



None of us can do our jobs without each other's support!

Building Quality Relationships

BETWEEN SUPPLIERS AND SUPERS

Written by & photos provided by Joel Johnston, Superintendent, West Haven G&CC, and Chris Lecour, Sr. Turf Sales Representative, BASF.

In the realm of golf club management, building quality relationships is essential for success. As a golf superintendent, your ability to cultivate strong connections with club members, staff, and stakeholders can significantly impact the overall experience, reputation, and success of both your club and your own career. Building a solid relationship with suppliers is no exception. Gone are the days when customers would count on sales reps' to solely take orders and make last-minute deliveries; turf sales reps today are well-educated with prior turfgrass

management experience and therefore have the ability to also provide sound advice and recommendations. In this article, we will explore key aspects of building quality relationships between suppliers and superintendents, beyond free hats, bundle programs, and double-double deliveries.

PUNCTUALITY AND RELIABILITY

At the core of any meaningful relationship lies honesty, integrity, and reliability. Mutual respect for one-another's time is key; make the most of each visit by:

1. Schedule appointments in advance and honour the commitment to the best of

your ability. Ensure reliability - no one's time is more important than the other; punctuality sends a powerful message that you value the commitments you make with fellow industry professionals. Of course, sometimes cancellations are unavoidable due to unforeseen circumstances, but last-minute cancellations should be the exception, not the norm.

2. Strive to make the most of each visit. Many suppliers are travelling great distances to see their customers, often scheduling multiple visits in the same area for efficiency and to make the most of their day on the road. A sales rep may not be in that area again for several weeks or even months.

3. Be productive with intention by suggesting an agenda. Not only should everyone provide context for requesting a meeting, but they should also prepare several key points of discussion and have them at the ready. For suppliers, this could include new products, new services, or even follow-up inquiries from the previous meeting; or golf course maintenance crews, this could include agronomic issues or interest in equipment demos.
4. Superintendents - avoid last-minute orders whenever possible. We all know that external factors like weather, changes in member events, and life in general can wreak havoc with the best-prepared superintendent's plans, but like last-minute cancellations, make it the exception. Planning material orders reduces stress, and help suppliers better manage rising fuel costs, delivery schedules, and inventory control.

SHARED MUTUAL SUCCESS

Nurturing relationships based on shared mutual success is pivotal in golf club management. Here are a few ways to develop those positive relationships:

1. Offer solutions, not just sales. Instead of focusing solely on sales and transactions, emphasize offering

solutions to customer needs. Take the time to understand their challenges and concerns, and work collaboratively to find appropriate remedies. As a supplier, demonstrating a genuine commitment to a customer's success allows you to establish yourself as a trusted partner rather than a mere service provider.

Strong relationships develop over time through consistent effort, open communication, and a genuine desire to meet the needs of others.

2. Be an active listener. Actively listening to your customers concerns and feedback is essential for building strong relationships. This level of attentiveness shows that you value your client's opinions and are dedicated to addressing their specific concerns. Listening actively not only to challenges but also to successes is an opportunity to gather proven knowledge that could be useful to another customer.
3. Do your research. Stay informed about the latest advancements and solutions within the golf industry. By being well-versed in current trends, you can offer informed recommendations to your customers. This demonstrates your

commitment to providing top-notch service and ensures that you are prepared to meet their evolving needs.

4. Strive to exceed expectations. By consistently delivering high-quality results, you not only build trust but also foster a positive image for yourself and your company. This may involve going the extra mile, delivering ahead of schedule, or providing innovative solutions that surpass expectations.

TRUST AND HONESTY

Suppliers are often sounding boards to the frustrations of superintendents. Those frustrations could range anywhere from budget constraints to difficult employees. Exude trustworthiness and always assume confidentiality! Visiting sites across large territories can expose you to numerous rumors about movement within the industry. Being professional and not spreading these rumors can help avoid unnecessary embarrassment or friction for all parties.

Strong relationships develop over time through consistent effort, open communication, and a genuine desire to meet the needs of others. Following this "Blueprint" will no doubt help superintendents and suppliers build quality relationships and possibly long-lasting friendships. ■

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