

**L**earning more can lead to more than just growing your turfgrass. It can lead to growing your résumé, your credibility and your intellect.

My best learning experiences include my college years (B.A. Geology), military service (U.S. Coast Guard), time in graduate school, and experience teaching junior high science.

Eventually, I made my way to the golf industry. I was on construction and grow-in crews in the early days and began my Disney golf career with a shovel and a rake edging bunkers. Along the way, I became a CGCS and served as president of the Central Florida and Florida GCSA chapters.

Each one of those experiences gave me an opportunity to master new skills. And some gave me very formal training. At each stop along the way I met peers who brought their own knowledge and experience to the classroom and workplace. The color and richness of those personal experiences gave form and perspective to the academic facts and figures of whatever specialty or task I was involved in at the time.

Whether your turf knowledge comes from work experience on the job with a respectable mentor or from some of our highly regarded turf programs at universities around the country, you're learning the most current information available. In today's world, technical knowledge continues to change rapidly with research and development, so continuing education in turf management and business is a must if one is to be successful.

Whether you are promoted in-house or graduate magna cum laude, the reality check comes when your duties and responsibilities change and you have to blend agronomy, communications and business management skills as a team leader or department head.

Back in the day, we looked to books for information. Now, with the advent of local professional chapters, networking between superintendents and suppliers became another reliable source of information, along with the Internet, blogs, Facebook, Twitter and smart phones.

But technology is not a substitute for human

## The More You Know the More You Grow

BY JOEL JACKSON



**DON'T SEQUESTER  
YOURSELF FROM  
OPPORTUNITIES TO  
MIX AND MINGLE.  
TAKE ADVANTAGE  
OF UNIQUE LEARN-  
ING EXPERIENCES  
OUTSIDE OF GOLF.**

contact and bonding, which is so important in our profession. And it is equally important to learn proper business and social etiquette. Today's technology enables us to be increasingly mobile and find information quickly, but nothing says sincerity and good manners like a returned call or a hand-written thank you note. Making a good impression as a well-mannered person also builds your collateral as a worthwhile go-to person.

At local, regional and national meetings and conferences, opportunities abound for making new contacts who may one day be the connection you need for a job change or promotion. To help you stay on top of your game, the latest technical information is available in education sessions. But it's at receptions, banquets and private dinners that you can rekindle old friendships and develop new ones.

Don't sequester yourself from opportunities to mix and mingle. When you're trying to balance your family life and work, take advantage of unique learning experiences outside of golf to expand your interests. At the very least, you should attend as many local chapter meetings and events as possible to keep up with the latest news and recharge yourself.

We all know superintendents and suppliers who are in the know and have built a network of contacts from coast to coast. They didn't attain their knowledge simply by working hard from dawn to dusk. They built their careers on a multi-faceted desire for deeper knowledge and personal growth. They did it by being actively involved in their associations, meeting new people and welcoming the opportunity to learn new things. You can too.

---

*Certified Superintendent Joel Jackson is executive director of the Florida GCSA.*