

## Off The Fringe

# By the Book

CLEAR POLICIES – FOR EVERYONE – MAKE LIFE AND WORK A PLEASANT EXPERIENCE AT J.C. RESORTS

By Don Dale

**T**he holistic management strategy practiced by J.C. Resorts, a La Jolla, Calif.-based hotel and golf resort company, is designed to make life and work both easy and fun for all — including golf course maintenance employees and the resort's clientele.

J.C. Resorts achieves this with a written program on complete golf course management. It starts with the corporation's core values and extends to employee communications and purchasing practices.

"We try to keep everything uniform and standardized," says Kent Graff, director of golf course maintenance for the company, who oversees five courses within a 40-mile radius of Rancho Bernardo, Calif.

The corporation's management program centers on effective communication, beginning at the top and extending to newly hired members of the five maintenance crews. A combination of staff meetings and informal, one-on-one impromptu gatherings are key, but training manuals outline guidelines to ensure the company's customers a quality golfing experience.

"The idea is to train our staff initially, and then we reinforce training at weekly or monthly tailgate meetings," Graff says.

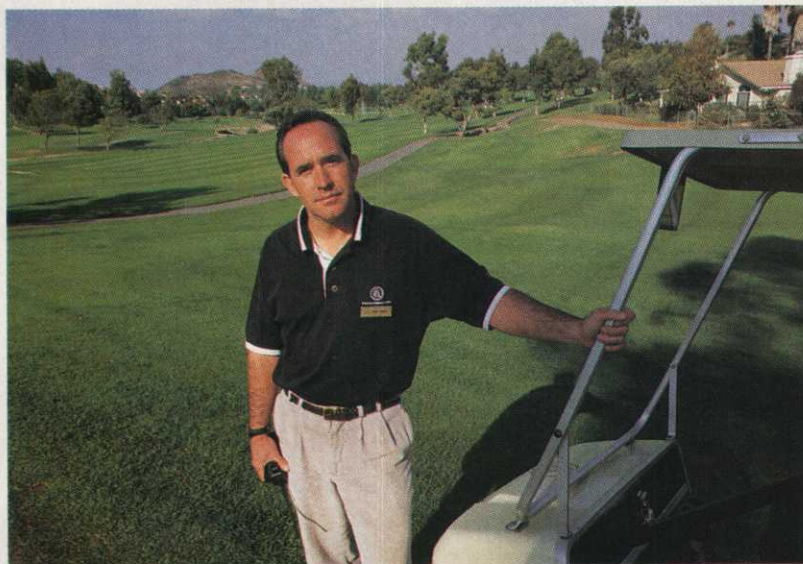
An employee standards manual deals with issues ranging from how to associate with resort guests to details about turfgrass maintenance. It's just as important to the economic life of a resort to greet a guest in a friendly manner as it is to know how to maintain the course, according to the company manual.

"The manual is intended to be an encompassing how-to guide," Graff says.

### Corporate culture

Crew members aren't the only ones turning to manuals to get a better understanding of their roles in the overall operation. Superintendents can quickly pick up insight into the corporate culture and operational structure.

"We have a manager's quick-reference manual that helps outline certain ways to process work, including proper procedures for memo writing, distribution and correct training procedures," Graff says.



"One of the nice things about our organization is that we try to pool our ideas rather than dictate them," says Kent Graff, director of golf course maintenance.

Although Graff has had business training and experience, he and other superintendents say it's handy to have reference materials that outline specifics of many managerial functions. Quarterly corporate committee meetings bolster communication and allow superintendents to represent their courses, as well as work closely with supervisors.

### Delegating authority

J.C. Resorts gives superintendents at the other courses considerable autonomy, allowing them to address maintenance challenges as they see fit. They are entrusted with the care of their courses, construction and other projects, but can turn to others for advice.

"My role is as a mentor or person to assist with large purchases and capital expenditures," Graff says. "One of the nice things about our organization is that we try to pool our ideas rather than dictate them."

But Graff keeps in close touch with fellow superintendents through monthly meetings to address issues ranging from wages and staff development to course maintenance details or project work. "It could be about a process of aeration or a particular turf cultural practice that is working in our favor," he says.

Graff also works with superintendents to assess needs so he can negotiate bulk purchasing discounts.

*Don Dale is a freelance writer from Hollywood, Calif.*