

Stathe Paganis

Superb customer service vital to growing the business

Stathe Paganis is a member of family-run International Golf Construction Co., which has built courses throughout the north-eastern United States and Canada since the 1950s. In 1998, the Massachusetts company also became a course owner with the opening of Cross-Winds Golf Club, a 27-hole layout in Plymouth, Mass. Paganis serves as CrossWinds course manager, giving him unique insights to the golf industry as both a course owner and builder.

Golfdom: *What's the most important issue facing golf course owners today, and why is it important?*

Paganis: Growing their businesses despite the abundance of golf courses. Doing this requires exceeding customer expectations. Make sure every customer leaves the course satisfied with the product and service.

Golfdom: *What is the key to a good owner/superintendent relationship and why is that relationship important?*

Paganis: They must have a mutual respect for each other's position. The owner/manager must understand the responsibility of the superintendent and what is involved with providing the quality course the customer expects. The superintendent must understand the responsibility and challenges that the owner/manager faces. The owner/manager is responsible

for keeping the money flowing. Once the two understand each other's positions, then they will at least have some respect for each other's job. This will allow them to communicate effectively, even if they do not always agree. They do not need to like each other, but they must respect each other's position. They must understand they are in the same boat. Like any relationship, both sides must understand it is a partnership philosophy working toward the greater good of the operation.

Golfdom: *Finish this sentence: "The best thing that could happen to the golf industry would be..."*

Paganis: ... to grow the game to reach more first-time golfers through means such as PGA of America's "Play Golf America"

Course owners and superintendents do not need to like each other, but they must respect each other's position.

program. The industry has to target every age and gender.

Golfdom: *What is the best investment you ever made in your business?*

Paganis: There are two critical areas — turf quality and customer service. The best investment has to be a good superintendent to maintain the quality of the turf, with special emphasis on the greens. Equally important is a good hands-on manager with emphasis on customer service. The two work together to provide the golfer with an enjoyable "golf" experience.

After all, a good golfing experience is what the golfer expects. Playing golf is like life. It is not about where you end up. It is the journey that counts.

Golfdom: *What do you do in your free time?*

Paganis: I rarely have any free time. If I had free time, I would learn how to play golf.

Golfdom: *What was the last book you read?*

Paganis: I think it was the Bible.

Golfdom: *What is your favorite movie?*

Paganis: I prefer romantic comedies. "When Harry Met Sally" is one of my favorites.

Golfdom: *What club in your bag do you hit the best?*

Paganis: My lucky 7-iron. ■

