

In case you haven't kept score at home, I'm pleased to inform you that this is the 20th issue of *Golfdom* since we brought the magazine back to life in January 1999. We still have a way to go to match the record of the "old" *Golfdom* (some 400-plus issues over 53 years), but after producing 20 magazines, it seems like a good time to consider what we've accomplished — and learned — over the past couple of years. Here's a half-dozen lessons I've taken away from this little experiment called *Golfdom*.

Lesson 1: Sometimes a plan works

Golfdom represents one those rare times when a business plan actually worked. The original plan (written with a golf pencil on the back of a cocktail napkin) called for the magazine to be "fresh, upscale, easy to read, smart and entertaining." Thanks to a lot of talented writers and designers, combined with great feedback from you, we think we've achieved this goal. The plan also called for us to be profitable. Thanks to unbelievable support from advertisers, we're not only profitable, but we've become the number two magazine in the market. In short, *Golfdom* is here to stay.

Lesson 2: Change is good

If nothing else, *Golfdom* has rocked the status quo. I'm particularly proud of our cover stories on PDI, management companies and the lack of ethnic diversity in the golf industry. Our goal in doing stories like these is to spur more self-examination and awareness in a business where people are often too busy to think about the big picture.

Lesson 3: It's OK to have fun

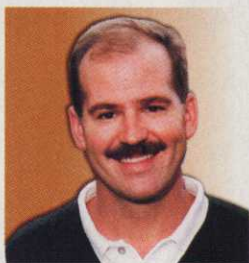
Superintendents are some of the funniest people I know. It seems like humor is the pressure relief valve that keeps us from going postal (or, more appropriately, going "Spackler"). We've tried to use humor with a purpose — with mixed results. For example, I still get hassled about the infamous "Dumb and Dumber" column Geoff Shackelford wrote last year. At the same time, some superintendents request extra copies for their green committees. Go figure.

Lesson 4: Listening works

We really do listen to what you, our readers,

Twenty Issues, Six Lessons

BY PAT JONES



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have to say, and we actively encourage feedback by publishing a lot of the letters we get. As a result, we get more e-mail, notes and calls than any other magazine in our company (which publishes about 70 other magazines). We also rely on in-depth monthly feedback from our *Golfdom* Advisory Staff, a group of more than 20 superintendents, architects and others who review each issue and help us plan articles.

Lesson 5: Nobody's perfect

To paraphrase Mr. Sinatra ... mistakes, we've made a few. Although we've been relatively lucky about errors, we always correct them prominently. In fact, here's one now: Newt Gingrich does not have a Ph.D. in environmental sciences as I glibly stated in my September column. He has a Ph.D. in history. I stand corrected, but I also stand by my assertion that EPA has exceeded the Congressional intent of the Food Quality Protection Act and needs to be reined in by somebody, if not Gingrich. We simply don't know if this will come to pass.

Lesson 6: Expectation and reality

Occasionally, you actually achieve your dreams. For me, the reality of *Golfdom* has exceeded my wildest expectations. Not only are we a successful business venture, but we've engaged you, the reader, in a way that I never expected. It's a thrill to meet superintendents and have them tell me that they love the magazine. Not like. Not appreciate. Love. Well, at the risk of being all warm and gooey, let me return the favor. We love what we're doing. We love this industry. And we love our readers right back. With a little luck, the lovefest will continue for many years to come.

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