

If you think it's tough to please 300 club members, try getting superintendents to return calls, submit dues, newsletter articles, committee reports, surveys and seminar registrations on time as a chapter employee.

At the recent bi-annual GCSAA Chapter Executives Conference in April, I got an earful of frustration from some of my chapter staff contemporaries. So I thought I'd send a reminder to all those chapters out there: Whether you have an executive director with an office or a superintendent's wife working out of her home, these folks represent you and should be treated as professionally as any employee you have at your course.

Key issues that chapters should consider when assessing the value of a chapter employee:

- Fair compensation with annual evaluations and scheduled increases.
- Reimbursement for home office space, electricity and phone expenses. How much would real office rent be?
- Respect and appreciation for the work being done. It's not rocket science but it does take accuracy, diligence and enthusiasm. We are human beings — not pieces of office equipment.
- Timely coverage of reasonable work-related expenses incurred by the employee.
- Conduct all business and personal communications in a timely and professional manner.
- Failure to plan on the board's part should not become an emergency for the employee.

Like it or not, associations have moved beyond shoe-box accounting and 11th-hour newsletters that arrive announcing the chapter meeting on the meeting date. Just as golfers have high expectations on course conditions, today's association members expect timely communications, smooth running meetings and events, and balanced checkbooks. While many volunteer association officers still shoulder the burdens in addition to full "real-job" schedules, it's becoming evident that association management has become a real job that makes running a local chapter easier for superintendents.

Some of us ex-superintendents or other industry types turned chapter executives have it easier than the part-time women who serve many of the 103 affiliated GCSAA chapters

Unsung Heroes Deserve Respect

BY JOEL JACKSON



OUR PART-TIME PEOPLE ARE AS VALUABLE TO THE ASSOCIATION AS ANY MEMBER SITTING ON THE BOARD

around the country. We're still considered peers and don't get the flack that many of those serving in part-time roles experience. But we all share some common frustrations when it comes to meeting deadlines.

It's amazing to me that superintendents of all people don't know the importance of meeting deadlines and communicating up and down the chain of command. Some association members seem to get tunnel vision when it comes to the internal operations of their own organizations. It's as if the rules of common business courtesy don't apply because a person works out of his or her home office or on a flexible schedule. When chapter staffers try to get things done on time, the reaction is often inaction by the membership.

As time begins to run out and the staffer begins to push a little, superintendents often push back with ugly comments like, "She's only a part timer," or "She gets paid for what she does," or "She's just a secretary — why do I have to listen to her?"

True, most of the work is not 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., but when the affiliation agreements, incorporation papers and not-for-profit tax returns need to be filed, when the membership directory and newsletter need to get to the printer, when the dues renewals need to be processed and the checkbook balanced, our part-time people are as valuable to the association as any board member.

Most of the time, these employees don't complain about the ill treatment they often receive from their members. So take a moment to thank these often unsung heroes of our local chapters — and treat them the way you'd expect your members to treat you.

They deserve nothing less.

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