



GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR LABOR DOLLARS

"Get to know your people. What they do well, what they enjoy doing, what their weaknesses and strengths are and what they want and need from their job. And then try to create an organization around your people, not jam your people into those organizational chart rectangles You can't motivate people. The door is locked from the inside. You can create a climate in which most of your people will motivate themselves to help the company reach its objectives." —Robert Townsend, "Up the Organization"

Mr. Townsend turned Avis Rent-a-Car into a success and won fame and fortune himself because he believes in people. Any golf course or country club that doesn't operate on this principle is headed downhill.

A golf business is a service business. You are there to help people enjoy themselves. If you and your staff aren't having fun, it's likely your customers won't either. They will simply stay away, join or play golf elsewhere, and you lose. So the club executive or supervisor's greatest challenge is to motivate his staff to perform at their best, so that work at the club will be fun and efficiently.

To some extent, the supervisor is a tightrope walker. He loses his balance only if he overextends himself in one direction with too much supervision or too far the other way with too little. He should learn to mix praise and criticism, raise the level of morale in his department, in-

crease staff incentives and, above all, he should seek to instill and reinforce employee self esteem.

Employee motivation has always been a requisite to effective management and must be given priority by every club's supervisory staff. Here are some ways to stimulate the kind of worker enthusiasm so essential to a successful golf club

by JERRY CLAUSSEN

In a poll asking what qualities an employee looks for in a supervisor, the seven most frequently mentioned were:

1. He generally feels free to discuss problems with me;
2. He lets me know how he feels about my work;
3. I can trust him to go to bat for me;
4. He talks problems over with us;
5. He means it when he gives me a pat on the back;
6. He tries to train men for better jobs;
7. He tells his boss when we do a good job.

Actually the employees were describing a supervisor who is neither lax nor overbearing, one who avoids too much or too little supervision, and who is always

around when he should be and knows what's going on.

KNOW YOUR STAFF

You should know your staff, from the secretary to the locker room attendant. Because every employee represents the club in everything they do and say, you can't afford not to know them and help them show the club's best face.

One manager keeps a "case book" on each of his employees. He makes a note of all personal facts he knows about his people including habits, hobbies and outside interests. He also keeps a running account of each person's performance and problems on the job. That comes in handy at formal and informal employee performance reviews.

Of course knowing your people doesn't have to be a book job. Talking with them occasionally, person to person, can build a strong bridge across the boss-employee gap. Tell them how they are getting along, ask them what they think about their job and the over-all operation, give them credit for success and tell them about future club changes.

The successful supervisor must also be a human-relations expert. He must understand why people act as they do and what sort of behavior they are most likely to show in different situations. This facility allows him to anticipate adverse employee reaction before it gets a full head of steam. Thus, he may be able to avert an otherwise bad situation. If you know an employee is disturbed because you

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denied his request for a raise—don't let him smolder—give another type of reward to assuage his indignation. A pat on the back or a few words to show you sympathize with his position can sometimes make the difference between losing and keeping him.

"A desire to feel they belong is often the strongest motivation for an employee to do his best and stay a long time at one job," says Don Adams, manager at Lakewood (Colo.) CC.

"Turnover is always a problem in our industry," declares Adams. "If you look at the classified ads, you'll see that there is more demand than supply for service and labor people."

Adams tries to keep a stable, happy crew by offering higher than average scale (\$2 an hour, plus 15 per cent service charge for waiters and waitresses), time-and-a-half for overtime, paid insurance, dressing rooms and other benefits above union minimums.

Pinehurst CC is a huge non-equity club with 1,600-plus members, a clubhouse covering 1½ acres and 27 regulation golf holes. The huge staff of 135 permanent employees has not inhibited the club's emphasis on training, job review and general labor management relations. The results are high efficiency, good service and small turnover.

Each new employee is given a well-written, 13-page employee's manual, plus a detailed job performance manual. The employee's manual includes a spirited "welcome to the team," over-all club policy, compensation and fringe benefits policy, personal conduct guidance, emergency actions, organizational relationships and club history. The club's emphasis on people is reflected in these sample passages:

"Your job at Pinehurst is important because we all work as a team—a well coordinated service team that works best when each of us does his best . . . We are interested in you as an individual, as a member of the Pinehurst team and we are concerned about your job welfare . . ."

The new employee attends orientation and training classes,

which use tape recordings, written materials and demonstrations. A sponsor (co-worker) is assigned to serve as a "big brother" for the first three days, teaching and answering questions.

Last spring, all employees were invited to, and most attended, a 12-week "attitude adjustment" training course.

Communications and human relations were stressed all through the course. Movies, tapes and a collection of the best written materials on motivation were offered to the staff. Hall and Clubhouse Manager Robert MacDougall taught the first session, and other department heads took over their own groups from then on. The latter technique is important in establishing rapport among co-workers, and gives several people teaching experience.

"The idea of people not caring or not wanting to work is hogwash," says MacDougall. "They do need to feel some pride in what they do and where they work. Our theory has always been that people make the club."

A slogan for the seminars was printed on a badge each employee was given to wear. It said: "World of Difference." What does that mean, a member may ask? "Because we care, you are here, and in a club that makes a world of difference," is the answer.

Does your club treat its employees like the very important people they are? Do all of you treat members or customers the same? If the answer is not yes to both questions, something is wrong with your approach to management.

Remember, people don't hate work. It's as natural as rest or play. If people enjoy and believe in their jobs, they will drive themselves to perform better. You only have to help them satisfy the basic needs: physical (salary), social (part of the team), ego (I'm worthwhile) and developmental (learning).

People problems are always your problems. The solution must come from the top.

How can a golf club executive use these techniques in his day-to-day operation? The opportunities are endless.

The club manager must absorb staff suggestions for giving members better service. If a waitress receives complaints about the T-bones hear her out. Try to get the specifics. Was the portion too small? Was the steak cooked improperly? Let her know her information and views are needed and will be used. If the chef's special dish was particularly good, tell him in a personal memo or in person how great it was. Or in each issue of the club newsletter, feature an employee, and let the members know the staff deserves some credit. That's what builds work pride, makes getting salary increases from the board an easier job.

The golf course superintendent usually works close to or alongside his men. He can easily make these men feel wanted and interested in their work. Explain the "Why" behind each maintenance job. Your know why certain procedures are important, so should the crew. When you hear compliments on the course, pass them along to the man who did the work. If a man wants to learn a new job, or is working toward being foreman or even toward your job, encourage him, don't ignore his eagerness.

The golf professional normally has a small staff. It is easier to talk privately or meet as a group every week or more often. Solicit assistants' ideas on how to redecorate the shop, how to merchandise slow items or what to buy for next season. Compliment them for selling a set of clubs or try to explain why the customer didn't buy. Tell them they can make decisions in your absence and that you'll support those decisions.

LABOR-MANAGEMENT TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

Despite differences between the problems and their workable solutions of large industry compared to those of golf course supervisors, there are certain corporate programs for employee motivation that could apply to the country club situation.

Recent studies conducted by General Motors subsequent to the strike of enraged young workers at GM's hyper-modern Lords-town, Ohio, plant in early 1972,

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ation. Other types of grasses grown for other purposes on the property generally are twice the size of the bent area.

Basic clay or loam soil needs some modification with peat moss and sand to bring it closer to the soil type prevalent on the playing 18 greens. This procedure of incorporating the materials into the basic soil is well within the scope of the turf manager, his crew and existing equipment. Water is necessary and usually available from the irrigation system close to the selected nursery site.

In the cool season grass-growing regions of the country, August to late September is considered the best time to establish either bent or bluegrass nurseries.

With all the changes in the grounds operation of a golf course, with vandalism on the upswing and with the normal uncertainties of managing a golf course, instant turf is necessary for repair work. And the practicality of having a private multi-purpose sod nursery is good business. □

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produced information on worker alienation, which is useful for any employer of a labor type force (large or small). The results showed that assembly line monotony, a condition prevalent where one person executes one type of assembly repeatedly each day with no change in work type or schedule for the conduct of that specific work, was conducive to low efficiency, heavy absenteeism, many labor-management disputes (flooding the established grievance procedure), which were only symptoms of the real problem—monotony and generally repressed hostility on the part of workers with accompanying interpersonal friction and low morale.

The company claims to have affected some relief from many of these problems by training each assemblyman to do not one, but all steps on his assembly unit. Under this plan, the worker also has a say in when he can change from one assembly job to another. The company says this method has created little confusion and that the initial low efficiency caused by the necessity for the worker to reorient himself when periodically tackling a new step, is compensated in surprisingly short order, making over-all efficiency greater than when mono-job assembly training was used.

The general result of this new plan (instituted only in certain plants; in others they feel the nature of the assembly precludes multi-job training where each assembly step is very complicated), has been to heighten the worker's self esteem and thereby to increase his motivation.

A leading golf equipment manufacturer has attempted a plan that is revolutionary in the field of mass production organizational development. The company has instituted periodic employee assembly, almost taking the form of a seminar at which workers are asked to help solve certain management and production problems (employees are at liberty to present to management at these gatherings their suggestions for solving other problems the existence of which management may not be aware). □

This program acts as a balm for labor-management strains and frictions, which grow as a result of worker alienation and job monotony. It hypes employee motivation and morale because the worker sees that although his job function may be insignificant when compared to the over-all operation, he does have a voice in changing aspects of the system he dislikes. These meetings have been particularly effective because they lessen the necessity for the worker to use the costly (in downtime) and complicated grievance procedure that oftentimes carries a stigma for the worker who may feel he is regarded as a complainer who shuts down at his job to file a grievance. Thus, under this kind of a system both worker and management benefit.

Worker alienation, job monotony and the ensuing low morale and lessening of motivation are not inique to large industry. Golf club administrators could undoubtedly benefit from applying some of the above techniques to their labor management relations problems. Training each grounds maintenance worker to use the variety of available course equipment and giving him the opportunity to function in all or many of the turf maintenance procedures, from labor to administration, would surely increase job interest and effectiveness and could help make his work attitude approach the ideal—a labor of love.

This would apply equally to the dining room and pro shop personnel. Training people to double as bartenders, waiters, second cooks and so forth also gives the club manager a more versatile staff. Gathering them for periodic interchanges of ideas on how the dining room could operate more efficiently and attract more business could not help but be fruitful.

The lesson learned by industry (that nobody knows more about a specific job than the man who does it day in and day out), is also applicable to golf club employees. Don't short suit your grasp of club management by failing to get the views of the person closest to each job—he does it every day. □