

# Training for the Long-Term Employee

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Golf Course Superintendent  
Rich Harvest Farms

# Opportunities Influencing My Training Program

- ▶ GCSAA seminar: Calibrate Your Management Skills - Business Management for Today's Superintendent
  - Mike Muetzel, President, MX Marketing, LLC
- ▶ GCSAA seminar: Developing a High-Performance, People-Oriented Golf Course Maintenance Staff
  - Robert A. Milligan, Ph.D., Sr. Consultant, Dairy Strategies, LLC
- ▶ Tournament Players Club
- ▶ Southwest Airlines research
- ▶ FISH! philosophy

# Outline

- ▶ Business Models
- ▶ Job Posting
- ▶ Interview
- ▶ Orientation
- ▶ Employee Handbook
- ▶ Training Manual
- ▶ Pictures
- ▶ In-the-field Training
- ▶ Past Experiences
- ▶ Closing



# Southwest Airlines

- ▶ How did Southwest Airlines become one of the largest airlines in the world, estimated by the number of passengers carried per year?
- ▶ How are they one of the most profitable airlines, posting profit 37 consecutive years in a very competitive and struggling market?

# Southwest Airlines

- ▶ Southwest is a miracle of efficiency, boasting the best on-time performance and fewest customer complaints.
- ▶ The airline encouraged flight attendants to crack jokes during in-flight emergency instructions.
  - ▶ It is noted that Southwest is widely hailed as one of the safest and friendliest airlines in the skies.

# Southwest Airlines CEO Kelleher

- ▶ CEO Kelleher will tell you it is the employees who make Southwest great.
- ▶ He believes it's as simple as seeking out exceptional employees, treating them with respect and providing the latitude and encouragement necessary to do their jobs better than anyone knew possible.
- ▶ Southwest's rules and regulations are kept to a minimum so employees can solve problems on the fly.
- ▶ Kelleher's advice: "Ask your employees what's important to them. Ask your customers what is important to them. Then do it. It should be that simple."

# Seattle's Pike Place Fish Market

- ▶ Catch the Energy and Release the Potential
- ▶ Employees gave their complete attention to each of their customers and ensured each had an enjoyable visit by:
  - Flinging fish
  - Inciting laughter from the customers
- ▶ Workers were making routine work fun for themselves and their customers.
  - They also were selling a ton of fish.

# Seattle's Pike Place Fish Market

## ► Fish! Philosophy

- Play
- Make their day
- Be present
  - Give your full attention to a task or individual
- Choose your attitude



# Relate this to the Hiring, Training and Employment of a Golf Course Employee

- ▶ When hiring, seek out exceptional employees.
- ▶ Treat employees with respect.
- ▶ Give new hires your full attention.
- ▶ Choose your attitude.

# Attitude: Filter Down Effect

- ▶ Choose your attitude
- ▶ Your attitude will rub off on your employees.
- ▶ The employees' attitude will rub off on their work.
- ▶ The employees' work will rub off on the customer's experience.



# Attitude: Filter Down Effect

- ▶ Choose your attitude
- ▶ Your attitude will rub off on your employees.
- ▶ The employees' attitude will rub off on their work.
- ▶ The employees' work will rub off on the customer's experience.
- ▶ Don't make stuff flow down hill. Make a great experience flow down hill.

# Your Club



- ▶ Who has pride in where they work?
- ▶ Who loves what they do?

# Your Club

- ▶ Who has pride in where they work?
- ▶ Who loves what they do?
- ▶ If you don't like your job and or the place you work - why should someone you hire want to work there?

# Your Club

- What does your club have that area clubs do not?
  - Tournament
  - Ranking in the nation, state or area.
  - Privet club
  - Best greens in the area
  - New construction
  - Great architect.





# Rich Harvest Farms



- ▶ Home to the 2009 Solheim Cup
- ▶ Rated #45 in the Golf Digest "Top 100"
- ▶ 64 car museum
- ▶ Rated in the Top 10 in course conditioning

# The Golf Course Position

- ▶ Working outdoors
- ▶ Usually not really hard work





# The Golf Course Position

- ▶ Working outdoors.
- ▶ Usually not real hard work.
- ▶ Not monotonous work.
  - Usually something different everyday.
- ▶ Instant satisfaction on a job well done.
- ▶ It can't be as bad as a fish mongrel.



# Job Posting

- ▶ When posting a job:
  - Be positive
    - ▶ Looking for an energetic individual who is willing to learn
  - Be up front with what you can offer
    - ▶ Don't waste the applicant's time and yours
- ▶ Now create a sample job posting.



# Sample Job Posting

- ▶ Full Time Position:
  - Turf Equipment Assistant Technician
- ▶ Minimum Requirements:
  - High School Graduate
  - Computer Literate
  - 18 years or older
- ▶ Experience Requirements:
  - Looking for energetic individual who is willing to learn and is capable of training people. Some education and experience in the following; turf equipment repair and maintenance, including commercial lawn care equipment, basic engine repair and maintenance, basic auto electrical knowledge, reel and rotary grinding a plus.
- ▶ Salary:
  - \$11 to \$15 per hour based on experience.

# Interviewing

- ▶ Take time with every employee.
- ▶ Every employee is an integral part of your club. Otherwise you would not need the employee and you would not be interviewing him/her.
- ▶ If you are not able to take time with the individual, have another key employee do the interview.
  - This would give an Assistant or Foreman great experience in hiring.
  - It would demonstrate responsibility and leadership.
  - It will provide a new employee with someone who can offer full attention.



# Interview Notes

- ▶ Take notes throughout the interview.
- ▶ Most likely this individual will not be the only one.
  - Take notes on how this individual stands out against the rest, good and/or bad.
- ▶ Write down how each question is answered.



# Interview: Create the Attitude

- ▶ Stress how important the position is to the company.
- ▶ Be positive when you talk about what you are able to offer.
- ▶ Go through a routine day with the employee.
- ▶ This is a position for you and the interviewee.
  - Make sure it is a right fit for both.



# Interview Questions from Mike Muetzel, President, Mx Marketing, LLC

## ► Questions that should be asked in an interview:

- What are 3 - 5 job experiences from previous employment that you are most proud of?
- Provide 3 -5 examples where you worked well with another employee.
- List 3 – 5 of your most positive attributes.
- List 3 - 5 areas where you might improve.
- List 3 – 5 things positive or negative about a former employer.

# Interview Questions

- ▶ Why 3-5 answers per question?
- ▶ The first two answers are most likely nonsense or considered before hand.
- ▶ These questions represent the work environment you are trying to create and the attitude you will be expecting from an employee.



# What are 3 – 5 Job Experiences from Previous Employment That You are Most Proud Of?

- ▶ This should be an easy question if the employee has gone above and beyond at any time in past work history.
  - It can be as simple as:
    - ▶ Staying late to get the job done.
    - ▶ Going out of the way to pick up some trash.
  - It is not about what the interviewee did but rather about the mindset towards the job.

# Provide 3 – 5 Examples Where You Worked Well with Another Employee

- ▶ If the interviewee cannot think of examples where they did not work with another employee or accomplishments, the individual might not work well with others or has not worked with others.

## List 3 – 5 of Your Most Positive Attributes

- ▶ This question's answer tells you a lot about what the employee thinks of him- or herself.
- ▶ You are looking for an employee that is positive and confident.

## List 3 - 5 Areas Where You Might Improve

- ▶ Watch out for tardiness and teamwork issues.
- ▶ Make sure interviewee is working towards self-improvement in some area, otherwise you might have an individual that thinks s/he does nothing wrong.

## List 3 – 5 Things, Positive or Negative, About a Former Employer

- ▶ Look for bad-mouthing of former employers.
- ▶ Listen for the things that were done well. It will demonstrate an ability to take direction easily.

# Orientation

- ▶ Review of the Employee Handbook as it relates to your department
- ▶ Employee orientation should consist of the following:
  - Welcoming statement
  - Mission statement
  - Organizational chart
  - Policies
  - Procedures
  - Rules
  - Tour



# Remember

- ▶ You are still creating the work environment that you would like to have at your club.
- ▶ You are still creating an attitude for your club.



# Welcoming Statement

- ▶ Hello, and welcome to Rich Harvest Farms. We thank you for your interest in employment and look forward to working alongside you in a team environment that will achieve our collective goals.





# Mission Statement

- ▶ Mission Statement should be created with individuals from the department or club.
- ▶ You might have separate statements for each.
- ▶ Get everyone involved.
  - Create a desirable work environment and attitude.



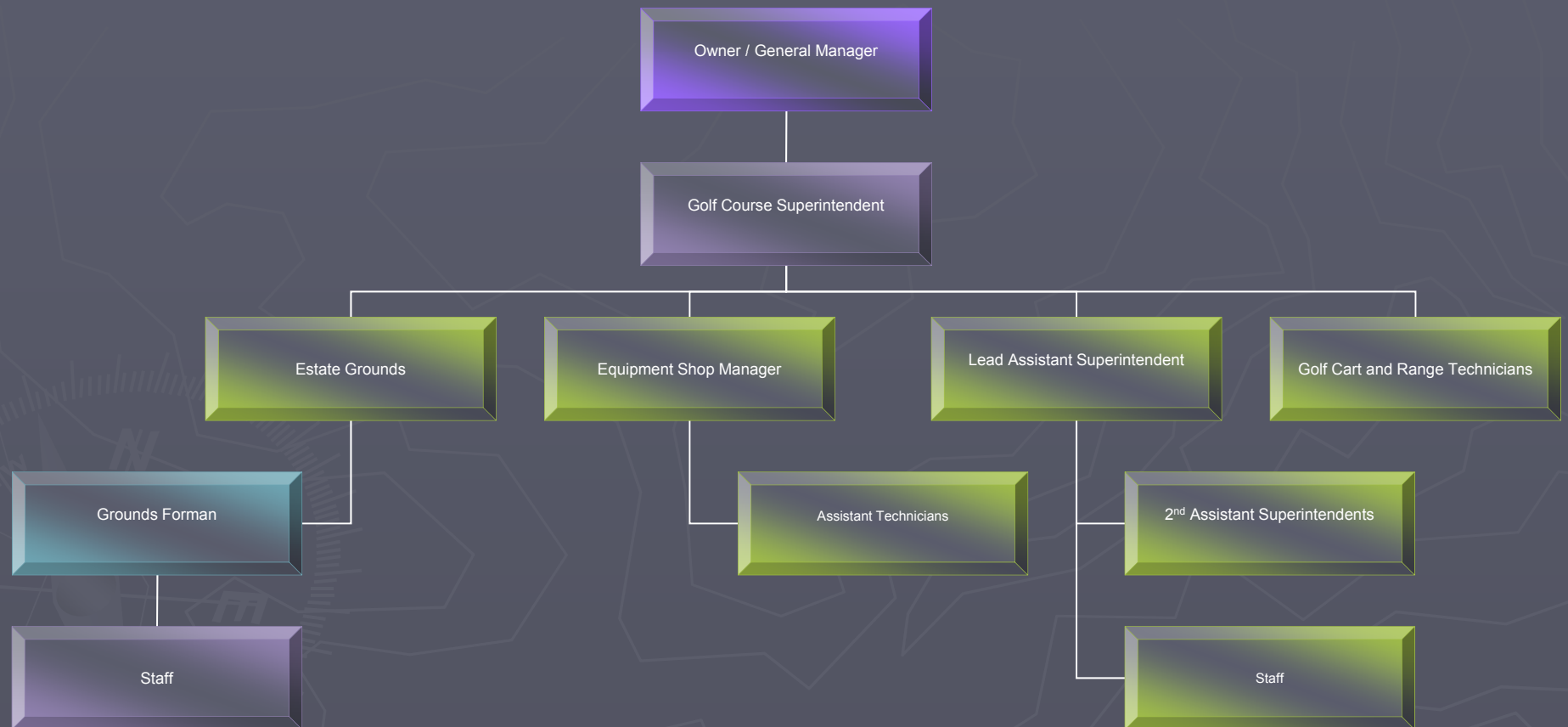
# Example Mission Statement

- Maintaining our dedication we will continue to refine our quality, expand our capabilities, increase our efficiency and elevate the superior level of golf course conditioning we now provide to heighten the standard of excellence we have set in the industry.

# Organizational Chart

- ▶ It should be known who is responsible for whom.
- ▶ Take all questions out of the organization of your club or department.
- ▶ If someone has a problem with a supervisor, it's important to note the next person in the chain of command.

# Golf Course and Grounds Organizational Chart



# Attendance Policy

- ▶ Spell out your attendance policy
  - Absenteeism
  - Tardiness
- ▶ What actions are taken if the attendance policy is not met?



# Uniform Policy

- ▶ Include which type of uniform should be worn on a daily basis.
  - Could be as simple as no holes in pants
  - Safety equipment
  - Wearing your hat straight
- ▶ If uniforms are provided, make sure a checklist is made to give employees a uniform.
- ▶ Be sure the corrective action is stated if uniform or safety equipment is not worn.
- ▶ Again, you are creating a work environment and attitude you would like the club to present.



# Example Uniform Requirements

- ▶ The uniform must be tucked in at all times.
- ▶ The uniform must remain buttoned up throughout work hours.
- ▶ Only club hats are allowed to be worn during work hours.
- ▶ Improper attire will not be tolerated and is grounds for termination.

# Corrective Action Example

- ▶ The first offense will result in a verbal warning.
- ▶ The second offense (within a 30 day time frame from the first infraction) will result in a written warning.
- ▶ The third offense (within a 30 day time frame from the latest infraction) will be a mandatory 3 day suspension.
- ▶ The fourth offense (within a 30 day time frame from the latest infraction) will be grounds for termination.



# Other Policies and Procedures

- ▶ Payroll policy
- ▶ Time Card procedure
- ▶ Lunch and Break policy
- ▶ Locker Room procedure
- ▶ Wash Pad procedure
- ▶ Fuel Station procedure
- ▶ Equipment procedure
- ▶ Accident procedure
- ▶ Inclement Weather policy

## Specific Rules:

- Cell phone usage
- Food on the course
- Utility vehicle and equipment traffic rules



# Schedule

- ▶ Create a typical work schedule

- ▶ Example

  - Monday - Friday

    - ▶ 6:00 start time

    - ▶ 1:00 quit time

    - ▶ 15 min break paid in-between jobs or in the field

    - ▶ Saturday or Sunday alternating weekend

    - ▶ 6:00 start time

    - ▶ 11:00 quit time

# Tour

- ▶ Give a tour of your facility, club and course.
- ▶ A golf course can be an overwhelming area to maneuver.
- ▶ Make the employee feel comfortable.



# Training Manual

- ▶ Training manuals can be as large or small as you want.
- ▶ A low-end course might only have a few tasks that are performed on a daily basis.
- ▶ Example
  - Triplex mowing, rough mowing, fairway mowing and string trimming.
- ▶ A high-end course might have a number of tasks that are performed on a daily basis.
- ▶ It will all be relative to the number of employees.

# Training Manual

- ▶ Regardless of the size of your company, a manual should be developed.
  - Provides documentation on how a task is done.
  - Verifies the employee was trained by a manual and verbally.
  - Use the manual as a performance evaluation.
- ▶ Remember you are creating an environment and attitude for your club.
- ▶ The manual shows that the employee's tasks are important.

# RHF uses the TPC Operator Checklist

- ▶ Operator I, II, III and IV
- ▶ Base performance reviews off of the checklist.
  - Encourages employees to learn more tasks.
  - Documents what employees have accomplished.
- ▶ It also creates the “Train the Trainee”
  - Once the employee completes the training, s/he should be able to train new employees.



# Example of Training Checklist: Operator I

Procedure Description	Training Start Date	Training Completion Date	Supervisor Signature	Training the Trainee Completing
Walk Mowing Tees				
Walk Mowing Collars and Approaches				
Hand Raking Bunkers				
Utility Vehicle Operation				
Divot Filling				
Ball Mark Repair				
Blower Operation				
Fly Mowing				
Sod Installation				
Mechanical Bunker Rake				
Pull Behind Blower				
Push Mower				
String Trimmer				
Irrigation Trimmer				
Step-Cut				
Washing Equipment				
Bunker Edging				



# Description of Position

- ▶ Job descriptions can be found on the GCSAA website.
- ▶ List typical work functions:
  - Operate trimmers
  - Operate walk mowers
  - Washes equipment
  - Ex...





# Description of Position

## ► Employment Standards:

- Knowledge of the safe methods and materials used in grounds and landscape area maintenance work.
- Working knowledge of and ability to use hand and power tools and equipment.
- Ability to operate utility vehicles and light machinery.
- Physical strength, stamina and agility.
- Ability to follow oral and written directions.
- Knowledge of the principles of operation of gasoline engines.

## ► Again, creating the environment and attitude

# Training Manual Example for a Specific Task

- Walk mowing of tees training and checklist at Rich Harvest Farms

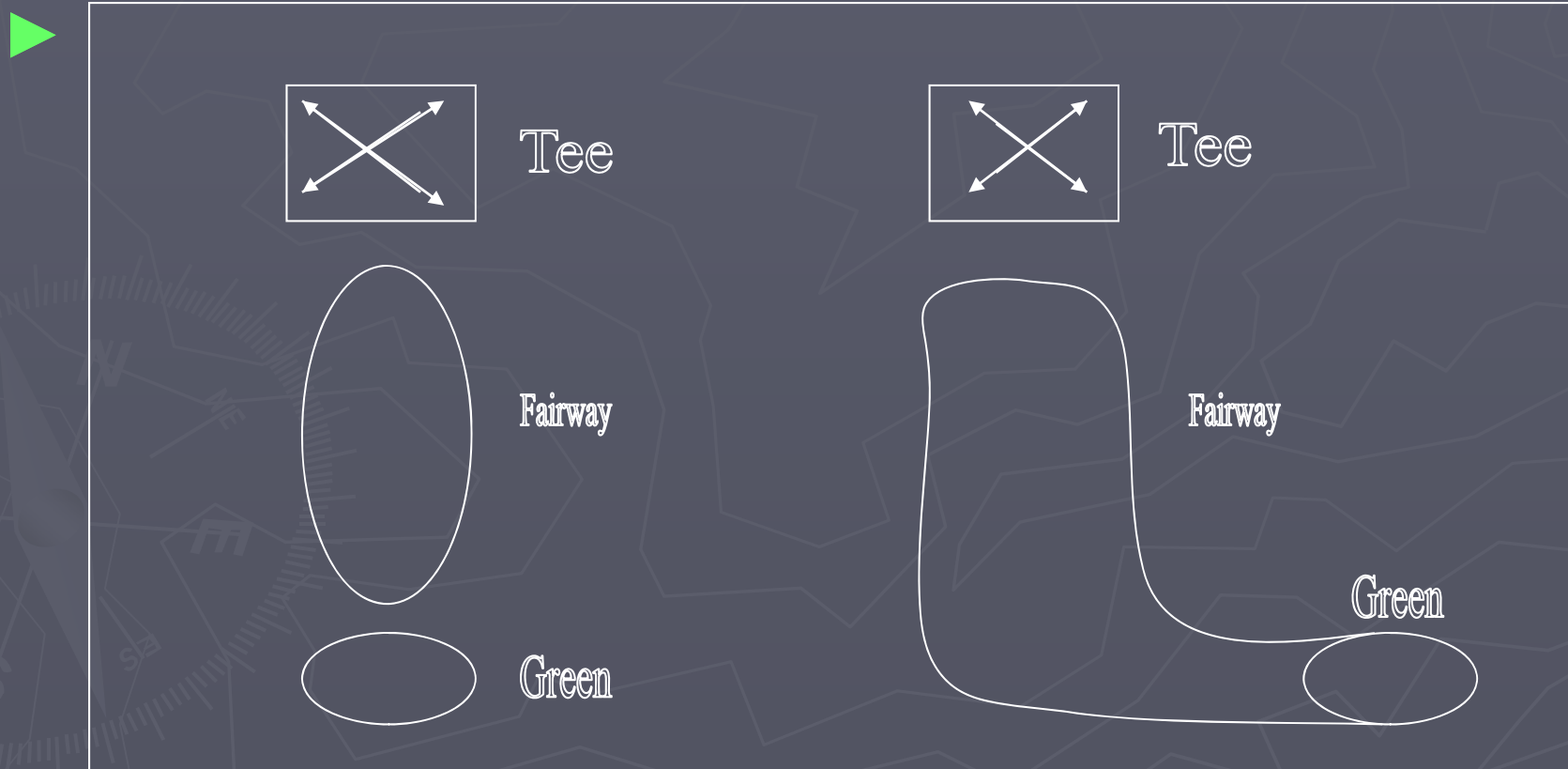


# Training Manual Example for a Specific Task

- ▶ Walk mowing of tees training and checklist at Rich Harvest Farms
- ▶ When you have been assigned to walk mow tees, make sure you have all the tools needed for the job before you leave the shop; tee mower filled with gas, blower, utility cart, direction of mowing and basket for mower. The direction of mowing should always be done at a left to right or right to left angle. No straight direction. Know your starting location to be mowed. Once you are to the specified tee, make sure the surface is repaired of all blemishes. Make sure the surface is removed of debris. After the surface is clear, find the direction the tee should be mowed for that certain day's direction (see directional figure). All straight directions should be to the fairway landing area, not the green.

# Training Manual Example for a Specific Task

## ► Direction Mowing Example



# Training Manual Example for a Specific Task

- ▶ When parking the utility vehicle, park on the cart path when existing or behind the tees. Unload mower from the trailer and proceed to the tee with the blades disengaged. Figure out the angle of mowing and engage the blades. Once you are ready to start mowing, engage the blades and mow the first pass down the center of the tee. Continue mowing back and forth till the tee is complete, making your turns nice and wide. While mowing, no skips should be allowed or that pass should be completed again. Always check the last pass for any problems with the mower. Lines should be perfectly straight and overlap should be limited to less than 1". Make sure the mower is picked up before the rough cut so scalping of the rough is created. If any problems exist find a supervisor. Once the directional mowing is complete start your clean-up cut. Follow the rough around, making the cut a razor edge and then back the other direction one pass into the tee. Take the blower and remove any debris from clippings. Dump your baskets, pick up the blower, load your mower and proceed to the next tee that has not been cut on your sheet. Not every other tee, not odd or even tees. The next tee in sequence that has not been cut on your list.

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- ▶ When all tees have been complete, washing of the equipment is a must. Make sure the reels are cleaned of all debris. Gas up the equipment and change out the mowers for the following day.



# Training Manual

- ▶ We review the Operator I Position with all interviewees.
- ▶ We again review the manual during orientation.
- ▶ Review different tasks one day a week for about a half hour.
- ▶ After the manual training, the learned material should be taken to the field.

# Pictures

- That old adage:  
“Pictures say 1000  
words”



photo courtesy LPGA

SUGAR GROVE, IL - JULY 14: 2009 Solheim Cup captain Beth Daniel (C) of Team USA poses for a photo with Bunker (the golf course dog) and her assistant captains Kelly Robbins (L) and Meg Mallon (R) during a preview event for the 2009 Solheim Cup at Rich Harvest Farms golf course on July 14, 2008 in Sugar Grove, Illinois. (Photo by Jonathan Ferrey/Getty Images)

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# Pictures

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- ▶ In the orientation, employee handbook and training manuals - add pictures
- ▶ These pictures document the task performed.
- ▶ How the task should be completed
- ▶ It also will create a good attitude for current employees
  - Employees will strive to do good work so their examples can be used in manuals.
  - They will be proud when they see their faces in the manual.



# In the Field Training

- ▶ Take time with new employees.
  - Don't just throw new employees out of the boat and hope they can swim.



# In the Field Training

- ▶ Take time with new employees.
  - Don't just throw the employee out of the boat and hope they can swim.
- ▶ Schedule time for new employees to shadow a model employee around for a week. "Train the Trainee"
  - Learning the course.
  - Learning tasks.
- ▶ You and your assistants should take time to check with the Trainee to make sure everything is going well.

# Past Training Experiences

- ▶ In my early career, my first day on the job, I came into the shop and sat there for an hour.
- ▶ One employee said something to me.
- ▶ He asked who I was and what did I need?
- ▶ I said that I was starting work today.
- ▶ That was it. I proceeded to sit there for one hour until the superintendent arrived.
- ▶ He then said, "Take this mower (triplex) and go mow tees."
- ▶ He showed me how to start the mower and left.

# Past Training Experiences

- ▶ How do you think I felt?
- ▶ What attitude was presented to me?
- ▶ What kind of work environment was created?
- ▶ How do you think I performed my task?

# When Training a New Employee, Answer These Simple Questions

- ▶ In my work history, I have discovered when an employee makes a mistake, 90% of the time it is the fault of the supervisor.
- ▶ You should ask these questions after a mistake occurs:
  - Did the employee know How to do the task?
  - Did the employee know Where to go?
  - Did the employee know When the task should be completed?
  - Did the employee know What s/he was supposed to do?
  - Who trained the employee on that task?

# Past Training Experiences

- ▶ The employee does not start the day saying, "I am going to go to work and really screw up!"
- ▶ If so, suppose you have a disgruntled employee.
  - Why is the person upset?
  - Has a great work environment been created?
  - Did your attitude reflect the employee's attitude?
- ▶ Again, 90% of the time it is a reflection of you. It is the fault of the supervisor, not the employee.
- ▶ The other 10% could be things happening outside of the workplace, which you cannot control.



# Conclusion to Training an Employee

- Create a good work environment.
  - You might have a dirt floor shop.
  - But is the dirt floor shop a clean dirt floor?



# Conclusion to Training an Employee

- ▶ Create a good work environment.
  - You might have a dirt floor shop.
  - But is the dirt floor shop a clean dirt floor?
- ▶ Create an attitude that people will enjoy working around.
  - Their attitude will show in their work and the consumer will see it.
- ▶ The employee cannot be successful if s/he is not trained.
- ▶ Never stop training yourself or your employees.

# Conclusion to Training an Employee

- It is easy to throw an employee out there untrained to get a job done for the short term. Look towards the long term. It will help the employee, your club, your department and you.

I hope all of this information  
will help you in  
“Training for the Long-Term Employee.”

