



How To Be A Great Boss

By Dr. Robert A. Milligan, Cornell University

Editor's Note: I have taken quite a few GCSAA seminars over the years; some are good, some are poor; and a few have been outstanding. One that fell into the outstanding category was taught by Dr. Milligan, a colleague of Dr. Frank S. Rossi's and a member of the Cornell University Turfgrass Team. This article, reprinted from Vol. 9, No. issue of CUTT, appears with permission of both the author - Dr. Milligan - and the CUTT editor - Dr. Rossi. At a time when we are looking back at the season now quickly passing and evaluating our staff, it may be good to also evaluate what kind of personnel manager we have been. Read on and learn.

We often think of a "great boss" as one who is nice all of the time. If we analyze the idea of a great boss, we get a much different picture. Think of the following situations:

- Sally is frustrated because she is unsure how well she is doing in her job. Her supervisor tells her she is doing fine, but somehow she isn't certain he means it.
- George is working hard and seems to be performing very well, but he doesn't see how his hard work contributes to the business. His supervisor tells him he is doing fine and just keep it up.

In both situations the supervisor is being a nice person but not a great boss. How can a supervisor be a great boss? The performance management process diagrammed here is a great tool to become a great boss. We will discuss each of the three components of the process.

Performance Expectations

Individual performance expectations are defined as the conditions or results of satisfactory work. They should be discussed and agreed upon before the performance period begins. They should be consistent with the mission, objectives, and goals of the business. These specific outcomes provide a target for the employee to shoot for. Effective performance expectations have the following four characteristics:

- **Measurable:** Truly result-oriented performance expectations must contain measures by which performance can be judged. Measures may include dollars, percentages, numbers of items, ranges, etc.
- **Time:** Productivity is often determined by how quickly desired results can be achieved. The employee and the manager should be clear on just when results are expected.
- **Attainability:** Performance expectations must be within the individual's and the organization's reach if they are to be an effective performance management

tool. If either internal or external business constraints prevent attainability, they may serve to demotivate rather than motivate the individual.

- **Available resources:** The individual or team striving to meet the performance expectation must know what resources including time are available to them

Coaching and Feedback

Once the performance expectations are established, they serve as the accountability for the employee. It is now the employee's responsibility to fulfill these expectations. The supervisor becomes a coach providing the support the employee needs to succeed. As with the coach of an athletic team, the "great boss" is now on the "sideline" providing the resources and the encouragement the employee requires. The keys to the supervisor's success in this environment are empathy and trust. Empathy to understand the employee, to know how and when to provide support. Increasing levels of trust so that the employee will freely seek support when needed.

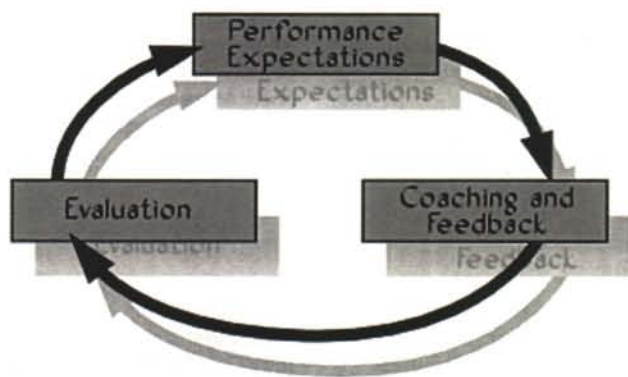
THE NEXT BEST THING TO RAIN!

- **Complete Course Design and Installation**
 - turnkey or in-house installation
- **Conversion of manual/hydraulic to electric**
- **Repair, Routine Maintenance & On-site Training**
- **In-house CAD Design & CIT Data on Sprinkler Performance**
- **Installation & Upgrade of Pump Stations**
- **Answers to your "how-to ..." questions**

If you have a goal, we have the leadership ...
... personalized service you can depend on



**800-554-TORO
(8676)**



The key skills required by the "great boss" now become interpersonal skills. Great bosses are individuals who listen. A valuable tool here is listening. Active listening is a special listening skill where we listen to and focus on both the content and emotional aspects and provide feedback on both. Other critical interpersonal skills include understanding what motivates people, providing large quantities of feedback, "I" statements, and other communications techniques.

Evaluation

Evaluation can be both ongoing and a performance appraisal at a specific interval such as a year. Continuous evaluation can also be an important part of the coaching and feedback. Evaluation, usually in the form of a perfor-

mance appraisal must be provided at the time that was established for fulfillment of the performance expectations. This is a time when three things should be accomplished:

The "great boss" and the employee should discuss what is going well.

They should talk about what can be done better.

Based on performance and the first two items, new performance expectations should be established for the next time period. Training and professional development opportunities can be identified to help meet the new expectations.

At this point we are back at performance expectations and the process continues.

Sally and George

We now return to Sally and George. Sally's supervisor was telling her she was doing fine but she's still frustrated by the lack of a clear understanding of her performance level. If she had a "great boss" using this performance management process, she would be clear on her expectations and her progress relative to those expectations would clearly provide information on how well she is performing. George's supervisor is telling him not to worry about how his work contributes to the business and just keep up his good work. If George had a "great boss" using our process, the performance expectations would be derived from and clearly tied to the goals and the mission of the business or organization. ♣

**We've Teamed Up to Compete
on Your Course with Better, Faster Service**



***Now get Scotts' quality products, technical assistance
and Turf Partners efficient delivery all in one.***

Scotts and Turf Partners have teamed up to provide you with faster and more efficient delivery of Scotts professional turf products.

You'll get all the localized advantages Turf Partners has to offer, including products on hand and faster response to your needs.

And Scotts' unmatched technical assistance will still be available to help you solve tough turf problems and keep your course in top playing condition.

Scotts and Turf Partners. The winning twosome for all your turf care products needs!

Dave Louttit • Scotts Territory Manager • Phone (219) 662-1014 • Fax (219) 662-2477

Turf Partners • 525 N. Enterprise St. • Aurora, IL 60504
Phone (800) 383-3230 • Fax (800) 457-7322