

Chances are if you're reading this article, you are in the golf business in some connection. Perhaps you are golf club member, maybe serving in a club leadership position or on one or more committees. If the committees are either the Green or Golf, if you're the club manager, golf professional, club President or board member, by default you have a working partner in your golf course superintendent. That may be good news or bad to you, but it's a fact and successful clubs make this a valuable partnership that works to their advantage.

There are still many clubs where the leadership, management and committee members see their superintendent as outside the club's core management group. The superintendent is viewed as playing a supporting as opposed to a principle role. The reasons this view persists vary. At some clubs, it derives from the dated (but quaint) view of the superintendent as the humble "greenskeeper", going about his work

- ✓ Administrator
- ✓ Agronomist
- ✓ Equipment Manager
- ✓ Irrigation and Water Manager
- ✓ Health and Safety Manager
- ✓ Property Manager

Should the club expect all these things from its superintendent? Well, it's a daunting list and descriptive of a true maintenance professional, but yes, that is the job. And could one reasonably substitute the word "require" for the word "expect"? Yes again. The point of it all is to provide club members day-to-day and dollar-for-dollar, the finest playing conditions possible and a maintenance program operated according to sound business practices. The methods for achieving it will vary, but these common goals should not. Nor should the clubs insistence on getting the best from their superintendent

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) says that, "today's superintendent must understand the business of golf, his facility's big picture goals, objectives, plans and programs and be a contributing member of the facility's management team. To ever-improving technical ability, the successful superintendent will add business, communication and leadership skills."

To that, add the comments of Tim Hiers, CGCS and Golf Course Manager at the renowned Old Colliers Golf Club in Naples, Florida. "Its as simple and as complex as recognizing the facts and (oftentimes) the need to make a change. A strong work ethic, which most superintendents have, is no longer what makes the superintendent valuable. The work ethic mentality needs to change to an ownership mentality whereby the superintendent looks at and is part of the big picture of the business."

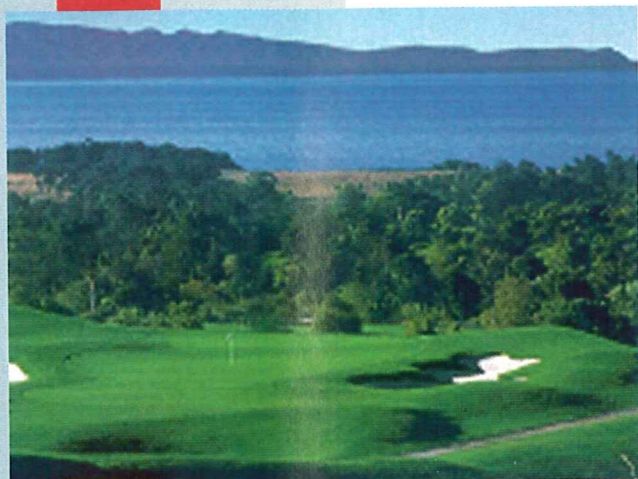
In line with the GCSAA's current thrust, we at ValleyCrest Golf Course Maintenance are intent on hiring, supporting

and promoting the "best and the brightest" superintendents we can find. This philosophy of "hiring up" makes imminent sense to us. The best people give the best customer service, run the safest, best-conditioned golf courses and are the most profitable. The best people reflect well on us and collectively help us reach our stated goal of being excellent in the art, science and business of golf course maintenance.

The "need to recognize the facts and make a change" that Tim Hiers is talking about goes beyond the superintendent. It can apply to the club, its leadership and other managers as well. If you expect your superintendent to be your partner, then you should be their partner as well. That means including him in as a valued member of your team. Communicating with him as you expect him to communicate with you. If that's a new way of doing things and perhaps a little uncomfortable then so be it. If

that requires some training and maybe some prodding, then consider the alternative. If that ultimately requires making a change in team members, then, again, consider the alternative. A culture of team goes a long way and can lift your club up to another level of member satisfaction.

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## ✓ What Should I Expect From My Golf Course Superintendent?

according to his own unwritten practices. In some cases it's the fault of a well educated capable superintendent simply low on his communication skills. No matter the reason, in all cases it's a mistake to allow this valuable person to be less than a full-fledged member of club management, bringing their specialized expertise to bear each day on the club's successful operation.

Does the club know what to expect from its general manager, its F&B manager, its golf professional? The answer is probably yes, so why should the superintendent be any less understood in terms of expected performance. Expectations that are mutual, understood and enforced enable standards to be set and achieved. No where is that more important than in the care and conditioning of the club's golf course. That's where most members still spend their time, achieve their greatest enjoyment and... that's where the big money is spent.

It is very interesting to consider the many hats the typical superintendent wears *in any given day*.

- ✓ Golfer
- ✓ Communicator
- ✓ Team Member
- ✓ Personnel Manager
- ✓ Purchasing Manager
- ✓ Financial Manager

ValleyCrest Golf Course Maintenance is a "Company of Superintendents" committed to leading the way in the art and science of innovative golf course maintenance. For more information please call us at 888-406-GOLF.



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