

# MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES...YECCH

Golf course superintendents are consistently great about dealing with agronomic problems. But there are others problems.

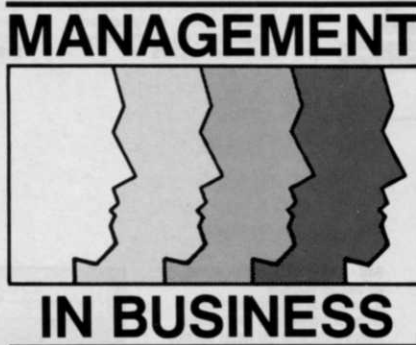
by Rudd McGary and Ed Wandtke

One of the hardest things about being a golf course superintendent is having to work with the various management committees. While this is a fact of life, many managers find that their time frame, particularly for new equipment or other major expenditures, depends on the committees approving a budget or unforeseen expenses arising from weather or climatic stresses.

Here are some factors to consider when working with these committees. The following suggestions may help to lessen the time between request and approval. They may also yield a better working relationship with the committee.

1. The committee generally isn't a full-time body involved in day-to-day operations. Because of this, you have to plan both your regular budget requests plus a plan for contingency spending. This can be done in the following manner.

2. Try to select an executive committee from your major committee. In



other words, select a smaller group from the larger one and agree that these people can vote on unforeseen expenditures. If you do this, you will at least have a smaller group with which you can work, which may help lessen the time needed for decisions.

3. A second way to deal with unforeseen expenditures is to have a second fund, clearly earmarked for use only in emergencies. You don't have to draw down on it during the year, but it will be there if needed.

4. Prepare any requests, particularly your major budgets, well before time. Then send them to the committee before the meeting so that they have time to consider your requests. This will generally save you from having to explain everything in the proposal at the time when you are actually making it.

5. After you send out the budget, call the people on the committee—at least the key people. Make sure they understand why you have made the requests and be prepared to answer any questions. It's always easier to have people on your side before you meet with the whole committee so that they can help in the discussions.

6. Remember that most committee members wouldn't know fescue from Bermudagrass. On many occasions, too much time is spent explaining technical agronomic information that doesn't mean much to committees.

The committees aren't chosen because of their agronomic background, so don't give them too much technical data with which to work.

7. Always have alternatives ready. By doing this, the committee can vote on fewer expenditures, thus feeling better about what is spent for your program. This means that you might offer them a "Blue Ribbon" program, which includes every type of turf management possible; as well as a second program, one that includes all you need for the year. If the committee approves the top program, more power to you. If not, you at least have all the essentials needed for the year. The committees like to feel that they have costs under control. Give them something to cut from the budget and they'll do it.

8. Finally, don't just talk to the committee once a year. Most superintendents can identify the key people on the committee, but occasionally don't keep the communication lines open during the year. The spring, when everything is greening up, is a good time to invite the various committee members to walk the course with you. Anytime the the course is looking green and lush is a good time to take a committee member on a tour.

## Summary

The basic issue here is that committee people usually represent someone else. They may represent the whole membership. If so, they are generally more conservative than if they represented only themselves. So your job is to make them comfortable about the actions they take on behalf of others. In order to do this, you need to give them information on a timely basis, give them options, and continue communication with them throughout the year. If you do these things, you'll find that meeting with your management committees can be productive, and that these people are working with you.

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