

Service & Support

Satisfied Customers

The good news for golf course maintenance manufacturers and their dealers and distributors is that most superintendents are content with customer service. According to our Superintendent State of the Industry Survey, 43 percent of superintendents say that service and support from local dealers and distributors has gotten better in the past few years. Only 10 percent say that service is worse, and 47 percent report that service is the same, which probably means it's decent.

Over the past few years, has the service and support from local dealers and distributors gotten better or worse?



other, Ihms says.

"That's benefiting us," he adds. "The market is more competitive, and there's better service because of it."

Ihms says Bent Tree's name also has something to do with the improved service. "The name of our facility has clout," Ihms adds, noting that Bent Tree hosts a PGA Senior Tour event. "They want our business."

John Cummings, superintendent of Berry Hills CC, in Charleston, W Va., was one of only 10 percent of superintendents who said that service and support from local distributors is worse. That's because Berry Hills CC has no local distributors for some of its major equipment. For instance,

service is the same, which probably means it's decent.

Keith Ihms, superintendent of Bent Tree CC in Dallas, says service is better because the industry's three major equipment manufacturers changed distributors in his area about five years ago. Before that, service was suffering, and the manufacturers recognized the problem. "The three new distributors have done a better job for me on loaner equipment, parts availability and overall service," Ihms says.

Because they're new, the three distributors are more hungry for business and competing with each

a major mower distributor is about a four-hour drive away.

"It's all based on our location," Cummings says. "We're in no-man's land for distributors."

Hence, Cummings has little personal contact with sales representatives and technicians. It's also difficult to get repair people to Berry Hills CC in a timely manner. "It makes downtime a little longer," he says.

To combat the problem, Cummings has increased his inventory on certain parts, but that has also driven up his maintenance budget. Cummings is not angry, and he understands that locations of dealers and distributors are based on business decisions. "It's just the way things are in today's business world," he notes. ■

— Larry Aylward

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