

Do you have a written job description that clearly defines your responsibilities at your club? Regardless of your title, I'd bet 90 percent of you don't. But you should have specific written guidelines from your employer that detail what is expected of you.

There is a universal reason why superintendents don't usually have clearly written job descriptions. Most club members or owners don't understand what you do or how you do it. All golfers know is the result they want — a perfectly conditioned golf course every day.

That might be their high-minded wish, but it is often just wishful thinking unless each club is realistic about how well-equipped the superintendent is to deliver the goods.

An easy catch-all job description that reads well in the clubhouse goes, "The superintendent shall be responsible for the maintenance and grooming of the golf course to meet the expectations of the members. He shall report to the green chairman." Heck, you knew that when you were college freshmen or rookie crew members. The devil, of course, is in the details.

Let's focus on water — the most important resource that superintendents manage. People are important, too, but without an adequate supply of water, you can forget about all the rest. The recent drought cycle has put water issues on the front burner. Superintendents manage the water, but they shouldn't have to worry about securing an adequate water supply in the middle of a blistering summer heat wave. That job must fall to the owners and members.

After all, superintendents come and go, but the consumptive-use water permits, local politics and watering restrictions stay forever. Superintendents are the people responsible for applying the water judiciously and making sure the irrigation system is calibrated correctly, runs efficiently and is maintained properly. The owners should be the ones giving superintendents enough money to make sure the job can be done properly.

Where in the job description does it say superintendents shall be responsible for lobbying legislators, county and city commissioners, and water-management district officials to write and administer realistic water regulations? The ques-

Going Beyond Your Job Description

BY JOEL JACKSON



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tion also extends to other legislative issues as well, such as pesticide and fertilizer regulations.

I seldom hear of owners/members leading the charge for fairness and common sense in these matters. They complain to superintendents when the grass is brown, but they aren't down at city hall fighting bureaucrats for an extra gallon of water for the course.

Somehow superintendents or their associations are expected to do the heavy lifting for them at their own expense and risk of time away from the job (which can be costly if problems occur while superintendents trudge to the state capital). Some clubs understand superintendents simply can't do it all, but most don't.

If you weren't so conscientious, you could simply tell your owner or green committee that it's not in your job description to perform these necessary tasks. Then you could sit back and let the owners unite to fight the politicians and regulators to ensure the best interests of their businesses are served.

The nature of superintendents, however, is not to complain. To this end, they battle tooth and nail to do whatever it takes to deliver the best conditioned golf courses they can. I call this insanity the survival instinct. After all, superintendents understand their jobs are on the line and will be blamed for poor course conditions.

I often wonder where the level of the game would be today if superintendents decided not to take leadership roles in regulatory politics — a job for which they were never trained, for which they don't have the financial or political clout and that definitely falls outside their job description. My own sense is that the state of the golf course maintenance industry would be

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