

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

*It's a matter of organization
to get maximum production with
a minimum of lost motion*

BY TERRY E. VANGORDER

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Before we can master the problems of turf management, we must first master the problems of personnel management. We can't personally cut 18 greens, rake the traps, mow the tees and fairways, spray and feed 100 acres of turf and keep up with the total daily requirements of sound golf course maintenance. We must select, organize and channel the efforts of others in order to accomplish all this.

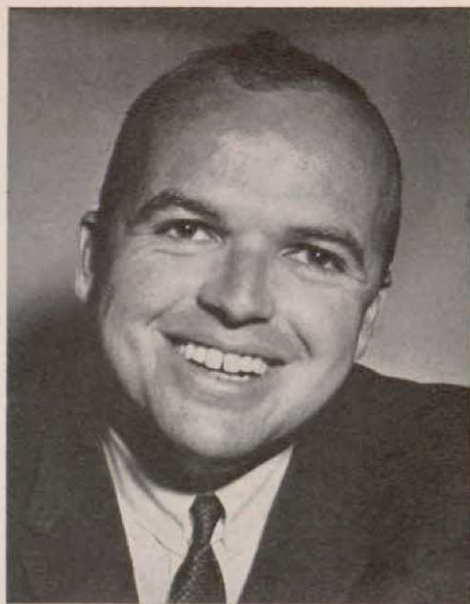
Today's highest cost factor in turf management, of course, is labor — personnel; it consumes two-thirds of our operational budget. To overcome problems of time and space within a given budget, we must organize personnel in the most effective, economical manner. We must sustain their maximum production with a minimum of lost motion. We can no longer tolerate the high cost of personnel turnover and replacement.

Purpose and Direction

The selection and organization of men may best be termed personnel management. I would like to equate it to leadership. Leadership, perhaps should be defined as the art of stimulating and directing the best efforts of men toward the realization of predetermined goals. Leadership must be motivated by purpose and direction. It can't be aimless, can't constantly change direction, and it can't survive indecision.

To lead men is not to push them. Rather, it is to pull them together in the achievement of a common end product — in our case the maintenance of a course or perhaps the profitable operation of a country club.

Leadership assumes authority and responsibility. It requires effective communication and discipline. Its functions are both administrative and operational. There are four fundamentals which under-



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lie sound administration. These are:

1. Chain of command
2. Delegation of authority
3. Span of control
4. Homogenous assignment

Effective leadership calls for the establishment of an authoritative chain of command which defines operational orders and creates effective communication channels. Orders and direction emanate from the top. Set up functional departments necessary to achieve your mission, and write job descriptions which pinpoint responsibility and prevent overlapping of authority.

Delegation of Authority

Authority and responsibility are inseparable. When you charge a man with the responsibility of a given job assignment, you must give him adequate authority to handle it. For example, if he is to be responsible for the supervision of men, give him power to hire and fire those men. Authorize him to make necessary decisions.

Lack of delegation of authority is too often the cause of failure in personnel management.

Can't Delegate Responsibility

As a leader you are responsible for every action and inaction of those who work under you. You cannot delegate this overall responsibility. However, you can and must hold your men responsible for

work assigned to them.

You should charge your employees with a maximum of responsibility — commensurate with their capacity.

Failure in personnel management can be caused by the fact that men are not worked to their full mental and physical capacity. The result is boredom, inefficiency and discontent.

Span of Control

You must realize the limits of your men's capacity for work. A healthy situation dictates that they should always be assigned a little more than they can actually accomplish. Such an assignment, if reasonable, will stimulate their best efforts and will create the most efficient operation for your purpose of achieving pre-determined goals.

Reasonable assignment introduces the administrative problem known as span of control.

How much can one man effectively accomplish, how many jobs can he supervise, how many men can he control — or how many greens can he cut? What is his optimum span of control? Experience and common sense help determine this. Your organization chain of command must define a span of control through the creation of various departments and sub-divisions thereof

Homogeneous Assignment

The fourth principle of administration concerns homogeneous assignment. This simply means the grouping of men for similar assignments. Economize production by placing trained personnel on projects demanding their own professional qualifications. Keep the greenmen on the greens — the gardeners in the garden and the cooks in the kitchen. Train your men for specific jobs and don't pull them for work which is definitely beyond their means, thus causing waste and inefficiency.

Having listed four principles of personnel administration, let's discuss management. What are the qualities of leadership? Who is the manager at the top of the chain of command?

Capacity for Making Decisions

He should possess common sense and have the capacity for making decisions — administrative, operational, financial and policy. Besides, he must realize that his every decision somehow reflects upon every man down the chain of command.

Without policy decisions there is no

direction.

Without administrative decisions there is no control.

Without operational decisions there is no action.

Without sound financial decisions there will not be the means to carry on. The man in charge must represent authority and should radiate authority. Not only must he be able to convey orders in such a manner as to produce the desired results, he must be able to receive orders. He should master the art of communication. A successful leader must sustain an effective system of discipline.

Two-Way Respect

A true leader naturally commands the respect of his subordinates as well as his superiors. He commands the respect of his men primarily because he respects them as individuals. Because of this respect, he maintains a natural system of discipline through a discretionary balance of praise and criticism — praising in public, criticizing in private.

A respected leader possesses professional knowledge, and displays such when necessary. He provides his men with continuous education and on-the-job training.

A successful leader knows the meaning of loyalty. He realizes it is a two-way street. He stands behind his men even when they are in trouble, as he expects them to stand behind him, especially when he is in trouble. He must have confidence in himself, and he must generate this same confidence through all of his men. He knows the meaning of pride and integrity. He hires only men of integrity, and he instills them with an appreciation of pride.

The leader is the conservative force that tempers and holds the crew together. He must take a sincere interest in the personal as well as the professional problems of his men. He must provide for their welfare and morale. A sense of humor is often the key to survival. Success means choosing the right men for the right job.

Chain of command, delegation of authority, span of control, homogeneous assignment . . . Patience, loyalty, integrity, authority, confidence and initiative — these may seem mere words, but they are the essence of real leadership. These are the techniques and the qualities that tame cat-skinners and laborers,

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Personnel Management

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greensmen and foremen, golf professionals or managers, and stimulate their best efforts toward the pride in authorship necessary to the realization of predetermined goals.

To lead is to work longer and harder than anyone who follows. It is to exhibit boundless initiative and creativity. It is to establish just and equitable work loads and payrolls. It is to communicate with laborers, foremen and executives. It is to follow through on orders given, to be on the job at the right place at the right time. It is to set an example of personal qualities as well as professional knowledge. It is to know much personal satisfaction.

Terry Van Gorder besides being the general manager of Peacock Gap G & CC in San Rafael, Calif., is designing a 9-hole course in Sonoma that will soon be constructed. He studied turf management under his father, E. W. Van Gorder, at the Stanford University course. He was graduated from Yale University in 1955 and served four years in the Navy. Van Gorder was a construction supt. for Architect Bill Bell on several California course jobs and, after completing work on Peacock Gap, stayed on as manager.

Extend the Season

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of their youngsters to school. In many cases, the fall offers an opportunity for them to play more golf than they did through the summer.

Full Maintenance Provided

The Supt. and his crew provide course maintenance in the fall just as in the summer. This season I plan to hold a tournament as late as Oct. 15. This, of course, would be impossible if a full maintenance crew wasn't on the job.

I have mentioned that it takes some competition to keep the members coming out to the course after Labor Day. Speaking of competition, I think that Northern pros have to take a second look at the word and consider what "the competition" is doing if they go out of business at the end of summer. In the seven month interval between the close of one season and the beginning of a new one in the spring, "the competition" can make great inroads in our business.