

Looking for success? Look no further than ... **YOUR STAFF!**

By, *Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) Editorial Staff*

Your staff has a significant impact on your success. The work that they do is a direct reflection on you, your ability to train, to motivate and to lead. Reaching the goals of your facility is only possible through good management of your people and their continued development. To make sure you are fully embracing the talents of your staff, use these simple techniques.

Top 10 Strategies to Engage Your Staff

1. Seek input and listen.

Your staff is a great resource for ideas and improvements. Asking for their opinions and solutions to problems, truly listening to them, and implementing as appropriate, strengthens their commitment to you and to their job. Involving your staff in decision making builds loyalty and improves retention.

2. Set expectations.

Clearly and consistently set expectations for each employee through jointly written performance objectives. Good performance can't happen if they do not understand what you expect. Reinforce your expectations verbally.

3. Provide continuous feedback.

Praise accomplishments, large and small, and for those projects that weren't as successful, use them as learning experiences to find out what could have been done differently. Don't wait until the end of the year at performance time to express dissatisfaction.

4. Show appreciation.

Just say "thank you!" When you reward and acknowledge good behaviors, you get more of the same. Publicly acknowledge your staff for doing a good job, and look for other ways to reward their efforts. According to a Harris Poll, the top three satisfaction drivers for employees are control over their work; the opportunity to use their talents and skills; and recognition and appreciation.

5. Be accessible.

By being visible and available, you send the message that you are part of the team and are ready to support their efforts to get the job done.

6. Train, Train, Train.

Training in the correct procedures and equipment use is critical to getting the job done right, but also for health and safety reasons. The continuous upgrading of skills also provides employees with the means for promotion. Consider training opportunities in areas outside of their core responsibilities, such as in writing skills, public speaking, customer service, business management, etc. You and your facility will reap many benefits from improving their "softer" skills.

7. Empower your staff.

Give them as much information as possible about what and why, and allow them to make decisions appropriate to their work.

8. Provide a safe and comfortable working environment.

Don't expect employees to use outdated or faulty equipment. With anxieties at an all time high regarding increased terrorist activity, make sure you have emergency procedures in place to protect the workforce in the event of an attack, and ensure that every employee is aware of these procedures.

9. Treat with respect.

Respect and accept each person as an important member of the team.

10. Inspire your staff.

Be a coach and a cheerleader. Be sure your boss knows about the good work they do. When you help them succeed, you succeed.

Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA), Lawrence, KS.

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