

Most superintendents get an “A” for effort. Regardless of budget levels and job responsibilities, good superintendents put forth sincere efforts to provide the best conditioned golf courses they can with the given circumstances. That means a wide variation of the roles that superintendents play at their golf courses.

Some don blazers and schmooze with influential club members as easily as jawing with fellow peers at monthly meetings. These supers are usually deft at public speaking and conducting meetings as well. Some might assume the role of traffic controller and overseer for multiple course operations with several assistants, technicians and staff numbering more than the total of your fingers and toes. Some achieve superstar status.

Other superintendents don jeans or shorts and set cups, mow greens and spread fertilizer. Their show and tell is often a direct result of daily labor. They might have a few crew members.

This disparity in job responsibilities in no way diminishes the effort required to deliver the goods by either party. I have often heard my peers say that you can often learn more about efficient operations and results by checking out the successful mid- to low-budget golf courses. The guys who really do more with less are the ones to emulate.

This isn't about whom or what type of operation is better. Each requires dedication and performance. Rather, it is about the professional attitude that a superintendent must have to master his or her circumstances. The old cliché of working smart instead of working hard doesn't mean you don't work hard. Quite the contrary, a smart superintendent will make sure he is doing both. The smart part is learning how to capitalize on that hard work so you reap tangible results.

Every superintendent, regardless of budget, must plan, organize, direct and control the operation. I think the most successful superintendents, past and present, have also learned how to communicate effectively up and down the chain of command. They are generous of spirit, good listeners, fair and consistent. Older doesn't always mean wiser, but certainly time

Create Your Own Value Proposition

BY JOEL JACKSON



COMMUNICATING
YOUR LONG-TERM
PLANS AND GOALS
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on the job does give you some perspective and is worth consideration.

Computer technology is opening many doors to career and job performance information, irrigation management and pest occurrence modeling. Old dogs would do well to learn new tricks. On the other hand, mastering keyboard skills is also no substitute for getting dirt under the fingernails. The art and science of agronomy is best learned from keen observation, diligent recordkeeping and a little controlled Rube Goldberg experimentation on the driving range, chipping green or remote rough location. There is sage advice in the old adage “back to basics” when conditioning the soil and turf.

Do you talk frequently and openly about course conditions with fellow management team members and clientele? You don't have to brag about working long hours, but there is nothing wrong with reporting an irrigation blow out took place last night and that you came in to make the necessary repairs.

In monthly reports or club newsletter articles, talk about the local ordinance pending to ban fertilizer use in your community and what your association(s) are doing about it, and ask members to help as well. Write a brief report about your local chapter's monthly meeting that you took the day off to attend. A sentence or two mentioning the education session or something you learned from networking with others shows you're on top of things.

OK, so you all make an honest effort. Are you getting a good return on your investment? The “A” for effort that pays off is the “awareness” by others of what you do and how valuable you are to the facility.

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