

## Communication is The Key

By Jeremiah Hoffmann, PGA Golf Professional, Rolling Meadows Golf Course

“Communication is the key.” No matter what industry you work in, you have probably heard or spoken that phrase. Communication is very important in everyday life; it's how we get things accomplished. We all know it's important in our industry as well. Communication is needed between the Superintendent and Golf Professional and to their respective staffs.

It's my guess that at most facilities those lines of communication are well established. If they aren't, you most likely will struggle to accomplish your goals and fulfill your mission statement. Communication between us (the golf course) and the customer is also extremely im-

portant. When the summer months are in full swing and all of our schedules are full to the max, it's easy to only communicate with our customers when they play golf. If we are going to continue to be successful or make strides toward being more successful, we need to meet the needs and expectations of our customers. Very often it is easy to know what those needs and expectations are, while other times we have no idea what they want.

We have made a very conscious effort to improve how we communicate with our customers. Letters and e-mails were sent, surveys were distributed and we even have an Advisory board. Despite those efforts, it still felt like we weren't getting our message to our customers in the way we wanted too. So, we tried something new. Well not really new, but new to us. We had a meeting. We invited all of our permit holders to attend. We bribed them too by offering cookies and brownies if they were to attend. We were worried no one would show or that we would only get one or two people. Much to our surprise 45 people showed up.

David and I each presented information to them about our respective departments. People asked questions, we got answers to ours and we received valuable feedback on some of our processes. We have a few potential projects on the table and we were able to get customers thoughts and ideas on which was most important to them. Over all it was very successful evening. It was an excellent chance for us to let our customers know what we were doing and why.

I know that many of you have meetings already and some places it just won't work. The most important thing is to sit down with your golf professional and general manager to evaluate if you are being as effective as you'd like in communicating with your customers.

After our meeting, I had a few customers approach me and thank me for offering a forum for them to express their opinions. The relationship we have with those customers is most certainly strengthened and we have created ambassadors for our course. The more people feel involved, the more loyalty they will have in the future.



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