



Response to "The Assistant"

Editor's Note: Kendall Marquardt is a 1986 graduate of the UW-Madison's Turfgrass Management Program in the Department of Soil Science.

The Grass Roots
c/o Blackhawk Country Club
P.O. Box 5129
Madison, Wisconsin 53705

Dear Monroe,

I very much enjoyed Mike Bailey's article on "The Assistant" in the Sept./Oct. issue of *The Grass Roots*.

Mike's article was very comprehensive about basic assistant training, which is essential. I am going into my fourth season as an assistant golf course superintendent at two different courses. I have a good basic management background and am now looking at the finer details of management in terms of bringing the whole picture together and making it work.

Much emphasis is usually placed on the assistant being able to assist "on the course". This is fine. Solid field training is essential. But also essential is business management. Keeping the supplies, tools, machinery and paper flowing to the golf course is a taxing task. There is only one way to learn how to do "office work" efficiently and effectively — and that is to do it! I believe that a solid training in the paper-shuffling end of the job is as necessary as the field management aspects. The assistant should assist with paperwork — manhours, diaries, weather observations, newspaper advertisements, payroll (if it fits your style) and inventories. Getting used to keeping good records is a must and doing it is the only way — every day.

Points to Ponder

Bookkeeping and the purchasing system for your club — How are bills coded? How are purchase requests made? These seemingly menial tasks must be done, even if the superintendent is not around.

Reports — How about having your assistant type your next greens committee report? This way the assistant can see what is said, how it is formatted and perhaps make some suggestions. It may be beneficial to have the assistant do payroll distribution reports or other simple end of the month reports to broaden his communication and public relations skills.

Ordering — Parts, equipment, supplies and dealing with the respective vendors. Just getting to know the salespeople, reps, etc. firsthand I think is important. Working with contractors is another interesting experience. The sooner one learns to deal with them the better. Simple projects like arranging for a painter to paint the maintenance building or to install a new overhead door in the shop are excellent ways to get the assistant's feet wet in the area of pricing and securing bids from contractors. The ability to use the phone EFFECTIVELY is a great asset.

Budgeting — I believe the assistant should be involved with the budgeting process. I was involved from roughing up the numbers to doing the final printout on my computer. It is educational to see how the numbers come together and how they translate quantitatively into the next year's maintenance.

The management of a golf course is not something that can be learned in a classroom. Therefore the most valuable training an assistant can hope for is to work for a good superintendent. There is simply no substitute for on-the-job training. The key is a well rounded diet of course management and office management for the successful operation of today's golf courses. Fieldwork, paperwork and peoplework . . . nuthin' to it.

Sincerely,
Kendall Marquardt
Assistant Golf Course Superintendent
Philadelphia Country Club

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