Never be familiar and use nicknames in a letter of this type.

Next the Subject: HOW TO GET FAIR-

WAYS YOU'LL BE PROUD TO OWN AND PLAY.

The subject has to have appeal or the balance of the letter may never be read. Using the word YOU'LL in this case appeal to the pride of possession. Remember the possessive instinct is second only to the law of self preservation. Next to YOU the word PROUD appeals to a man's pride. If you are going to hold your job and build a good reputation you have to produce a course your owner or club members are PROUD to be part owners. Next the word PLAY appeals to joy of exciting fun. A good slogan for a well kept publicx would be "More Fun per Round", because that is why people play golf.

The opening paragraph reads:

"When you were over at so & so's course, did you notice how few dandelions and weeds on their course? Did you notice how kind the turf was to the feet? You can have just as good if not better here at"

The first sentence recalls a happy experience and gets a YES answer. So does the second sentence and the third appeals to pride. You have created a desire to know how.

As you reread the second paragraph, note you are telling 3 stories:

"We would like to kill the weeds but if we do we might get a lot of crabgrass. You see our turf is thin, it needs fertilizer—plant food. Our soil tests 5.0 to 5.2, showing it needs lime too."

The argument for your program must counteract other arguments that may be presented when your letter is presented in committee. For example one member might say, "Let's sow more grass seed to get thicker turf". In your opinion does this paragraph do the trick?

"We won't have to buy a pound of grass seed to thicken our turf. The grasses we have are adapted to our soil and climate, they will spread if we feed them properly. The lime will help make longer roots and the grass will be more drought resistant—stay green longer.

Now you are ready to tell the committee how much fertilizer you need. If you ask for ½ ton per acre—maybe you won't get any because few of your membership know there are 43,560 sq. ft. per acre. So the terms are reduced to a working knowledge of those you are addressing:

"One pound of fertilizer to each 44 sq. ft. will do us a good job, applied in early spring and late fall. It will take tons to cover the course on each application, and tons of limestone to

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be put on this winter when the ground is frozen.

Again you must fortify your argument; some one is sure to say well let's put on half the amount.

"Our labor cost to apply fertilizer is about the same if we put on a ½ lb. to 44 sq. ft. or 1 lb. The higher amount will be more apt to meet the plants' needs from spring till fall. The fall application will thicken the turf and we will be ready to spray out the weeds with 2,4-D, which you have read about."

The closing paragraph outlines costs with personal appeal to provide funds for the project.

Did you note that no closing salutation such as yours truly, sincerely, etc., was used. Supply the signature over the title Greenkeeper.

In requesting new tools such as power units and others the letter can follow much the same trend. All man hour labor savings, cost for repairs, quality of work plus a testimonial from a near-by user are some of the features that will make your letters STICK.

Tools of Selling

As Golf's Great Salesman there are a few tools that you must have. The first of these is loyalty to your club.

Absolute honesty in using the other man's money. That is what you are doing when you spend the club's resources for labor, tools and materials. Keeping good records is a must if you are to become a bigger, better greenkeeper.

Enthusiasm—that spark that stirs you on to new objectives. Without that you are like a car with dead battery, you have to be pushed. If you are not enthusiastic about your job, quit; your club would be better off without you. Investing a little each week in pleasant restful hours of reading good books on related subjects to turf will help you find new horizons in the turf business.

Make use of Publicity. It is a strong factor to aid you in getting support for your program. If you run a publicx it will help you "Win Friends and Influence Customers". Use the camera, your bulletin boards, even the newspaper to let the world know something is doing at your course."

A news letter twice a year from the greenkeeper to club members on the maintenance of home lawns is good selling. It's a subtle form of publicity.

As a greenkeeper you have golf's biggest selling job to do. You are the key man between the golf maintenance equipment, supply industry and the club.

The reaction of people to the course itself depends entirely on the maintenance practices of the greenkeeper. People notice if your greens are too hard, if they are grainy, or rough, cup is poorly set and trimmed, or greens poorly mowed, etc.

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When you meet a member who wants to talk turf, give him the works. You can develop of these people "walkie talkies" for your program, salesmen for your program.

The great improvements that have been made in turf maintenance has much to do with the low scores of the playing pros today.

As golf courses have improved so has the number of people who are finding that golf is fun. It is your salesmanship making your ideas STICK, showing results on the course that makes Golf in America what it is today—big business, and you are Mr. Greenkeeper, Golf's Great Salesman.

ST. LOUIS CC BUSY WITH OPEN PRELIMINARIES

An intensive program to stiffen and improve the St. Louis CC course, scene of the 47th Annual Open Championship of the USGA June 12, 13, 14, is under way. This is the first time that the open championship has been played here. The last major tournament held at St. Louis was the National Amateur championship at the same club in 1921.

Season tickets went on sale about the middle of April, and most of the important department stores, athletic firms, and men's and women's shops are planning window displays publicizing the tourney. Many intend to use tie-in advertising to promote an outstanding civic affair and one of the most important sports events to be held here.

Sponsors of the tournament, led by Samuel D. Conant, general committee chairman who was instrumental in obtaining the Open for St. Louis, have organized

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