

Choosing the Best Summer Crew

Although it's still early, now is the time to think about hiring summer crew help. Some young people may already have contacted you during the Christmas holidays or during their semester break; more will come during spring break, and the crunch will hit as the end of the school year approaches. How you choose your summer help could make a big difference in the kind of summer you have.

Most superintendents hire from two pools of labor — turf students and nonturf high school and college students. Experience has shown that men and women work out equally well. Turf students often need on-the-job training as part of their education, and you can influence the future of your profession by helping them learn on your course.

Turf students are interested in turf management, not just in a summer job, and they bring a certain degree of expertise and understanding.

Your supervision during the summer can be of real benefit to the students when they return to school in the fall, too, especially if you have given them genuine experience over a broad range of tasks. Many superintendents have a list of operations a turf student should try during a summer internship — mowing greens, managing equipment, calibrating spray equipment and numerous others. If you give the students broad experience, they will give you hard work and effort in return, and your goodwill rating will be boosted as well.

Aside from turf students, what kinds of people make good summer golf course employes? Those who want to work outside and who enjoy hard work, those who can be on their feet and operate machinery all day, those who will get to

work on time, stay the required number of hours and follow through on assignments — these are the people who belong on your golf course.

Before you hire a summer employe, consider exactly what you want that person to do and be sure that you will have enough work to keep him busy all day every day. Boredom robs your employes of enthusiasm and a lack of enthusiasm robs you of quality workmanship.

When you know clearly what you want from an employe, choose persons to hire by evaluating their job application forms and conducting a thorough interview. Have them use a standard application form that asks for personal data, job experience and educational background. The form, available at most office supply stores, should have a place for your comments and for recording the date work began and the salary. This will give you similar information on each person so you can compare one to another.

During the interviews try to ask each person about the same questions so you can compare their answers. Ask each to expand on his work experience and try to assess some of the following: Is this person interested in the work? Has he shown leadership? Does he seem forceful and appear to have good reasoning ability? Is he sincere about his ambitions and objectives? Does he really want to become involved? What is the extent of his knowledge in the field and his interest in learning more? Does he show pride in a job well done? You can ask about the person's future plans as well as his past experience, and certainly find out what his job goals are. Ask what he expects from this position and why he wants the job.

Tell each applicant exactly what the job and working environment will be and what you expect in the way of standards of conduct and quality of work.

Discuss salary in full. Most summer employes will be paid a little above the minimum wage. Tell the person when payday is and about how much each check will be. Discuss vacations and other requests for time off in advance, make clear whether holidays will warrant more than the standard hourly rate and what overtime arrangements there are, if any. Discuss withholding tax, and tell students about the special W-4 forms that will exempt them from having money withheld.

Mention equipment or clothing that is provided by your course and explain OSHA regulations that will affect the employe. Ask the applicant if he has any questions, and evaluate what he asks as you provide answers.

How you start the new person working will depend on his experience or lack of it and on the job to be done. For the novice, some superintendents provide a map of the course, lead the person to the first tee, and send him around the course to pick up trash, sticks, etc., to familiarize him with the physical layout. Sometimes new employes are encouraged to play a round of golf first, to get a feel for the course. Then start the person on the first task, with complete instructions and with someone around to help for a few days.

When you thoughtfully and thoroughly choose your crew members and when you keep them busy and give them lots of encouragement throughout the summer, you will have few personnel problems and your work will be well done.



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