

Non-monetary motivation for golf, athletic field employees

by Sam Crowe
and Craig Conner

Finding ways to motivate your maintenance staff is no easy task. The work can be tedious and monotonous, even at the best of times.

While an assistant or mechanic may be self-motivated, your general staff will often need special reward programs to provide motivation.

Salaries are certainly a major component of any reward system, but research indicates that money is only one of an employee's motivations to work. He or she also wants a sense of importance, autonomy and inclusion.

The following are several suggestions on how the supervisor can create a family atmosphere and motivate his or her staff without using salary increases.

1) Provide a few generous perks such as a free lunch program. This makes employees feel that not only are you paying for them, but you are also providing for them. Meals don't have to be extravagant—sandwiches and chips are enough.

2) If you are a golf course superintendent, you can allow golfing privileges. Your staff will become better educated about the game, and will better understand how to prepare the course for fair play. This program also allows employees a chance to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

3) Another privilege might be allowing employees to use the shop facilities. Access to tools and equipment provides employees with a way to save money on their personal repairs (usually automobile). They may also be able to use the facilities to generate extra income for themselves.

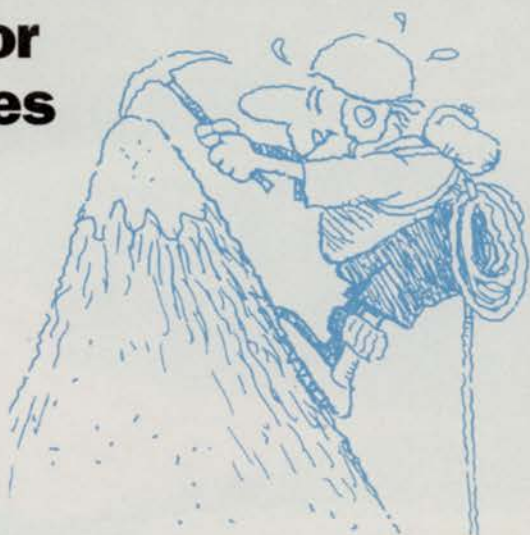
(Keep in mind, however, that this privilege can be abused. It should be carefully monitored.)

4) Parties also provide a good source of motivation and morale-boosting. (Outdoor) maintenance work seems to follow a pattern of periods of high stress followed by periods of dull monotony. A party can provide relief from either the stress or the boredom.

Timing is important to a party's success. It's just as important to break up the monotony of winter equipment repair as it is to celebrate the end of a long, hot summer.

These types of activities don't have to be limited to parties; sporting events and movies are great tension-breakers, too.

5) The suggestion box is still an effective motivational tool. Your staff may discover ways to make their work more efficient, more effective or more fun. The suggestion box provides an outlet for their own ideas—ideas that may improve your organization and also provide the staff



with a sense of autonomy.

6) Another well-tested technique is the Employee of the Month recognition program. Outstanding employees, for instance, can be rewarded with a day off, letting them know that their hard work is noticed and appreciated.

While all these ideas may not be feasible for you, most of them are easy to implement. If you don't like these ideas, try to create some of your own. The result will be a satisfied, productive employee.

—The authors are head and assistant golf course superintendents at Monroe Golf & Country Club, Snellville, Ga. This article excerpted from "Through the Green," the magazine of the Georgia Golf Course Superintendent's Association, May/June, 1993.

10 Golf design considerations to speed play

■ While there are many solutions to slow play, Don Knott, president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, believes some design considerations should be taken into account. Here are his suggestions, some of which are applicable to superintendents as well as designers:

1) Provide efficient golfer circulation throughout the course. For example, make certain golfers always move off to the sides or behind greens rather than walk back to the front.

2) Clearly mark out of bounds areas to minimize time spent searching for balls in

unplayable areas.

3) Multiple tees equalize the hole's length, help golfers align, and may reduce severity of doglegs and hazards.

4) Greens that are substantially open in the front provide easier access and allow for the run-up shot.

5) Minimize severe undulations in greens [or place pins in areas where undulations won't cause so many three-putts].

6) Mowing patterns can provide a wider landing area for average and short hitters. Narrow landing areas should be located only where appropriate or necessary.

7) The edges of water hazards should be clearly defined and marked for shorter ball searches.

8) Use the lowest possible mower cut for both fairways and roughs. Leave just enough height on the rough to encourage definition and the desired playing characteristics. Trim trees to swing height and reduce brush in high play areas.

9) Fairways should be maintained as containment areas using mounding to retain a slightly errant shot.

10) Accurately mark yardage, including vertical yardage markets for quick identification.

"A well-drained course with ample playable areas, properly placed bunkers, visible water hazards and smaller greens usually plays fastest, Says Knott. "The key is to provide a challenge without overwhelming players."