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# Say What?

AS A MANAGER OF PEOPLE, I'VE FOUND THAT WHAT SOMEONE IS THINKING DIRECTLY AFFECTS HOW WELL HE HEARS

By Jim Black

There is a phenomenon going on in the workplace that may need to be investigated by the medical community. You see, I have a theory that could be the cause of many a breakdown in functional communication.

My theory is this: The more someone is harboring a preconceived notion, the less likely his ability to correctly understand what it is you are telling him. Put another way, what someone is thinking directly affects how well he hears.

Those of you in managerial, supervisory and superintendent positions can maybe back me up on this.

I can count on my fingers, toes and trusty abacus how many times I have answered the question, "What do you want me to do next?"

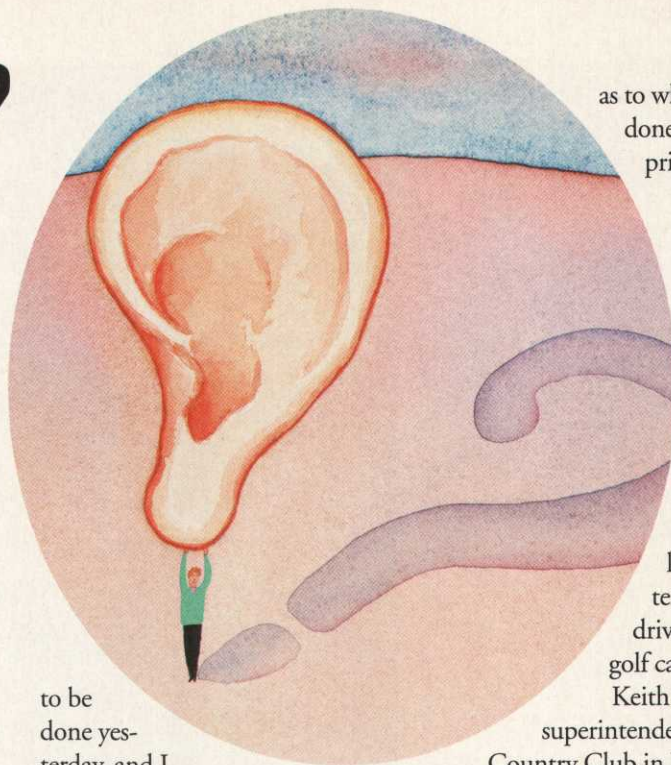
I will have thought about this question before any given employee has radioed it in and will have formulated what I thought was a very specific, detailed answer. When the question comes, I give this answer with all the confidence in the world that my directions will be completely understood.

Much to my dismay, however, I will go by this particular employee a few minutes later and find that he won't be accomplishing anything related to what I asked him to do.

"What!?" I ask myself. "Was I speaking Greek or something? Why is he doing Z when I told him to go and do X and Y?"

So I drive up in my golf car and confront him. "What are you doing?"

The answer. "I saw that this needed



to be done yesterday, and I thought you wanted me to take care of it."

My reply. "But is this what I asked you to do *today*?"

The answer. "No, but ..."

I reply. "Exactly. No buts. What was a priority yesterday is not necessarily a priority today. Please go do what I asked you to do *today*."

They reply. "OK. What did you say you wanted me to do again ...?"

By this time, whatever hair remaining on my head has turned gray. You know, I really do want my crew members to be able to think for themselves and make some of their own decisions, but not to the point where it undermines my daily agenda.

I think that what happens is this: At the same time I'm formulating my answer to the "what next" question that is yet to come, my crew member has also formulated what he thinks I will say before I say it. As a result, his preconceived notion takes priority over my direction, and his hearing suffers.

It's not a malicious thing; it's a human nature thing. As frustrating as it is, I can usually tell that this crew member is trying to do what he thinks is the right thing to do. He just needs *more* direction, *more* instruction

as to what needs to be done — what *today's* priorities are.

It's funny. I was talking to another local superintendent one day about what it is we do. I'm sure a lot of you have heard a crew member or a member of your club say, "Man, I'd like to be a superintendent. All you do is drive around in your golf car all day."

Keith Hershberger, superintendent from Old South Country Club in Lothian, Md., and I just laugh. We both agreed that sometimes we *have* to laugh.

Here's a little synopsis of what happens. After today's work is done, we think about what it is that needs to be done tomorrow.

Tomorrow then turns into today and over coffee at home before work we think again and prioritize again about what needs to be done. Confident that our plans for the day are set, we head into the office.

Then the crew shows up for the day's work. We give out job assignments and away they go.

The rest of the entire day can easily be spent in the car, riding around the course making sure that what you told everybody to do is what they are actually doing.

If not, chances are pretty good that somebody's preconceived notion got in the way, affected his hearing and what you told him came across as Latin this time instead of Greek.

You can't help but wonder how you learned to speak so many different languages.

EYEWIRE

*Black is the former superintendent of Twin Shields Golf Club in Dunkirk, Md.*

## Business briefs

*Briefs continued from page 19*

Lawrence Bain (president) and David Rivers (vice chairman of sales and marketing).

### Milliken on FORTUNE'S list

Spartanburg-based Milliken & Co. ranked as the 16th best company in FORTUNE Magazine's annual "100 Best Companies to Work For" listing which was announced in January.

"We are pleased that those who have made this company great, our associates, are receiving this public recognition," said Ashley Allen, president and COO of Milliken. "It really is an affirmation of what they have known all along, but it is nice for them to be able to see it in print"

Milliken says it has long been a fierce advocate for preserving American jobs.

### Pinehurst CEO resigns

Patrick A. Corso, who was president and CEO of Pinehurst Resort for the past 17 years, resigned Feb. 6.

"I have had the honor and privilege of leading Pinehurst for the past 17 years," Corso said. "We raised our family here and have deep roots in the community. This is an opportunity for me to pursue a new career direction, and for Pinehurst to move into the next chapter of its history."

Corso joined Pinehurst in 1986 and became president in 1987.

### Method approved to test fertilizer

The International Association of Official Analytical Chemists says it has approved a new official method for more accurately analyzing the nitrogen content of urea-based liquid fertilizer products, especially those containing slow-release nitrogen (SRN) found in triazine products. The new analytical process, called Determination by Liquid Chromatography of Urea in Liquid Fertilizers, was developed by Tessenderlo Kerley Inc. (TKI).

Michael M. Hojjatie, director of research and development for TKI, said the new method was developed over the last 15 years and has been validated by thousands of tests conducted by TKI and different laboratories. The AOACI is the internationally recognized scientific organization that validates analytical methods used in industry.

# Quotable

**"I tell people, 'The best thing about this business is the quality of the people.' It's outstanding."**

— Terry Bonar, certified superintendent of Canterbury Golf Club in Cleveland, on his peers.

**"It's indescribable to win this award. I feel like I could die now since there's nothing in my profession better than this."**

— Monroe S. Miller, superintendent at Blackhawk Country Club in Madison, Wis., reacting to receiving the USGA Green Section Award.

**"What Mr. Brewer wanted was for the elite player to have to hit driver more often."**

— Charles Raudenbush, the pro at Pine Valley, on club president O. Gordon Brewer's decision to lengthen the heralded course. (*GolfWorld*)

## Growing Up

*Continued from page 19*

Hughes makes the prediction because he's already seeing a turnaround. "Several things that were weighing us down are leaving."

Corporate spending is coming back, said Hughes, who also expects memberships to rise at private clubs and guest play to increase. "We definitely hit the bottom, and the curve is going to start sloping up."

But an improving economy doesn't mean that owners can sit back and let more rounds come to them. Hughes stressed that they must create more business as well. Not surprisingly, player development should be high on their lists to trigger more business.

Hughes also noted the importance that owners must place in ser-

ving the 300 to 500 key customers at their respective golf courses.

"Most of the reduction in the past few years has come from the fact that golfers are playing fewer rounds,"

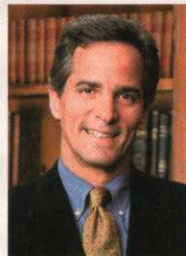
Hughes said. "They're not leaving the game totally, but they're playing less golf. We need to be tuned into them."

If they're playing less golf, owners need to find out why. And then owners need to offer them incentives to come back and play more golf.

"We absolutely have to know what their patterns of play are," Hughes said.

It seems that Hughes, who worked as a lawyer for 10 years before joining the NGCOA, wants owners to apply his "you-can-always-be-better" attitude toward business.

"Like any business, if you think you've arrived, you're on a downhill slope," Hughes said. ■



Mike Hughes



~ 8 ~

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# Hole of the

A photograph of a golf course hole, No. 16 at TPC at Sawgrass. The image shows a large, curved green island green in the foreground, surrounded by a water hazard. A wooden bridge with several arches spans across the water, leading to the green. In the background, there are more green areas, trees, and a few people on the course. The sky is clear and blue.

■ No. 16  
TPC at Sawgrass  
Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.

# Month

## Calm Before The Storm

The TPC at Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla., is most famous for its island green at No. 17.

But the 497-yard par-5 No. 16 is equally important – if for no other reason than players approaching the green can watch their competitors struggle with the island hole.

“Most tour players are trying to make No. 16 in two so they can birdie or eagle the hole and move up the leaderboard,” says superintendent Fred Klauk. “When they get to the green, it’s fair to say they’re watching the island green to see how their opponents are doing.”

As with all Pete Dye-designed greens, the 16th hole has undulations that make proper club choice imperative, Klauk says. The green is also guarded by water on the right, and bunkers on the left and in front.

Klauk says the biggest maintenance challenges are spectator mounds, which require small rotary mowers and hand-mowing to maintain.

Golfdom’s Hole of the Month is presented in partnership with:

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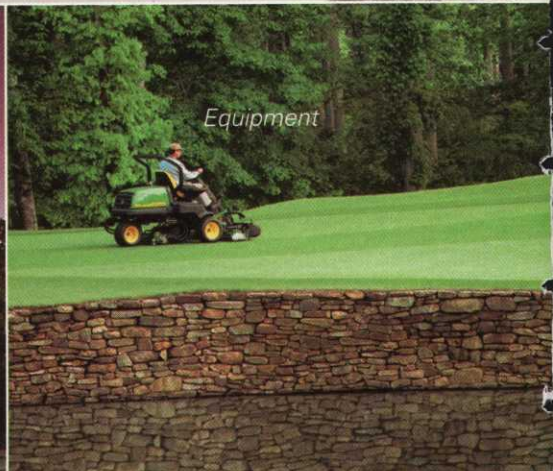
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**A**s director of communications for the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association, I'm on the road quite a bit. I live in Orlando and criss-cross the state from Tallahassee to Ft. Lauderdale, Jacksonville to Naples, Tampa/St. Petersburg to Daytona Beach, and all points in between. I don't want to say that I travel a lot, but some of the toll takers on the turnpike are now on my Christmas card list.

I'm really not complaining. I like to travel and see the sights along the highways and byways of our state, but there's one sight that saddens me. That's the amount of road kill I see.

On some trips, the double-digit total of dead critters is alarming, and I often think about how people are so concerned about pesticides harming wildlife when I saw more dead wildlife in one recent trip across Florida than I ever saw in 30 years of golf course work.

First, there was the armadillo pizza, thin shell with extra squeeze. I shed no tears shed there. Nothing tears up a golf course like a hungry armadillo digging for grubs or mole crickets. I know some guys who will risk an SUV rollover to swerve into the path of an oncoming armadillo.

That prostrate possum in the passing lane isn't "playing" possum. He found the enemy and it wasn't us. It was a steel-belted radial, instead.

It's not considered sporting to mount a 10-point buck bagged with a V8. If you do, the NRA will cancel your membership. As a result, the mangled bodies of those bucks lie by the side of the road for all to see. To all the white tailed deer out there — graze next to a fairway, not a freeway.

Nothing sadder or flatter than a squirrel that changes its mind halfway across the road. And what's with Chip and Dale high-fiving in the TV commercial after causing a car to crash? Is this some sort of warped case of rodent's revenge?

Turtles are not speed bumps, and people who run over turtles are clearly coordination-challenged. It's one thing to try and dodge a scampering squirrel, but how in the heck do you run over a turtle? That takes a special kind of skill — one that I don't want to see working for me.

In Florida, we have another kind of wildlife menace: the love bug. Nothing like the pitter-

## Road Kill on the Highway of Life

BY JOEL JACKSON



I HAVE SEEN MORE  
DEAD WILDLIFE IN  
ONE TRIP ACROSS  
FLORIDA THAN I  
EVER SAW IN  
30 YEARS OF GOLF  
COURSE WORK

patter of love bug splatter on the windshield to herald the beginning of spring and the end of summer in Florida. Love bugs have migrated to Florida along with armadillos, coyotes, New Yorkers, Michiganders and Canadians. Sometimes hard to tell which is the biggest nuisance, eh? If you come down in May through August, don't drive from 10 a.m. to sunset. That's all I'm going to say.

My cousin did his master's thesis on love bugs. He learned two things. The only natural enemy of the adult stage is Owens-Corning Tempered Safety Glass. If you drive under 38 mph, they won't splatter on your car. Try doing 38 mph on the interstate and see if there's any road rage out there.

Sometimes you're the bug; sometimes you're the windshield. I learned this from taking a GCSAA seminar on IPM from the renowned tag-team of entomologists, the two Pats: Dr. Vittum from the University of Massachusetts and Dr. Cobb from Auburn University. I called their presentation "Chowder and Grits." They laughed, but amusing them didn't help me on the final exam: I was the only person ever to flunk a course evaluation form.

Here's the final scorecard from the tallies from my most recent trip across the state (I warn you, the numbers aren't pretty):

Greyhounds 12, Raccoons 0,  
Mustangs 8, Possums 0,  
Harley Hogs 1, Wild Pigs 0

So next time you hear somebody complaining about how many furry friends golf courses kill, tell them to watch the side of the road when they're on the highway. Then ask them who's the greater menace to the wildlife: golf courses or Grand Ams?

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*Joel Jackson, CGCS, retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.*

