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(president's message)

Embracing the T.E.A.M. concept

Whether by coincidence, destiny or fate, I believe in the power of chance encounters. And last November, I experienced one of these encounters that ultimately set me on a path to reinforcing what I thought about establishing and being a part of a team.

At the airport and on my way to the Carolinas GCSA Conference and Show, I was approached by a gentleman who recognized the GCSAA logo on my shirt and asked if I was a golf course superintendent. It turns out he was also on his way to the Carolinas GCSA event — his first time attending — and I ended up sitting next to him on my flight. It was obvious he was very astute and a successful businessman, but he was new to the golf industry.

As we discussed the industry and my thoughts on my role with GCSAA, as well as our work with our allied associations, he listened intently. My passion for the “T.E.A.M.” philosophy — Together Everyone Accomplishes More — was evident, and when I finished sharing my thoughts, he said, “You have to read the book, ‘The Five Dysfunctions of a Team.’” The title had negative overtones, but his business knowledge was clear, so before we landed, I had ordered the book off Amazon.

The author, Patrick Lencioni, is the founder and president of The Table Group, a management consulting firm specializing in executive team development and organizational health. In the book, Lencioni outlines what he believes are the five dysfunctions of a team — the absence of trust, the fear of conflict, the lack of commitment, the avoidance of accountability and the inattention to results. Another way to understand the model is to take a more positive approach and imagine how members of truly cohesive teams behave. They trust one another. They engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas. They commit to decisions and plans of actions. They hold one another accountable for delivering on those plans. And they focus on the achievement of collective results.

These positive team attributes weren't always apparent when I first entered the golf course management industry almost 30 years ago. In many cases, golf professionals, club managers and superintendents functioned independently and were not always aligned behind common goals or with a united purpose.

Thankfully, these positive traits are the rule rather than the exception at most golf facilities today. The reality is that regardless of

your title or primary role at a facility, working together not only to make the facility the best it can be, but also to grow the golf industry and attract others to it, is a must. If we do not, we all suffer.

The GCSAA Board of Directors and staff embrace the T.E.A.M. approach. Everything the association does is based on our mission statement, which is to serve our members, advance the profession and enhance the enjoyment, growth and vitality of the game. Our members are our lifeblood, and we would not survive if we didn't serve them and work to advance their profession. Similarly, the golf industry as a whole will not flourish if GCSAA does not play its part in enhancing the enjoyment, growth and vitality of the game.

To accomplish that mission, GCSAA relies on the T.E.A.M. approach, most notably in our relationship with our 99 affiliated chapters. As the GCSAA board travels around the country, we routinely meet with the leadership of our affiliated chapters to gain their perspective and to make sure we are meeting their needs.

We also rely on established and mutually beneficial relationships with the staff, board and members of the PGA of America, USGA, PGA Tour, Club Management Association of America, National Golf Course Owners Association, American Society of Golf Course Architects, Golf Course Builders Association of America, National Golf Foundation, We Are Golf coalition and many other groups and associations involved in golf. We routinely attend allied association meetings and major golf championships, where we interact with these groups informally and formally, and we often provide presentations and updates on GCSAA initiatives.

As I have often said, I immediately knew I had found my true calling when I first entered this industry. And when I reflect on the changes, growth and the enhanced unity that I witness at the golf facility and within the industry, my initial thoughts on my choice of professions have only been validated. I am excited to see what can be accomplished when everyone believes that together everyone can truly accomplish more.

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