

**C**hange is stressful but inevitable. Compare golf course management from 20 years ago and imagine what it will look like 20 years in the future. The same goes for associations.

One of the things I admire about the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) is that it always tries to be all things to all people. And one of the things that keeps the GCSAA from creating clear value for belonging to the association is that it tries to be all things to all people.

You may not believe that first sentence, but I say it confidently, having been at meetings where the discussions go long and hard about being inclusive of the wide range of golf facilities and the resources for which each must work. Members must make some attempt at participating in their association or it won't have any value. The members that do participate can no longer be shackled and held hostage by the weakest links. GCSAA membership must be marketed as a real value to its members. It's time to change or die.

And that is the basis for the second sentence. The time has arrived for members to take personal responsibility for the value of their membership. The GCSAA isn't 100 people in Lawrence, Kan. The GCSAA is all of its members involved in the profession.

As much as I admire anyone engaged in the superintendent's profession, I'm totally flabbergasted by the level of ignorance that members have about the resources available to them. Call 800-472-7878 or go online at [www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org) for information from agronomics to the Professional Development Initiative; it's why you pay \$300 dues. Or just read *Golf Course Management*, *Newsline*, *NewsWeekly* or *Leaderboard*. There is no way you can defend saying you don't know what's going on.

But committees and staff can't design meaningful education and support services if you don't talk to them either directly or through your local chapters. This is not a bull session over beers. Ladies and gentlemen, this is a serious discussion about the future of your profession, and you need to take some time to come up with constructive questions and answers and suggestions. It's easier to complain than to contribute. You must change or die.

## Memo to Masses: Change or Die

BY JOEL JACKSON



IF YOU WANT GCSAA  
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Don't say, "I don't have time!" That's a cop out. You always find time to do something you need to do. If you want GCSAA membership to mean something besides receiving a magazine, you need to invest in more than the time it takes to write a check. Answer a survey. Make a call.

Now that I have the boo-birds stirred up, here are some preemptive strikes:

► **Golf Industry Show:** The GCSAA is and remains the primary partner in this venture. The association is the one that leads the unification of the various golf trades shows. Why? The annual conference and trade show is the primary revenue source for programs and services. It needed to do something to improve the viability of the trade show. By combining the National Golf Course Owners Association and Club Managers Association of America show, the GCSAA keeps the revenue and services. Change or die.

► **Environmental Institute for Golf:** It's the GCSAA Foundation with a new logo and mission. It still funds scholarships and research like it did before. By acknowledging that the environment is one of the key issues in golf course design, construction and maintenance, it is able to build relationships with significant and influential donors and environmental groups. Change or die.

► **PDI and beyond:** You love working outdoors. You hate coats, meetings and spreadsheets. The superintendent of the future will need business and communication skills in order to keep his job and remain that key member of the golf facility team. Working hard and growing grass alone just won't hack it in the future. Change or die.

When do you start preparing for the future? I say it begins today. Start changing or die.

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