



# Top Assets

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Have you ever looked at the Asset list for your golf course? Assets of a business vary in many ways and will include such things as land, land improvements, the irrigation system and equipment. Typically, assets have a life expectancy and are depreciated over that period of time. At the end of the depreciation cycle the asset is considered fully depreciated and no longer carries any value, book value that is.

Consider what the most valuable asset at your operation is. Is it your maintenance building, your pump station, your mowers, your tractor? I think the most important asset at any business may be an asset that is not even included on the asset list, the employees. Without a good staff nothing can get accomplished. Every single crew member on your staff plays an important role in your operation or you would not employ that person.

Unfortunately, many times we take our staff for granted. We assume they are happy and enjoy their position working for us. Have you ever stopped to think they may not be as happy as they could be? Have you ever taken a little extra time with your employees to find out how you may be able to make their job better? A happy employee will produce a better product.

Key employees are probably your full time, year round employees. When I think of key employees, I automatically think of the assistant superintendent and the equipment manager or mechanic. These have to be two of the most important assets in any golf course maintenance operation. These two employees keep the course running smoothly every day



of the year. Without a good assistant and a good mechanic the superintendent's job is very difficult.

More and more each year it seems superintendents get caught up in more administrative work than is imaginable. Meetings seem to take up a lot of time, along with telephone calls, writing letters, memos, email communications, research, payroll, approving invoices, developing reports, and the list goes on and on.

So how does the golf course maintenance get accomplished? The assistant superintendent is out there supervising, inspecting and looking for ways to improve the golf course all day long. We really find out how much the assistant does when we assign them to a specific job like spraying, fertilizing, irrigation repair or we place them on a specific project. The assistant is then strapped down and cannot do his normal task of crew supervision. The superintendent has to get more involved in the daily operation.

I'm sure everyone would agree their assistant is their number one or key employee. Having a good

assistant is invaluable to a superintendent. Keeping a good assistant is always a concern. After a year or two many young assistants aspire to move on and become their own boss, run their own show. You can't blame them, but you always hope that never happens. It is difficult to replace an assistant. We don't have the luxury of testing an assistant like we do mowers. Once we make our selection, that's it. The selection process is always a tough decision.

The mechanic is another key employee of each of our staffs. When your equipment doesn't function properly, everyone gets frustrated. Good golf course mechanics are hard to find. The automotive industry has many, but trying to find a mechanic that is willing to work on reels and smaller equipment is very hard. Why is it so hard to find and retain a good mechanic? The problem lies with the low wage most golf courses are willing to pay. Take a look at what a GM mechanic makes if working at a dealership, \$18 - \$30 per hour. It is rare that we see a job notice come along offering that kind of wage for a golf course mechanic. These men are very important to the success of our operations, so why don't they get compensated better for their value? Once you find a good mechanic you better try your hardest to hang on to him.

Top employees have to be our number one asset. A lot of responsibilities ride on their shoulders. Are you showing these key employees of yours how much you appreciate them? Take some time to evaluate your full time key staff members and let them know how much you appreciate them. Once they are gone it's too late. ♣