

# 1999 WGCSA Spring Education and Business Meeting



By Mike Lyons, Golf Course Superintendent, Old Hickory Golf Club

A gathering of 87 golf course superintendents and affiliates met at the Ramada Inn in Fond du Lac on Monday, March 1 for the annual Spring Education and Business Meeting. The educational topic was put together by GCSAA and Etonic World Wide organization. The presenter was Ms. Lisa Micunek of Accent on Success and it was entitled "Enhancing the Professional Image of the Golf Course Superintendent."

The common theme of this year's meeting was how you perceive yourself and how you want others to perceive you, and the steps to take in improving the perception that others may have of you and your profession.

Ms. Micunek, president of Accent on Success, started her presentation with an overview of these steps:

1. The impact of first impressions and how to turn negative perceptions into positive ones.

2. Four recognized communication patterns and behavioral styles and how to build rapport with them.

3. How to serve members (and

their guests) and/or the public with excellence.

4. Helpful business etiquette and protocol.

5. How to develop enhanced leadership skills to ensure continued success in the golf course industry.

Ms. Micunek used many quotes and out-takes from current and older movies to help us visualize these steps. Some were very good: Tom Hanks in *Big*, Michael Douglas in *Wall Street*, Whoppi Goldberg in *Associate*, and Jim Carey in *Liar, Liar*. One movie out-take was not so good - *Caddy Shack* with Bill Murray. As much as I liked the movie, the perception many people have of a superintendent will always be the character Bill Murray portrayed. Unfortunately, as long as this movie is played (and it will be for a long time), we will always have to battle this perception.

First impressions are formed quickly (7 - 30 seconds for business situations and 2 - 4 minutes in social situations) and not always based on facts. Frequently, they are formed from superficial data.



Lisa Micunek led her "Accent on Success" seminar.

Although it can be unfair, one's perception is reality. Body language alone can make up 55% of what someone thinks of you in those first couple minutes. We will continue to be connected to some negative perceptions and stereotypes.

First impressions are very powerful. Though external, impressions truly come from within. To help in this area, one can become

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more visible, approachable, and more open minded. Another point brought up and one that I find to be very true was that many people must be taught visually, not orally.

Ms. Micunek introduced us to what is called the "Primary Comfort Zones." These are ways in which people communicate and behave. There are four zones: controlling, analyzing, advocating and facilitating. Being able to identify which zone a person you are dealing with may help build a good rapport and help you communicate more effectively with that person.

Being a good listener may sound like an easy thing to be, but many of us are not. A few good tips are: be sincere, never make someone feel awkward or that they are bothering you, avoid distraction, let him complete his thought,



**A century of WGCSA experience! Bob Gosewehr, Roger Bell, Bruce Worzella and Bob Belfied recieved 25-year plaques. Tom Van Valin was unable to attend.**

never presume what they are going to ask or say, ask questions, and restate what was asked of you.

We were given some tips on

helpful etiquette and protocol. Always try to be up-to-date on current issues, have a plan and be prepared for meetings, and be



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An excellent facility, a quality seminar, friends and colleagues, and a short business meeting blended together to make the March 1 WGCSA meeting very worthwhile.

accessible to the media and government agencies. Knowing the proper way to give a simple handshake, say hello and thank you, can go a long way. In social settings, there are a few topics to avoid - religion, politics, sex, money, and talking shop. I don't know about most of you, but at lunch I didn't have much to say to the people I was eating with! The list pretty much kept me quiet...

There was also a list of proper etiquette to use at meetings: be familiar with the agendas, know who you are speaking to, make good eye contact, don't mutter, avoid statements like "I'm not sure" or "This may not be right", and use "we" instead of "I", to name a few.

Ms. Micunek finished up with tips on how to develop enhanced leadership skills to ensure continued success in the golf course industry. Some to be noted are: be flexible, attain evenness of temper and clarity of mind, be prepared, strive toward your goals, focus on positive rather than negative, and devote all your energy to each task you perform.

Following lunch, the association's business meeting was held. During the meeting awards were

given to five members of the WGCSA to recognize their 25 years of service. The recipients were Bruce Worzella of West Bend CC, Roger Bell of Peninsula State Park GC, Bob Belfield of Kettle Hills GC, Bow Gosewehr of Mee-kwon Park

GC and Tom Van Valin of Rivermoor GC. Congratulations!

I felt the presentation was excellent and full of information I will make reference to during the year. GCSAA and Etonic World Wide organization will also be sponsoring next year's educational session. The speaker will be Jerry Sweda and he will discuss the topic "Bring out the Best in the People you Manage."

I would like to reiterate what Paul Runyan of Golf Digest once said (with some changes of my own):

"Don't let the bad shots (days) get to you. Don't let yourself become angry. The true scramblers (superintendents) are thick-skinned. And there always will be the whiners."

Thank you to all who were in attendance. Hope to see most of you at our April 26th meeting at Lake Arrowhead GC. ♣



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