

Ten Tips to Make GCSAA Conference and Show Better

By **Monroe S. Miller**, *Blackhawk Country Club*

Each year, during the USGA Green Section's conference, turf tips are offered from the agronomist staff. There has never been a year when I didn't take advantage of several of those tips.

In the spirit of the turf tips for golf course superintendents, I offer ten tips to GCSAA officials that I think will make the next conference (and those beyond it) better. They are offered in a constructive spirit.

1. Eliminate corporate sponsorships. Here is a fact: people in the audience tune out the pitch that goes on before a lecture, like the innovative superintendent sessions. The simple food provided is inexpensive and most of us can afford to feed ourselves. The constant selling, which even goes on during the opening session, numbs people. Quick quiz: Name the sponsor of the opening session. My point exactly.

In addition, corporate sponsorship hasn't resulted in lower conferences expenses or reduced dues. I see no benefit, other than a freebie lunch for the CGCS crowd and prizes for the tourney participants. I'll take cash, please.

2. Eliminate ALL preferred seating. If you want to sit up front - opening session or banquet - get there early. It is not a difficult concept and it is certainly more fair than the current elitist system.

3. Design a pocket program that even the simple minded like me can understand. The booklet for this year was anything but

handy or convenient. I was with a guy who was so frustrated with it that he tossed it after being unable to find a room location. Also, print booth numbers for the show floor big enough to read or issue a magnifying glass with each booklet.

4. If there are association activities in the convention center, make sure there is food available. At least one lunch stand should be open in the lobby area. And tell people where that lunch stand is located.

5. Check out all A/V equipment the day before it is to be used. Have back up equipment available right in each lecture hall. No more excuses.

6. Preview all lectures and their presenters. Apply the hook to those that don't measure up, that are too long, or that are off the subject. Poor quality remains a problem.

7. Schedule rooms that are big enough. Those convention centers we now seem to be forced to visit are all cavernous. There should be no excuse for people

not finding a place to park themselves. I hate standing along the wall on the sides or at the back of the room.

8. If GCSAA is going to be in the travel business, then negotiate some respectable room rates. It is maddening to see a better room for half the price closer to the convention center than the one we were assigned to by GCSAA. It defies logic.

9. Enhance conference education without making it necessary to buy a seminar. There has been a gradual erosion, in my opinion, in the free conference educational program, and a fattening of the "for a fee" seminars. There seems to be a loss of the sense of what the conference should offer.

10. Hire a superintendent or disguise a staff person as a superintendent and have that person participate fully in conference activities. Have this individual take notes and report on what frustrates members at conference. It would save chapter publication editors the task. Thank you. ♻️



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