

SUPERS GIVE AN ASSIST

For assistants who have wondered what skill they most need to work on, we have the answer. OK, make that more than one answer...

BY MOLLY GASE

The role of a superintendent is a multi-faceted one. For assistant superintendents, there are a lot of skills to pick up. These range from communication skills, financial planning and agronomic knowledge to leadership skills and member interaction. Each skill is important for an assistant to master in order to move into the role of superintendent.

When asked what skills their assistants needed to improve upon to move forward in their careers, superintendents were quick to speak up. However, they did not all have the same thing to say. The same goes for the results of our survey: Coaching and counseling employees was the most popular response at 30 percent. Agronomic knowledge (23 percent), financial planning (21 percent) and member interactions (14 percent) were also popular choices.

John Gosslin, superintendent at Aronimink GC, Newton Square, Penn., pointed out both the strengths and weakness of his assistants. "They are all very good technically these days, but everybody could always work on their leadership skills, dealing with people, negotiations, leading people that are all from different cultures and different age groups and that's just something you can't get in school. You can only get that once you get in the workplace," says Gosslin.

Eric Frazier, Director of Agronomy at Willow Oaks CC, Richmond, Va., finds some assistants lacking when it comes to staff management. "They manage the staff directly, but they don't have to manage the human resources piece, so bridg-

ing the gap between the H.R. piece and the staff management, I think is a huge area for assistants to grow," says Frazier.

Learning to lead staff is important, but Jackson Reiswig, superintendent at Coral Creek Club in Placida, Fla., suggests adaptability.


"It would definitely be an ability, for lack of a better term, to roll with the punches and adapt. You have to be able to go from speaking with a CEO of a fortune 500 company to a laborer who went through four grades of school," says Reiswig.

Assistants, many constantly glued to their smart phones, do have a skill that both Gosslin and Frazier value: communication. Being able to communicate well is something that Frazier finds very im-

portant at his private club.

"I think you can't communicate too much. Communicate to your staff, communicate to your managers, communicate to the membership or your golfers," says Frazier.

Only 11 percent of responses selected communication skills as something their assistants needed to improve upon. Constant communication seems to be a staple of younger generations and for Gosslin, that is a positive.

"They are usually really good communicators with all of the tech. I find it easier to communicate with assistant superintendents these days just because it's easy. We basically can stay in touch 24 hours a day," says Gosslin. 

WHAT ONE SKILL DOES YOUR ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT NEED TO IMPROVE UPON THE MOST IN ORDER TO MAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL?

