

**C**all me crazy, but I think the golf industry may not be as helpful as it could be to people who would like to join it. I've spoken with several candidates looking for information on careers in golf, and each of them expressed frustration about not knowing where to look and whom to contact. Some folks, I'm sure, gave up their searches in frustration.

This phenomenon puzzles me, especially in light of the tight labor market we currently face. I am reminded of the words of a mentor I once had who told me that one of the key indicators of a successful, long-term business is its ability to attract and retain qualified, committed people. The golf industry is no exception to this adage, but its diffuse structure creates challenges to marketing all it has to offer.

Since the golf industry is comprised of independent courses, facilities and businesses, it's difficult to construct a marketing campaign to meet the needs of all its components. Therefore, the industry usually uses a word-of-mouth networking effort to fill a specific position. Once it's filled, there's no ongoing recruiting effort to promote the course until the next position opens. That's a bad long-term strategy.

Effectively marketing industry career opportunities means learning how to use economies of scale. It also means that even though there may not be a current opening in your organization, it is worthwhile to participate in activities that provide valuable insight and information to people who are considering careers in the industry. Here are some examples of things you can do to make this happen:

Local chapters are constantly looking for new ways to add value to their membership. Organizations such as this can pool their resources to sponsor job fairs or career days for prospective employees. Well-designed information sessions can be conducted about the industry, including the benefits and satisfaction one receives from these opportunities. Most importantly, however, is the opportunity for face-to-face dialogue between people in the business and those folks who would like to be in it. Experience has shown that these con-

## Good People Don't Grow on Trees

BY DAVE ST. JOHN



### COURSES MUST

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versations are invaluable recruiting tools.

Internships are also a good method to open doors to new employees. If you elect to start an intern program, make it worthwhile and a win-win situation for everyone. Don't stick the students with your worst crew and forget about them. Be creative, and assign the interns some type of project that requires a full measure of their creative and critical thinking skills. There are some sharp people out there who may come up with new ways of doing things that you wouldn't have considered without their help.

Web sites are another way to make it easy for prospective employees to contact you. If your facility doesn't have a site, you should make a strong pitch to get one. Keep the site fresh with regular updates, and make sure your Internet address is part of all your facility's literature. Ensure that the site has a section which describes employment opportunities.

Establish links with local colleges, industry-oriented schools and industry associations. Students on campus usually have direct access to the Internet, which means they are only a few clicks away from communicating directly with you.

The name of the game is ongoing marketing, effectively using economies of scale and accessibility. People who want to work in the industry don't want to spend inordinate time searching for you. If that's the hurdle they have to overcome, rest assured they will take their skills to other companies in allied industries that have figured out ways to remove these obstacles and will welcome them with open arms.

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