

**T**hroughout our lives, we form many types of relationships. At work, we develop professional relationships with subordinates, superiors and fellow department heads. Ask yourself, how well do you get along with each? Do you go out of your way to meet, greet, support and acknowledge them?

There is no simple formula for relationships, other than common courtesy and good manners, I suppose. Every club, corporation and company has its own cast of characters. You must learn to navigate the best course for productive interaction with each of them. In some cases, strategic avoidance may be the best answer. Let's call that one a necessarily distant relationship.

Other than at your own club, you can broaden your network in any number of ways, whether it be through local superintendent chapters, the GCSAA, state and regional turf-grass and golf associations, land grant universities, state and local regulators or your network of suppliers and vendors. We meet many contacts through our group affiliations and involvement but rarely take it a step further. It would be smart and savvy to interact one-on-one with the colleagues we meet at these events and get to know them better personally.

With a little effort, some of these contacts may even become good friends. Nurturing our relationships can benefit everyone, but keep in mind, balancing the professional and social aspects of our relationships can require us to walk a fine line. Wherever you make your contacts, be sure to keep it cordial but professional at all times.

There can be many rewarding personal and professional benefits to cultivating sound working relationships, including job satisfaction and advancement.

Without a doubt, the number one benefit of a good relationship is the exchange of information. You may be the giver or receiver of that bit of information that helps someone solve a problem. Sharing raises your stature as a key team player, friend or partner. This give and take is the foundation of good relationships.

## It's All About Relationships

BY JOEL JACKSON



**YOU NEVER KNOW  
WHEN THE NEXT  
PERSON YOU MEET  
WILL BE SOMEONE  
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YOUR LIFE.**

Recently I attended the International Network of Golf spring conference at the Innisbrook Resort near Clearwater, Fla. The Network is a golf media-based group for golf playing and training equipment manufacturers, golf travel, lifestyle and merchandise marketers, golf architects, golf associations and golf writers. I was able to chat with the Golf Channel's Todd Lewis and NBC's Mark Rolfing, who were there along with many regional golf writers and golf talk radio hosts.

I made new contacts outside of my usual work environment and exchanged information about golf superintendents and the challenges our industry faces.

Besides the classes and presentations on business development and relationships, publication management and personal enrichment, one of the most interesting and educational experiences I had at the International Network of Golf spring conference was playing in a four-some with Pam Swenson, executive director of the Executive Women's Golf Association; George Baker, partner in Razor Golf; and John Schultz, the developer of ezLocator, a pin placement management system.

Life is an amazing adventure. You never know when the next person you meet will be someone who will play a big or small part in your life. We go about our business and carry out our responsibilities every day. It's easy to go through the motions. But look around and pay careful attention to the world and people around you. Reach out. Be as good a steward of your relationships as you are of the environment.

The quality of our lives is dependent on the nature of the relationships we cultivate.

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