



Better Turf for Better Golf

# TURF MANAGEMENT

from the USGA Green Section

## *Personnel Management and Relationships*

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A review of the basic ideas and techniques as they apply to professional turfgrass superintendents in the discharge of their responsibilities is to be the subject of this discussion. First, however, I would like to mention some personal conclusions that have resulted from observations made over the past few years. I am convinced that the central problems facing golf courses today are ever increasing costs on the one hand, and more intensive usage on the other. The latter compounds the former. Figures just released show that, on the average, 70 per cent of the total golf course maintenance budget is spent on salaries and wages. This represents, incidentally, a 5.1 percent increase over the figures of last year.

In view of this large expense item, let us ask this question: Does the superintendent spend enough time and effort training himself in the area of labor management? I am afraid not in all cases; yet, I think you will agree with me that it will be only through improving efficiency in management that our golf courses, parks, and school grounds will be able to maintain their quality of service without substantial increases in their budgets.

### **Management as a Profession**

Management is the art of getting things done through people. The profes-

sional manager, like the physician, combines science and intuitive judgment in the practice of his profession. The use of science in management as we know it today need not, and must not, be confined to the management of industrial plants. "It won't work here!" and "We're different!" is an admission of failure to keep progressive, and to admit that yours, or any other organization, is not being run in the most efficient manner. Certainly, individual cases are unique, and solutions, of course, vary from organization to organization, but **sound management principles are not unique**, and their application should **not** be limited to the factory!

Historically, the profession of management is very old. The sciences supporting the profession, however, date back only to the last decades of the nineteenth century. While considerable misunderstanding will always exist concerning the place of science in management, we can readily understand how ineffectual the medical profession would be without the benefits of a scientific approach to their problems.

In its simplest terms, a scientific method may be any method that applies a logic of effective thinking, based on applicable science, to the solution of a particular set of problems. Such a method is applicable in an "exact"

science, as in the case of the physical sciences, or in an "inexact" science as in the social sciences. Professional management in solving business problems merely combines the logic of effective thinking with the facts gathered by the scientific approach. It differs from traditional management in the manner in which decisions are made, i.e., decisions made under professional management are based on facts developed by a studied approach, as contrasted to predicating decisions primarily on opinions, prejudices and unsound rules of thumb.

Management, as a function in an organization, plans, coordinates, motivates and controls the efforts of others, so that the entire organization moves toward specific objectives. It follows then, in the case of a golf course or park department, that management is a function of executive leadership in golf course or park operations. The managerial functions (of the superintendent) involve planning, coordinating and controlling the activities of others in accomplishing the organization's objectives, within the framework of the policies set up by the club, park system, or school district.

### Objectives, Policies, and Plans

The same words stimulate different ideas based on each person's experience. To assure that we will be discussing similar ideas when we hear the words objective, policy and plan, a few sentences of explanation seem in order. The word **objective**, as we will use it, may be explained simply by answering the questions, "Where are we going?" and "What are we trying to do?" In other words, our goals. To describe an organization's objectives or goals may require several paragraphs or pages or they may be expressed in a few lines. A private organization such as a golf course may have as its objective the design, building, and maintenance of the best possible golf course from the membership point of view. A public institution, board or authority may have as their objective providing areas for beautification of the city, or for public recreation of various kinds.

All objectives must be achieved, of course, within certain moral, financial and legal limitations. In addition, it may be that the governing bodies in a public

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enterprise, have designated some special way in which the objective is to be achieved. The limitations and designation of means are specified in the **policies** of the organization.

The details of what is to be done to achieve the objective and the who, what, where, when, why, and how of doing it are spelled out in the organization's **plans**. The act of preparing these plans, or planning, is a very vital part of professional management.

### Planning and Organizing

As we have intimated in our previous remarks, the orderly and efficient attainment of a goal is rarely achieved without considerable planning as to how the desired end can be best achieved. **Planning begins** with a statement of objectives by the controlling organization. This should be a statement covering not only the objectives, but also the policies and long range plans that are to govern the means of achievement of the objectives. The superintendent acting within the confines of this overall program and, in the case of the golf course, in consultation with the Green Chairman, lays out the objectives for a given period. Given the objectives, a much clearer understanding of how they will be accomplished can be obtained if we can answer the following questions about the work to be done.

1. What is to be done?
2. When is it to be done?
3. Where is it to be done?

4. How long does it take to do the job?
5. How is it to be done?
6. Why is it to be done?

1. **What is to be done?** — To help in answering this question, we use budgets, programs, charts and diagrams as aids in correlating all the factors that go into achieving our objective. An annual program of all the work carried out under the supervision of the manager or superintendent laid out on a quarterly basis may be the first step in taking a new look at your plan of work.

Before we can look at the details of each project, however, there are several limiting factors to be considered. For example: How much can be spent? How little can be spent and still do a satisfactory job? What must be sacrificed, if anything, to meet the budget objective? What is the calendar of events?—Any tournaments, post season games, conventions, etc?

A detailed budget by months or quarters, with allowances for each and every job, will help in determining what you can do and how you can do it. It will also help you in selling your program to those in higher authority. To make up a budget by projects, however, you must know your costs for each type of job. Do you know these costs? If not, you will want to start studies and records that will help you in future years.

2. **When is the job to be done?** — From the budget we can proceed to make detailed plan for the timing of each job. Each project can be planned by breaking it down into steps listing materials, man power, money, and other requirements on a monthly, weekly, or daily basis. If this is done for all activities, then weekly or daily totals can be made showing the number of men required each day or week as well as material deliveries, and money flow. To prepare such an analysis, however, we must know the time required to perform each job or group of jobs. How long does it take a man to mow a green, an athletic field, an acre of high-way or airport turfgrass? How long should it take? An annual, monthly, weekly and daily schedule will give you and your men a guide to follow when the playing season rush is on as well as insurance that all the necessary work is done before the season starts.

In a business with a seasonal pattern such as yours, planning of this type, during slack periods of usage, will result in substantial cost reductions when maximum use periods occur. The first year many questions will be raised that may have to be answered by direct observation and more careful record keeping during the coming year. But, once the job areas are outlined and people assigned, the pattern of instruction can be broken down into the basic information that must be given in advance of the daily or detailed supervision. Daily work patterns can be provided in the schedules, so that the entire day is fully and effectively occupied, and so that teams of men are brought together and coordinated as needed. Do not forget to plan for adverse weather, keep a list of jobs that can be done under cover on rainy days.

3. **Where is the job to be done?** — This question may also stimulate constructive thinking about the jobs to be done. Obviously, a green has to be cut on the green, but the question is "which green?", "which fairway?", and "which park?" If the job is cup setting, "which holes are to be reset?" This decision then determines where the employee goes to do the work. The sequence of greens cut or holes reset may be chosen to require the least travel time between holes. In this respect, an accurate scaled map showing all major work areas, irrigation lines and accurate green sizes is mandatory. Maintenance work may be done on equipment in the field, in a shed, on in a well-equipped shop. The most economical answer may not be the most obvious. Don't be fooled into thinking that because a certain route or certain practice has always been done in this manner, that the job can't be accomplished in a more efficient

## TURF MANAGEMENT

The book "Turf Management," sponsored by the United States Golf Association and edited by Prof. H. B. Musser, is a complete and authoritative guide in the practical development of golf-course turfs.

This 354-page volume is available through the USGA, 40 East 38th Street, New York 16, N. Y., the USGA Green Section Regional Offices, the McGraw-Hill Book Co., 350 West 42nd Street, New York 36, N. Y., or local bookstores. The cost is \$7.

way if it's carefully analyzed and studied.

4. and 5. **How long does it take to do the job?** and **How is it to be done?** — As you work on your plans and study your employees' activities, two questions are going to keep coming up—

- (1) How much time **should it take** to do the job?
- (2) How much time does it **actually take** to do the job?

The second question can be answered by keeping records on how many man hours are required to cut a certain area or to perform any of the other projects and jobs. Such records, however, do not usually tell how well the job was done, or by what method it was done, or how much idle time occurred while the job was being done. In industry, the work of Frederick W. Taylor at the beginning of this century showed there was a vast difference between how long it takes to do a job and how long it **should** take to do the job. Taylor discovered when equipment was properly used, and the unnecessary work removed from the job, that the actual effective working time was frequently from **50 to 80 per cent** of the time actually spent in the past. We also know, from repeated studies of industrial operations, that anywhere from 10 to 50 per cent of the man's day may be spent in idleness or non-productive work. An interesting fact about this idle or non-productive time is that roughly  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the idleness is the result of inadequate **supervision or management**, and, on the average, only  $\frac{1}{3}$  is chargeable to the **man himself**. To properly answer the question of how long the job should take, break the job down into elements or steps, and determine how long each step takes by the best available method. Then put together the necessary steps to arrive at the total time the job should take, if there are no delays or wasted time. If you were to hire a trained time study man to make your methods and time studies, he would probably use a stop watch. You, however, can do some studying and observing of your own with wrist watch or the clock on the wall.

6. **Why is the job to be done?** — Obviously to produce a useful result, but how many jobs actually produce the results we want? One method of studying jobs, to reduce the time and effort required, is to sort out the elements or steps of the job

into productive and non-productive work. This forces us to question the necessity of every element, and many times a sizeable amount of work can be eliminated by challenging the entire job, or its parts. For example, is it necessary to trim or rake as often as specified? Can we eliminate sand trap raking entirely? Some courses have the player do the raking and so eliminate much of the raking by the employees. Where a job, or part of it, passes the test of productivity and necessity, then a reason must be given for doing it. We may decide, now that we know why we do a particular job, that it can be done some other way much more effectively.

7. **Who can do the job best?** — Can you do your job best or are there parts of your job that can be done better by others? Perhaps you can do any job better than the best of your employees, but obviously time does not permit you to do all jobs. It is true that you are the one finally responsible for all results and this cannot be escaped. However, since a major portion of your success hangs on planning, seeing that the plans are carried out, and then replanning to correct the discrepancies between plan and action or between plan and needs, you must delegate some of your authority and responsibility to your individual employees or to designated assistants. If you have more than ten employees reporting directly to you, less and less time will be available for planning. If you have twenty or more employees reporting to you directly, you will probably not be able to plan at all during the periods when this many men are on your payroll. You owe it to yourself and your club, park system or school system to appoint, train, and use an assistant to relieve you of the pressure of making hourly decisions. This enables you to do your planning and, equally important, provides for continued operation of the organization in your absence for vacations, illness or other personal reasons.

Many of the projects listed in your annual plan, or provided for in your budget, can be carried out by one team of employees. Some jobs may occur at irregular intervals and may require special skills and abilities that are not needed in day to day work. Tree trimming, building construction, plumbing, etc., are

## COMING EVENTS

- September 14  
University of Rhode Island Field Day  
Kingston, R. I.
- September 14-15-16  
University of Florida Turf Management  
Conference  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, Fla.
- September 15-16  
Midwest Turf Field Days  
Purdue University  
Lafayette, Indiana
- September 20-21  
Ohio Lawn Clinic  
Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station  
Wooster, Ohio
- September 21 noon to September 22 noon  
Penn State Turfgrass Field Day  
The Pennsylvania State University  
University Park, Pa.
- September 28-29-30  
Northwest Turf Association Conference  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington
- September 26-27  
Utah-Idaho Turf Conference  
Salt Lake City, Utah
- December 5-9  
Fifty-Third Annual Meeting of  
American Society of Agronomy  
Morrison Hotel  
Chicago, Ill.

required for successful and efficient accomplishment.

**Supervision is justified only insofar as it helps the man who is doing the work.** If we remove our own personal feelings of position and pride from the picture, we realize that we must make it possible for the man we supervise to work so much better, that his increase in output more than covers the added cost of our salary. A good supervisor must know what he wants his men to do, tell them what he wants done, and help them to do it in the best possible way. In doing this, your men will be properly instructed in what they are doing and why they are doing it. You must obtain adequate equipment for them. You must let them know what is expected of them insofar as quality and quantity of work is concerned.

**Evaluation of results** — The effectiveness of your management can be measured in some areas and comparatively judged in others. A most important activity is your periodic evaluation of your efforts as well as the efforts of those working for you. You can measure yourself and your performance financially against your budget; your quality of effort, by the total annual compliments or complaints; your safety record, by the lost time accidents in your work force, and in any other area where you have set definite objectives subject to measurements by qualitative data. Those who work for you can be measured both by the amount of work performed in a given period of time compared either to time studied standards, or to past history. The evaluation of the quality of their work may require closer personal examination on your part, but calculation can be made more accurate and satisfying when you have definite specifications of quality for key jobs. Twice a year or more often, if necessary, you should give your employees an evaluation of their performance. This applies to the satisfactory employee, particularly, so that he may be encouraged and developed. The correction of the unsatisfactory employee falls under the heading of job instruction and, if necessary, discipline.

### Human Relations

Management is a function of assistance rather than dominance. Give recognition to an employee's ability and performance when they meet your requirements. Take

some, and in these cases, contracting may be a better answer.

Again, each man on your team of employees either can do, or is selected and trained to do, a certain group of jobs. Some thought of these assignments, and the qualifications and training necessary, will lead to superior results for both you and the employee.

Assuming that you have planned your work and organized your team to carry out the plan, we are ready to discuss supervision.

### Supervision and Controlling

So much has been said about the psychology of handling people that it is worthwhile to recall the basic reasons for supervising people at work. Basically, we supervise because some useful objective must be reached by two or more people working together. If these people are to achieve an objective, requiring the efforts of a number of people, each individual must be instructed on his contribution toward achievement of the objective. To do this in the most efficient manner will require a supervisor or manager. Further, it will be necessary that the manager completely and thoroughly understand the total objective to be able to explain and direct the individual activity

a firm constructive stand when they don't. A man-hour of labor can be utilized only through the courtesy of a sensitive human being. Each employee has feelings—of love and hate, happiness and sorrow, pride and shame, security and uncertainty. D. C. Faith, George Washington University consultant on personnel, sums up a basic tenet for management in these words, "Most insulting, dangerous thing you can do to another person is to disregard him as if he didn't exist . . . If you haven't time to smile and say good morning to the janitor who went to work only yesterday, then you are taking money out of your own pocket." Call your employees by name and make an effort to learn something about their family. Discuss their problems with them when the opportunity arises.

When these things are done, your employees will help you to carry out your plans more perfectly than you ever dared expect. If you do not manage properly, charm, tact, and leadership must be much more effective in order to maintain a minimum of cooperation.

#### Decision Making

If one were to summarize, in as few words as possible, the nature of the management function, perhaps the best reply would be "decision making." Decision making itself is simply the selection of one alternative from a group of two or more alternatives. Among this group can be found the alternative of maintaining "status quo." This possibility should not be underrated, for this, in some cases, may be the best solution. The number of alternatives available, of course, is limited only by the imagination and resourcefulness of the analyst—the manager.

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## Mowing

Greens should generally be mowed at 3/16 to 1/4 of an inch throughout the year. During the seasons of most active growth, daily mowing is best. A lesser frequency may be acceptable during other times. Brushing before mowing and cross mowing will help to prevent the development of mat and grain. Occasional use of the vertical mower will also be valuable in reducing these problems.

—Victor B. Youngner