

To solve our problem we had to—

1. Build a new modern maintenance shop.
2. Equip our staff with modern labor saving equipment.
3. Install a modern automatic irrigation system.
4. Renovate fairways to remove thatch, goosegrass and *Poa*. We then established championship-quality bentgrass fairways.
5. Rebuild and enlarge our tees.

We had to accomplish these objectives within the financial limits of the club and still get the job done in an amount of time that the members would tolerate.

The planning started in 1967 and 1968. All our planning was finally reduced to capital and operating budgets. When we had studied the plan through, and the board had approved it, we called a meeting of the membership and sold our plan to them. As the work progressed, we made several interim reports to the members and complaints have been held to a minimum by our interest in member communication. The members understood our problems and what we were doing to solve them.

Test areas were renovated in 1968 and after results were observed the fairway program was continued in 1969 and completed in 1970.

A modern shop was built for the green department in 1969.

A multi-row automatic irrigation system was installed in the years 1969-70.

A tee improvement program is about half completed at present.

Our superintendent practically had to build two new golf courses in three years. The job was completed in a relatively short time and within budget. Our success was due to proper planning. *Everything was put in writing.* Costs were studied both on an operating and capital budget basis. Next time you have a proposal for your board, put in in writing first. We found many ideas change after they are down on paper and can be studied. Somehow, many ideas "sound" better than they "write."

Results are what count in this or any other business. As each year ends, ask yourself, "Have the members had a course in the condition they wanted? Did the year go so well that no one thought of the green department or were you mentioned many times in bitter, mumbled conversations at the bar? Did you stay within your budget or did you upset the club's fiscal apple cart?"

No matter what happened, study the year and try to learn from it. Look to the coming year and plan for it. Work on your master plan and implement the next phase. The chairman and the superintendent must work together to produce an effective overall course management program for the overall good of their club.

What Does a Superintendent Expect from the Club

by RICHARD C. BLAKE, Superintendent Mt. Pleasant Country Club, Boylston, Mass.

In today's constantly changing business world, a great deal of thought and effort goes into the selection and employment of a qualified and professional golf course superintendent.

During the last decade the demand has been for the college-educated, business-oriented man who has practical experience obtained by working under a qualified superintendent, usually at a well-known and well-groomed golf course. Generally, these men will have worked at several different golf courses and obtained all the practical knowledge possible. They realize

the importance not only of technical knowledge, but also of the common sense approach to turf management. In short, they can do the job as well as know why it is done.

Most superintendents are dedicated, hard-working, dependable, and have spent considerable time learning and living their chosen profession. They enjoy their work, and when you enjoy your work, you are usually good at it. Unfortunately, emphasis has been given to learning the technical aspects of our profession at the expense of learning the business aspects and in dealing with people, and it is in this area

where help is needed. Handling the problems of people is the most important function of the green committee chairman—to keep balance, to evaluate complaints. His responsibility is to communicate and to maintain liaison with the superintendent, the board of directors and the membership.

Do you realize that at many clubs a large percentage of the membership doesn't know the superintendent? They do not know what he is responsible for or what he does. They are unaware of what is required to give the member what he doesn't know he has or what he thinks he wants!

Is that confusing? In most business organizations, people have job descriptions; areas clearly defined as to responsibilities; and contracts. Usually when responsibilities are defined and written out, the employee at least knows where he stands.

Because most members are interested only in enjoying the golf course and getting away from their own problems, they employ professional people to operate their golf courses—the golf course superintendent, the golf professional and the clubhouse manager. These men are trained to provide service to golf club members. The success of most clubs starts when the three professionals work toward this common goal.

To be successful a golf course and club must be effectively and efficiently managed. The degree of management should be established and agreed upon by the board of directors or executive committee. This has to be done with the money available to provide services expected by the membership. What is expected by many is becoming more difficult to provide, simply because a business-like approach to management is lacking.

Player demands have increased each year. People have more free time to play golf and use other club facilities. They expect excellent conditions seven days a week. There are more golf tournaments of all types—member-guest, shotguns, you name it! The golfing season starts earlier and ends later.

You read everywhere about the high cost of golf. But hasn't inflation affected other forms of recreation and business as well? Managing a golf course requires capable leadership and men and women experienced in working with people. It requires those who can face up to problems and look at the overall picture, the short-term and the long-range problems as well.

Members who serve on committees should be hand-picked. They need not be low or high handicap golfers, but a cross section of the membership. They need not necessarily be the

ones who complain the most, or the loudest. A factual approach is required—not an emotional one.

The green or ground committee chairman is one of the most important men at the club. He should ideally serve as chairman for five years, and the man who succeeds him should have at least three years' experience on the committee. In all, this means an eight-year tour of duty. Lack of continuity and lack of long-range planning both add to the high cost of golf. The committee should be in agreement on programs, and once initiated, plans should not be changed. They should, however, always be explained to the membership. If the chairman or superintendent needs outside help or wants to consult with others, call on experts. It all adds up to understanding what the members want and what the superintendent can give them within the budget. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have enough to do the job right just once?

How many superintendents believe they have an adequate budget? How many club officials think their superintendent is spending too much money?

The budget should be separated into specific categories so that you know your actual costs. Then when club officials compare budgets they will mean something. When comparing budgets, why not also compare those areas that influence and effect budgets: age of the golf course; acreage of greens, tees, fairways, roughs and overall acreage; wooded areas; contour of the area; soil conditions; grass types; and questions such as was the course properly constructed? can modern equipment be used efficiently or is a large amount of hand work required? how many playing members and how often do they play? how many golf cars? how are they used and are they controlled? do you have roads? How much damage results from improper use?

Player attitude toward the golf course is very important. Do members care? Do they practice golf etiquette? replace divots? repair ball marks? rake out their own foot prints in traps? take care of their own litter? Do they respect the rules of the club? Player demands and player attitudes contribute directly to the high cost of golf.

Budgets must be adequate to provide the facilities and services demanded by the membership. Budgets must be flexible enough so that the unexpected problem or condition doesn't cause a major panic. Construction and major course improvements should be separate budget items, as they usually represent capital improvements. Capital improvements need to be planned well in advance and performed

when possible by outside contractors during the off season. Superintendents and club officials frequently get into trouble by trying to do construction work during the playing season, thereby overextending themselves and their maintenance people.

Equipment needs should be approached as in any business. Equipment is needed to get the job done. It is not purchased necessarily to replace people but to make them more productive and efficient. Equipment requires service and preventive maintenance. It is usually more economical and practical for clubs to service and maintain their own equipment, but someday it will wear out and will have to be replaced. Constantly repairing junk equipment adds to the high cost of golf.

An adequate facility should be provided to store and repair equipment. It should include proper work areas; have adequate lighting and heating; and have electrical and air outlets so power tools may be used. There should be an area where topsoil and soil amendment materials can be prepared and stored. Clean and sanitary areas for the maintenance crew are essential. They handle dangerous chemicals and materials and must be provided with safety equipment and encouraged to use safety procedures.

An efficient and adequate water system with the capacity necessary to meet player demands for fine turf is of utmost importance today. An automatic water system is a necessity—not a luxury. It is not a cure-all or labor-saver by itself, but a tool—one of the best tools available because it gives some irrigation control back to the superintendent. It will save labor in some areas but increase it in others. It enables the superintendent to provide better playing conditions, to inconvenience the golfer less, and to conserve water and use it more efficiently.

The highest paid, most efficient, best educated and trained superintendent with the biggest budget, the most modern equipment, in the best service building, with the best automatic irrigation system, on the best constructed golf course means absolutely nothing unless you have people—good, qualified, reliable and dependable people—interested in working on a golf course.

The golf industry is behind in providing adequate and favorable working conditions, fringe benefits, proper sanitation facilities and safety practices for the people who provide a service for the membership. At most clubs labor represents 60 to 70 per cent of the overall budget. Most clubs are constantly turning over people, replacing and retraining and using these people unproductively. Most workers like to know exactly what they are going to do each

day and want some type of job description. This is impossible when you operate with a constant turnover of help. Player demands and player attitudes are reflected by worker attitudes. The turnover at a club reflects the club policy, or more accurately stated, lack of policy.

Assuming now that we have everything we need to do the job—adequate budget, etc., that nature is kind, that we aren't plagued by disease, insects, storm or vandals—we next need understanding of one another's problems and responsibilities. The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America published a brochure entitled "The Golf Course Superintendent, His Qualifications, Responsibilities and Requirements." The USGA Green Section has published handbooks, numerous brochures on everything from constructing greens to standardizing budgets. There is a wealth of printed information available to club officials written by experts. It is the club's responsibility to establish policy, and that policy should be set up by the board of directors within the financial structure of the budget. Lack of direction and policy contribute to the high cost of golf.

Today's successful golf club will take advantage of professional services available, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, the Green Section of the United States Golf Association, Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and state university and extension services. They are capable and willing to provide a service. Often it is free. Work closely with your local golf association. In Massachusetts, the Golf Association and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England work together; we understand one another's problems and we communicate. We are interested in better golf courses and in the golfing public; amateurs and professionals, juniors and seniors. Work with state universities or colleges. Support these groups; they also face inflation. I think clubs have a responsibility to support turfgrass research. I would suggest to golf officials that scholarships be presented to those young men who, although not caddies, contribute equally to the game. Those young men who work on the golf course or in the locker room or the kitchen at a club.

Consider the other person. Everyone wants to do a good job, to be recognized, to enjoy a better way of life. Everyone is looking for security of one type or another. The game has done so much for so many. I know we can do more for golf through understanding, better coordination and better cooperation between those who work and those who play (and pay) in golf!