

Successful Projects at the AGCSA Chapter Co-Hosted Seminar

by Brandon Haley

On January 16th, 2006 Greystone Golf and Country Club hosted the annual GCSAA/AGCSA sponsored education seminar, "Successful Project Management," presented by Bruce Williams, CGCS, Director of Golf Operations at The Los Angeles Country Club. A sincere thank you is due to Textron for supporting this event, and Greystone Golf and Country Club for hosting it.

The majority of the seminar discussed planning large projects efficiently, but the concepts will work with smaller projects as well. For those of you not fortunate enough to be in attendance, here is a summary of what was discussed.

Planning

Keep the goal in sight. Without a goal the project will fizzle, and there will be no definite completion. Think of S.M.A.R.T. goals next time you plan a project. They should be Specific, Measurable, Agreed upon, Realistic, and Time-framed. Whether you are renovating an old bunker or rebuilding 20 greens, keeping S.M.A.R.T. goals in mind will help to guide you. Set your priorities and think of everything that could go wrong or affect the results. Have alternate plans ready to control unforeseen circumstances.

SMART Goals

Specific
Measurable
Agreed upon
Realistic
Time-framed

Selling projects correctly is an important step in the success of a project. If unachievable results are promised, then the project is doomed to failure. Only promise what you can deliver. You need to sell your plan to everyone that is affected, and use other influential people to help. The

Head Golf Professional has the golfers' ears, and the General Manager can help to ease the Greens Committee's concerns about cost. Including these people will show a united effort in creating a new asset for the golf course.

While planning budgets and time frames, remember to build in contingencies. A standard 5%-10% addition will help to keep everything on time and under budget. If there are changes and unexpected delays or costs, be upfront. Hiding a known problem will only create more in the end. Be careful with the "while we're at it" additions to a project. These will have a significant impact on your timelines and available resources. Don't be afraid to say no or change the budget.

Problem Solving

If one thing in project management is guaranteed, it is that a major problem will strike at the worst possible time. You have three chances to solve it. The first is in advance while it is still on the horizon. The second is while it is happening, and the third is after. Thinking and planning for problems will allow you to progress



Bruce R. Williams, CGCS

smoothly at a lower cost. Don't fall into the trap of not having enough resources to do it right the first time, but plenty the second time around.

(continued on page 18)

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Making progress

While work is progressing, remember to inform all of the stakeholders. Short and frequent updates will help to keep everyone on the same page. Weekly flyers posted in the clubhouse, one paragraph emails sent to the Greens Committee and GM, and company wide memos will help to prevent surprises. Good communication will help to limit complaints and questions.

Set milestones on which your progress is measured. Let your stakeholders know when each one is hit, and use the momentum to keep going strong. After you hit your specific goal, celebrate with your crew. Nothing closes a successful project off more than a party or golf tournament.

Project Management can be a daunting task, but a well planned and executed project will reward everyone involved. As a Golf Course Superintendent or Assistant, you are the leader and project manager. Be informed, communicate clearly, and deliver what you promise.

Things to Never say as a Project Manager:

- We tried that before
- We've never done it that way.
- That's not the way we do things here.
- It costs too much.
- We don't have the time.
- Why change it? It's still working OK