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Building a Professional Management Team

A Superintendent's Approach

By Fred Taylor
Mankato Golf Club

Judge and Jury

The measure of success for any organization can usually be formulated from the success of its smaller functioning units. In other words, to say that Muskrat Flats Country Club is a wonderful, marvelous and enjoyable place to recreate, is to say that the golf course, golf shop and dining areas are each, individually, offering superior experiences for the patrons. To lower the performance of any one area is to reduce the success of the entire organization. Just as a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, so is the club only as successful as its poorest performing unit. With this in mind, it behooves the members of the management team to collaborate, cooperate and work together towards the organization's ultimate goal of success.

What Determines Success?

In order to judge success, failure or any level of performance in between, there must be a set of criteria for an evaluation to take place. Job performance evaluations are quite common and relatively easy to perform for individuals, but what about for the functioning units of the organization? Or for that matter, the organization as a whole? How is the golf course judged? Is green speed the overriding factor in determining a "good" course, or is the density of the turf in the fairways the most important factor? Do fiscal matters override the aesthetic factors? Do you expect Augusta conditions on a Scumwater budget? The same questions must be asked in the golf shop and dining areas. Are golf professionals judged on the way they swing the four iron, or how the apparel is arranged on the shelves? In the lounge, are the strength of the (cocktails) more important than the length of the server's skirts or the condition of the furniture? Does profit supercede service? It becomes apparent that in order to find success, the first step is determining what factors will be used to evaluate and judge performance.

A Golf Professional's Approach

By Greg Mireault
Pebble Lake Golf Club

Building a successful management team starts with common goals and objectives. Goals and objectives can be driven by the facility's financial state or something as simple as an enhancement to the facility. Each facility, be it public, private or resort, must have goals set each season with an evaluation done at the end of the season to see if those goals were achieved. This management style can be very rewarding for the individuals involved because there is a sense of accomplishment. Hopefully, those accomplishments are the byproduct of the professional management team.

Once the goals and objectives are understood by each part of the team, a plan will need to be implemented. Hiring and training becomes one of the most important parts of a successful management team. Having a procedures and policy manual is a vital part to goal management style because it helps create consistency and continuity. The other factor that often hinders the success of the team is the lack of constructive criticism. We must all be willing to listen to each other's opinions and ideas in a professional manner and not a personal manner. In the ever-changing golf business where the bottom line has become more prevalent than the quality of the golf experience, it helps to have the superintendent maintain and improve the product while the golf professional sells the product and the golf experience. Communication lines must be open so the golf professional can answer the many questions that are asked about the course and its condition. The information the superintendent provides gives the team credibility in the eyes of the user. This vital form of communication maintains a smooth-running operation which benefits the golfers that use the facility.



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Biostimulant/Growth Enhancer Technology In Plant Care Programs

By Dan Gabler
Superior Tech Products

Introduction

Biostimulants have assumed considerable importance in turf care and crop production practices in the United States. Field success and the increasing validation information confirm beyond reasonable question the viability of these products in this country, just as they have been viewed as critical in maximizing crop yields in other countries for many years. Along with genetically engineered improvements to plant species, biostimulants/enhancers now represent the only credible new technology for improving health, increasing yields and decreasing stress induced problems. As Dr. Ward of Auburn has stated, "There is a need for these products."

Certainly, as with all new technology, there has been a learning period—with some remarkable successes and some seeming "failures" over the past twenty years—in the application of biostimulants to improve plant performance. Fortunately, the past (and present) "failures" are identifiable as resulting from one or a combination of the following:

1. Ignorance or disregard of the needed balance and the inter-relatedness among the various hormone groups.
2. Inappropriate attention to other critical constituent (e.g., nutrient) requirements of plants.
3. Poor formulation chemistry, particularly in regard to stabilization of compounds.

A number of companies have made progress in dealing with some of these basic problems, at least in regard to the second and third items, and in fact have product currently on the market which may be fairly said to give good results in many circumstances on some species. Nevertheless, as far as hormonal chemistry itself is concerned, most manufacturers have yet to achieve a balancing of inputs of *all* growth hormone groups, especially as it relates to different species and consistency of desired result. Perhaps Dr. Karnok of the University of Georgia identified this problem best when he doubted that any single hormonal material could have the same effect on "...all species growing under all conditions."

A Primer on Biostimulation & Growth Enhancement

There is now a substantial body of evidence that the addition of biostimulants to nutrient programs can significantly improve:

- Survivability & Vigor
- Root Depth & Mass
- Stress Resistance
- Nutrient Uptake
- Moisture Utilization
- Apical Quality
- Disease Resistance
- Insect Resistance

What is a Biostimulant?

It is a compound containing one or more plant hormones from the Auxin, Cytokinin and Gibberellic Acid groups which control the health, efficiency, and growth of plants.

What does a Biostimulant do?

Under ideal conditions, a plant has adequate hormones to function efficiently. In the real world of plant management, conditions are never ideal, thus plants are always asked to perform at less than peak conditions. Biostimulant applications can replenish hormonal deficiencies and improve plant performance.

What results will Biostimulants give?

Generally a healthier, more efficient plant. The greater the stress, the greater the benefits—whether we are speaking of increased yields, more prolific roots or resistance to external agents.

What is a "Growth Enhancer"?

A compound containing both growth hormones and appropriate beneficial nutrients.

(Continued on Page 16)

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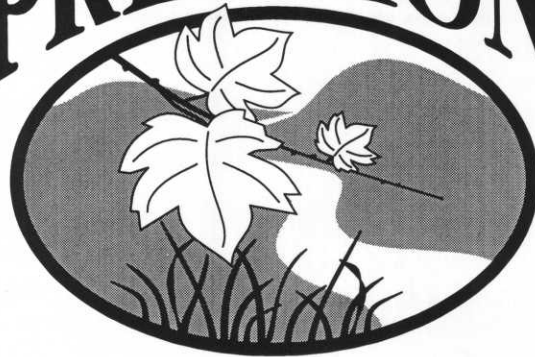
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Biostimulant—

(Continued from Page 14)

Are there differences in Biostimulant/Enhancer compounds?

Yes. Most compounds contain one or two hormone groups. While these sometimes *do* yield good results, often they lack consistency because they do not address all areas of hormonal deficiencies in the plant. They assume that one compound is appropriate for all types and all functionings of plants, and they often lack beneficial carrier constituents.

Plant Hormones

There are five types, or groups, of plant hormones. Two of these (Ethylene and Abscisic Acid) regulate or initiate decline activities including dormancy and death. The other three groups, primarily associated with growth enhancing activities, are:

Gibberellins (GA)

Produced and dominant in the new growth areas (particularly in seeds and apical portions), Gibberellins are key to cell division and elongation and are the "signal callers" or messengers of the plant. As apical growth occurs, GA travels downward (provided sufficient Auxins are present) and instructs the plant to:

- a) Produce more Cytokins for root proliferation.

- b) Translocate more Cytokins to the other areas of the plant to enhance the topical elements.

Auxins

Produced in the middle regions of the plant, Auxins contribute to root growth and formation and largely govern GA and Cytokinin movement to and from the extremities. They also play a major role in internode formation, which in turn significantly influences leaf quality.

Cytokinins

Manufactured in the roots, Cytokins profoundly affect root development and, with assists from GA, Auxins and sufficient nutrition, light, air and moisture, are integral to cell division and leaf and stem formation.

From a practical standpoint, the upshot of these facts is that a thorough understanding of hormones and their interrelationships to each other and the other sustaining elements of plant health is essential to producing dependable responses. The absolute corollary is that different responses require different prescriptions. Thus, for example, hormonal compounds with advantageous attributes for seed germination and early establishment may be ineffective or even damaging if applied to the same plant during a more mature state of the life cycle.



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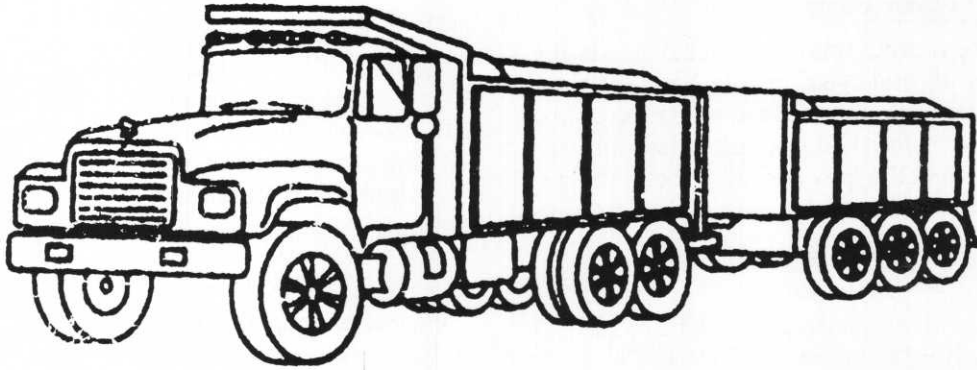
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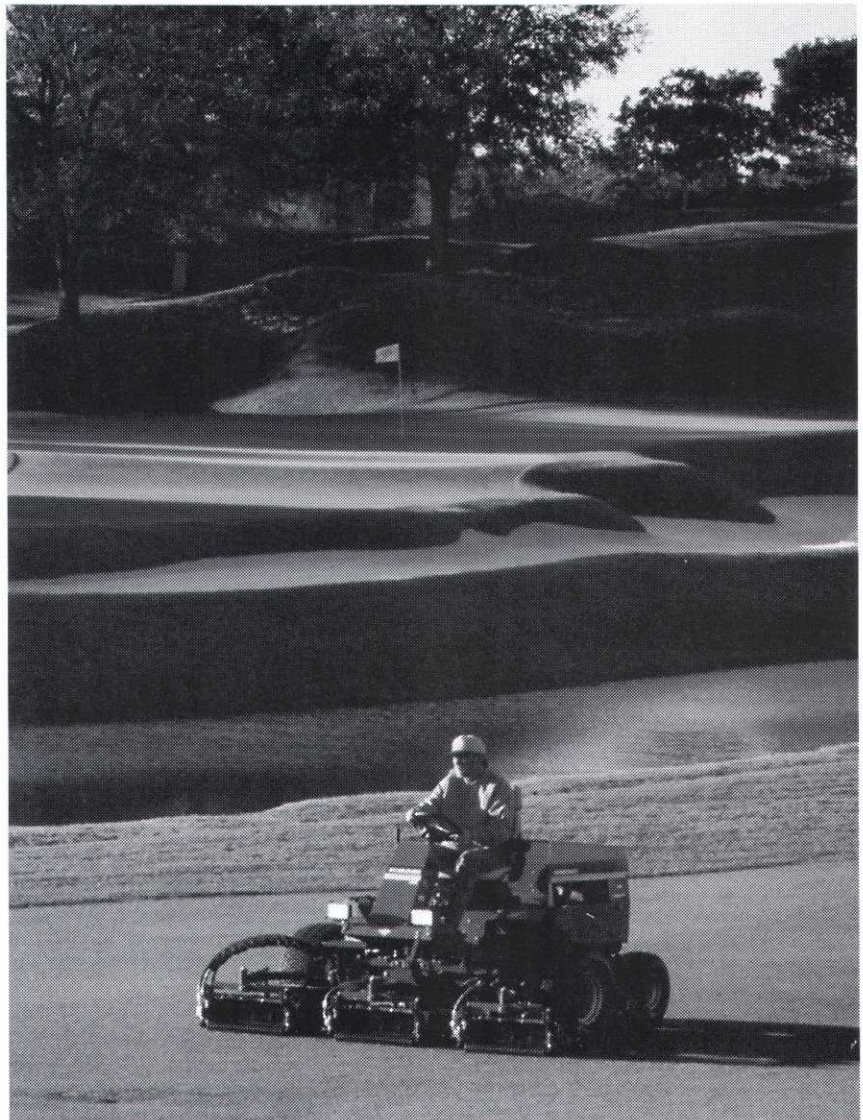
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Someone Else's Opinion

By Tom Parent
River Oaks Golf Course

A Response to One Guy's Opinion

The following response is to the April 1996 article "Dual Membership, Whose idea was this anyway?" As I stated in this month's "Editor's Corner," the response to the article was overwhelmingly positive in support of the opinion expressed in the article.

The only rebuttal I will give to the rebuttal (one of the joys of being editor is that you get to get in the last word) is that it clearly points out the flaws in the chapter delegate voting system. Our delegate voted how he felt the chapter would wish him to. For this he deserves high praise. The problem is, it appears, that he clearly did not have an accurate view of how the chapter felt.

To date only three members of the MGCSA have called me to tell me that they disagreed with the article. One stated that I should be looking to the future.

I feel that the dual membership issue and most of the other bylaws that were passed this February have everything to do with the future. I see an economic segregation of our industry. Those that can afford both dues and those who can't. My concerns over this and other issues are unfortunately not addressed in the following rebuttal.

I would like to throw this idea up for discussion. One member, one vote. This would preferably be done on the national level. A voting booth on the floor of the trade show and proxies for those who are not in attendance perhaps?

Democracy only works if people are involved. Until I was elected to the board, I know I was, like too many of us, not participating in our democracy.

I would also like to apologize to Pat Walton for any misinformation in the article regarding Tommy Witt's visit. The reference in the article stemmed from Mr. Witt stating, at the start of his talk, that, several years ago he would have passed on the invitation to speak, and now he felt it was important that he come. As Rush Limbaugh knows so well: If you want to get people's passions aroused, stretch the truth a bit. Enough said, read on.

Dear Mr. Parent:

I saw your column about dual membership in the April *Hole Notes* and needed to respond to some of the miscon-

ceptions and errors that it contained. First, though, I would like to thank you for your compliment about GCSAA doing an excellent job in many areas. We try hard, and listen carefully to our members.

In response to your basic question of "Whose idea was this anyway?" I can say that it certainly was not original with GCSAA. Many other associations in all types of industries — including some of our allied associations in golf — have dual membership requirements.

This idea is not even new to our own association. When the National Association of Greenkeepers of America, GCSAA's precursor, was formed in 1926, it was assumed that the national association would have chapters, and members would have to belong both to the national association and the chapter. The Northern Ohio chapter, which gave birth to the national association, has always retained its own dual membership requirement, even after the national association began lowering the percentage of national members it required local chapters to maintain.

In recent years, the idea came from a group of ardent local chapter supporters who volunteered their time, energy and insight to help GCSAA build stronger ties with its affiliated chapters, with the goal of benefiting chapters and individual members as much as, or even more than, GCSAA.

This group, representing chapters of all sizes and regions, recognized that the key to a successful relationship is clarity of expectations. As they developed a clear and manageable affiliation agreement proposal and ideas for programs to actually help chapters succeed as chapters, they came to the conclusion that it was all for naught — unless the national and the locals had a common, joint membership.

The concept of requiring dual membership was then discussed by about 90 chapter representatives at the 1994 Chapter Relations Meeting. With their general agreement that the concept was worth a closer look, the Chapter Relations Committee began working on a specific proposal, while the delegates took the information back to their chapters for local discussion and feedback.

The committee's specific proposal was presented at the 1995 Chapter Relations Meeting. After much discussion, the delegates in attendance asked for specific changes in the proposal:

- 1) Exempt assistant superintendents from the dual membership requirement.
- 2) Replace the implementation plan of requiring chapters to have increasing percentages of GCSAA superintendents with a single cut-off date and a grandfather clause for all current members of GCSAA or chapters.
- 3) Make GCSAA swallow the first dose of the medicine by voting on a bylaws amendment to require superintendents who want to join GCSAA to join their local chapter.

(Continued on Page 20)

GCSAA Response—

(Continued from Page 19)

If the amendment were to fail, the clause in the affiliation agreement requiring future chapter members to join GCSAA would be stricken.

Of course, as you know, the GCSAA bylaws amendment sailed to an easy passage, 6,093 to 548. Minnesota GCSAA's votes were cast 100 percent in favor of what you termed a "goofy idea."

Minnesota GCSAA also voted 100 percent (including 34 Class C members) in favor of the amendment to revoke Class C members' voting privileges. The chapter's votes were also 100 percent for cutting Class C dues in half.

I don't know where you got your "quote," but I can guarantee it wasn't from any member of the Board of Directors or Chapter Relations Committee. I speak for both groups, and I would warrant the majority of the chapter voting delegates, too, when I denounce anyone who says assistant superintendents don't know or care about what goes on in this association.

When the delegates recommended cutting Class C dues to increase assistant superintendent participation, the Standards/Bylaws Committee and Board of Directors agreed to put the recommendation to a membership vote. While we do anticipate lower dues revenues the first few years, we have an aggressive marketing plan in place to more than double our Class C membership. When we cut the dues per Class C member by half, but have four times

as many Class C members, the association will be well ahead in revenues. Just as importantly, we will be providing important services to a greater segment of the profession, and building a stronger profession and association for the future.

Your comment about the Board being "uptight" about these issues is way off base. We stuck to a 100-percent democratic process, and are prepared to abide by the wishes of the vast majority of members. Tommy Witt's appearance at the Minnesota GCSAA's March Mini-Seminar was in response to a Speakers Bureau invitation from Patrick A. Walton, CGCS, for any director or officer to speak on "What Do I Get for My Dues Investment?" Tommy Witt's report on his trip noted, with some surprise, that he received no questions whatsoever from members.

In closing, I must clearly state that chapters and the quality of the relationship between chapters and the national association have been key priorities for me since I first came on the GCSAA Board of Directors. I believe in strengthening both, to the benefit of us all. And I believe the road that the members have chosen will take us in the right direction.

— Sincerely,

— Paul S. McGinnis, CGCS

Chapter Relations Committee Chairman



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