

Purchasing tips from industry pros



Purchasing: report from the front lines

By Mike Andresen, CSFM

Lately it seems that getting any purchase past administrators or purchasing agents at our university has become daunting. Three recent purchases that went through the state mandated bidding process were for a wide area mower, an aerifier and a 3-year paint supply contract.

Our athletic director's philosophy that we "hire good people and give them tools to effectively do their jobs" rings sweet to our Facility and Grounds Department. Discussing need for those big ticket tools is not for everyday banter. The only time I discuss purchasing equipment is during the budget process. Don't constantly put your administrator in the position of listening to you cry about the condition of your equipment. And believe me, that's how they hear it. We have a place holder in long-range planning budgets for equipment replacement. If the department wins the lottery I want the boss to easily find a way to spend the windfall through us!

In working with purchasing professionals it's my job to make their jobs easy. Telling an agent we only want a specific brand machine puts that person immediately on red alert. Most purchasing agents have seen most of the tricks so you may as well come in humble and accept their rules. Besides, in our case the state makes the rule and this person is simply the messenger. Kind of like being a turf manager many times.

When we're ready to bid a piece of equipment I personally gather all the specification information on at least three like machines. I'll meet with the agent and be very honest about my professional and our

department's business relationship with distributors and manufacturers. The visibility of Athletics puts us in a unique position for potential gift-in-kind, donation or even sponsorship premiums relative to purchases. Take the time to educate the purchasing agent about the need to offer addendums to your bids that will allow for creative bidding that may benefit both your department and the supplier.

I love trade shows such as the one we have at the STMA National Conference. We draw up the wish list at the conference but we won't consider a major purchase without a demonstration at our facility. Our bid requires a demonstration of equipment and I exercise this right on the low bid or more if a couple bids are close. During demonstrations we'll take pictures and document our thoughts on the performance. The purchasing agent is required to be present during a demonstration and he or she documents comments and conversations as well as asks pertinent questions more related to warranties and contracts. It's impossible to document too much or have too many people watch the demonstration!

During a grueling paint bid process documentation and follow through was critical. Few things are more important to athletic departments than the field presentation for each sport. Paint budgets can be significant. Educate and develop a relationship with your purchasing agent to ensure they understand the importance of this purchase as well as the details, chemistry and nuances of paint materials and their application. Our process of evaluation was complex. All paints (white and colors) were applied at exactly the same ratios. From that point we kept a daily series of photos and a diary of comments on each product. Every couple days the purchasing agent visited the test sight to

make his own observations. When we sat down to compare notes it was striking how similar the observations were. Pre-bid education of the agent made the decision unanimous.

Avoid skirting or playing tricks with the formal purchasing process. Trust is the most important characteristic you carry. Trust with the purchasing agent and trust from the suppliers that they will and do receive a fair shot at your business. Don't waste your time or anyone else's time by being deceitful. Your reputation is on the line.

I've worked in the private sector and now the public. At times it would be nice to just make a call and tell a salesperson, "Please deliver this product" but there's benefit to adding people to your successful team. You are the leader of your team. When the preferred equipment or supply does not come in as the low qualified bid, remember it's not your opinion that ultimately determines if you have a satisfactory conclusion to the process. As it is with most every other aspect of our job, build the relationship first. ■

Mike Andresen, CSFM, is Facilities & Grounds Manager at Iowa State University and past president of the Sports Turf Managers Association.

Purchasing perspective from the director's chair

By Matt Mandia

As with most things in life, a learning curve exists for those who are not familiar with a certain task or profession. This is certainly the case when it comes to educating Parks and Recreation Directors as to the complexities and multitude of challenges encountered by turf managers in keeping sports turf surfaces in playable and sustainable condition.

Although I could be wrong, I don't believe the majority of turf managers have a degree in teaching or in the field of edu-

cation. But in order to be successful in terms of acquiring the necessary materials and equipment needed in the field, it is essential that you prepare your classroom for instruction each and every day.

Directors routinely rely on the expertise and knowledge of a multitude of areas within the field of Parks and Recreation. Specialties such as aquatic facility operations, park and open space planning, and bicycle and pedestrian trail design to name a few. Turf managers must be at that same level of expertise and knowledge so that Directors feel confident in the information they are receiving to make informed decisions that won't come back to bite them.

In the current climate of tightening municipal budgets and lack of funding for the basic core services of local government, it becomes increasingly more important that turf managers prepare a plan. The plan should include both short term and long-term needs and goals. This plan should be formulated in conjunction with the Director. Whether the Director realizes it or not, he or she is now in your classroom and this is your opportunity to demonstrate how serious you take your profession and to impress upon them, in a tactful way, your knowledge and the foresight you have put into your plan.

This is also the short period of time that you have to educate decision makers on the intricacies of your work. The biggest mistake turf managers can make in making an appeal for a new piece of equipment or large purchases of material during this meeting would be the following statements. If you want to be successful, DO NOT say:

- "Well, so and so School District or Township has one."
- "It would be nice to have."
- "The cab has air conditioning."
- "Although our current machine does the job, our guys don't like it."
- "I realize this piece of equipment is only a couple years old, but the new features on this model are more comfortable."

Although some of these statements may be true and the purchase may in fact increase productivity and produce a happier workforce, you have to understand that Directors must make very difficult budget decisions. These decisions include everything from pool and facility repairs, to programming and special community event obligations that the community expects. A well thought out and presented plan by turf managers must be part of these budgetary considerations in order to be seriously evaluated, and if done correctly, you may just get that new piece of equipment with the bells and whistles.

Here are some tips for success as I see them from the Parks and Recreation Directors perspective.

Plan ahead. If you know you have a big purchase coming up, plan for it, and don't blindsides the Director the year you need it. Look ahead and request it in next year's budget that we will need this piece of equipment. This provides the Director time to contemplate the request and make every effort to make it happen in the confines of all the other capital requests for the department.

Consistently communicate with the Director in terms of

upcoming previously agreed upon purchases of fertilizer, seed and fungicides. This "touching base" approach further increases your credibility of being on top of your job and team approach to keeping your athletic surfaces in premium condition. Show that you are in tune with the budgetary pressures; believe me, it will help you in the long run.

Schedule time to have decision makers out to the parks to provide a first hand account of why you need the things that you have requested. It is a much easier sell on site than from a picture in a catalog. Also, when you encounter turf damage from misuse during wet conditions, or from turf disease, have those individuals come out and look at the situation. Seeing it first hand provides much more of a punch than pictures in an e-mail or written description.

When I started in parks and rec 18 years ago, I knew very little about turf management and the challenges of turf managers. It has become abundantly evident that I have been in our turf manager Bob Piccolo's classroom and didn't even know it. ■

Matt Mandia is the Parks and Recreation Director for Derry Township, PA, which is home to the world famous Hershey Chocolate Company.

What do you need in a utility vehicle?

By Brad Aldridge

In selecting a utility vehicle (UV), you're looking for one machine that "does it all"; the trick is determining how your organization defines "it." By its name of course it offers convenient flexibility, but choosing a UV is about matching the machine to your facility's unique needs.

Start by making a list of primary tasks the UV will need to handle, and then consider which models can best meet those requirements. No need to get something that tows a tractor if that's never going to happen. On the flip side, remember this might be your daily workhorse and you might find that you really need some of the extras.

Distributors can help recommend the right model. In general, sports fields require turf-friendly options such as 6x4 vehicles or turf tires to minimize ground compaction. Additionally, be sure to measure any tight spaces at your facility before you look at specific models; a UV that won't fit through a tunnel can't do its job.

While you can't foresee every future need, considering how a new UV complements your current fleet is important. If another machine goes out for maintenance, can the UV fill in? If another piece of equipment is at the end of its life, could a certain type of UV take its place and do double duty?

Don't forget that that using the vehicle's versatility may require switching between various attachments for different jobs, so take that time into consideration.

Do you need the option of full-time four-wheel drive? What top

speed and cargo box capacities are right for you? Tight turning radiuses an issue? Again, having a clear understanding of the tasks you need to complete will determine your UV needs.

Your mechanics' time is always at a premium, so choose a UV that's easy to service. A machine with sealed bearings and few grease points helps reduce maintenance time. If you have multiple machines, they should share service parts. Consider whether investing in a higher-end machine today might reduce your maintenance costs and downtime in the long run. If cash flow is a concern, leasing options can mean a lower monthly payment.

When choosing a UV, plan for what you want the vehicle to do, and the utility capabilities will support similar-level tasks as they arise. ■

Brad Aldridge is a product manager for John Deere Golf.

Selecting irrigation systems

By Pat Johnston

With so many irrigation products in the market, it's important that turf managers understand what they need before they spend money on a new system. Decide what you expect from a system before you determine a total budget for the project.

The most important decision turf managers can make when considering an irrigation installation or renovation is whether or not to hire a certified irrigation designer, who can ensure that the irrigation plan meets your particular needs.

Whether or not you decide to work with an irrigation designer or directly with a distributor, here the questions you need to ask before making a decision:

- How much does the system cost? What is my return on investment?
- Who is the local distributor representative to contact for service issues?
- What kind of equipment training is included? If something goes wrong with

the system, what parts should I have on-hand for quick replacements?

- Is there a nearby site that has this system installed? Can I visit?
- How long is the system under warranty? What does the warranty cover?

When researching a control system, don't become enamored with all the bells and whistles of a system; it's important to know what features you need for your turf area and then maximize your return on investment by selecting a control system that will get the job done.

Important considerations for a control system include: ease of use; flow management and flow sensing; moisture sensing including integration with an ET-based system; and remote-access control.

Water application

When selecting rotors or sprays, turf managers should consider the following:

- Water window: What gives the best distribution in the shortest window?

• Ease of use: Is the rotor or spray easy to adjust or fix?

• Safety/durability: How will the rotor stand up to everyday wear and tear?

A typical turfgrass system needs 85 psi to operate efficiently. A booster pump is necessary to meet that optimal design requirement. While the upfront price of a booster pump package can seem considerable, the energy savings from a high-efficiency pump can represent thousands of dollars over the life of the pump.

After the irrigation system is installed, it's important to follow the manufacturer-recommended maintenance schedule. A well-designed, properly installed and maintained irrigation system is the best way to keep your turfgrass green and healthy for years to come. ■

Pat Johnston is water management sales resource consultant for Horizon Distributors, Inc.



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STMA 2008 Compensation and Benefits Survey Results

During the fall of 2008, STMA conducted a survey of its sports turf managers on compensation and benefits. Most of the tables, graphs and charts have been re-created here. The results show that 60% of sports turf managers earn more than \$50,000, and

that 90% of the membership's employers pay for STMA national membership dues. Compensation data is also presented by certified status, level of education, number of acres managed, etc., and you will also find a tremendous amount of demographic and

benefits information included. The response rate was more than 38%, which is excellent and provides even greater assurance that the data is statistically valid.

Head Sports Turf Managers Salary

18% of STMA Members make more than \$75,000 per year

60% of STMA Members make more than \$50,000 per year

Head Sports Turf Manager Salary by Level of Education

Please indicate the highest level of education you have completed.	Total	What is your base salary excluding bonuses?														
		Under \$35,000	\$35,001 - \$40,000	\$40,001 - \$45,000	\$45,001 - \$50,000	\$50,001 - \$55,000	\$55,001 - \$60,000	\$60,001 - \$65,000	\$65,001 - \$70,000	\$70,001 - \$75,000	\$75,001 - \$80,000	\$80,001 - \$85,000	\$85,001 - \$90,000	\$90,001 - \$95,000	\$95,001 - \$100,000	\$100,001+
High school	4.8%	2.9%	3.7%	8.2%	5.7%	3.8%	9.5%	5.8%	3.2%	4.3%	0.0%	11.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some college, no degree/certificate	21.7%	17.6%	25.9%	28.6%	30.2%	24.5%	21.4%	19.2%	16.1%	21.7%	20.0%	11.8%	0.0%	0.0%	30.0%	9.1%
1 yr. certificate	0.8%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2 yr. certificate	4.4%	2.9%	0.0%	4.1%	3.8%	9.4%	2.4%	5.8%	6.5%	4.3%	8.0%	11.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Associates degree	17.3%	17.6%	18.5%	10.2%	9.4%	20.8%	28.6%	21.2%	16.1%	34.8%	4.0%	5.9%	33.3%	11.1%	0.0%	18.2%
Bachelors degree	43.2%	52.9%	48.1%	44.9%	49.1%	32.1%	28.6%	34.6%	41.9%	30.4%	64.0%	47.1%	50.0%	55.6%	50.0%	54.5%
Masters degree	6.9%	2.9%	3.7%	4.1%	1.9%	7.5%	4.8%	11.5%	16.1%	4.3%	4.0%	5.9%	8.3%	22.2%	20.0%	18.2%
Ph.D.	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.3%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%

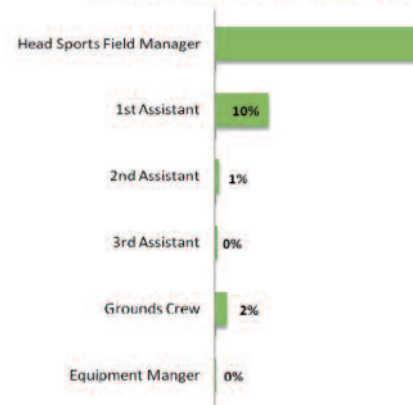
Head Sports Turf Manager Salary by Total Acres Managed

How many total acres do you manage? (including structures, water and land)	Total	Base salary excluding bonuses														
		Under \$35,000	\$35,001 - \$40,000	\$40,001 - \$45,000	\$45,001 - \$50,000	\$50,001 - \$55,000	\$55,001 - \$60,000	\$60,001 - \$65,000	\$65,001 - \$70,000	\$70,001 - \$75,000	\$75,001 - \$80,000	\$80,001 - \$85,000	\$85,001 - \$90,000	\$90,001 - \$95,000	\$95,001 - \$100,000	\$100,001+
1-10	7.6%	18.2%	16.7%	4.8%	18.4%	8.9%	2.6%	2.2%	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%
11-40	16.2%	40.9%	23.8%	26.2%	20.4%	13.3%	21.1%	6.7%	10.7%	13.6%	8.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
41-70	13.2%	22.7%	14.3%	14.3%	12.2%	11.1%	5.3%	15.6%	25.0%	4.5%	8.0%	16.7%	0.0%	22.2%	22.2%	9.1%
71-100	7.6%	9.1%	4.8%	9.5%	10.2%	11.1%	10.5%	4.4%	3.6%	9.1%	8.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	9.1%
101+	55.4%	9.1%	40.5%	45.2%	38.8%	55.6%	60.5%	71.1%	57.1%	72.7%	76.0%	83.3%	88.9%	55.6%	77.8%	72.7%

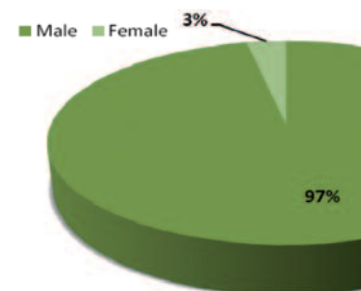
Head Sports Turf Manager Salary by Certified Status

I am a Certified Sports Field Manager	Total*	What is your base salary excluding bonuses?														
		Under \$35,000	\$35,001 - \$40,000	\$40,001 - \$45,000	\$45,001 - \$50,000	\$50,001 - \$55,000	\$55,001 - \$60,000	\$60,001 - \$65,000	\$65,001 - \$70,000	\$70,001 - \$75,000	\$75,001 - \$80,000	\$80,001 - \$85,000	\$85,001 - \$90,000	\$90,001 - \$95,000	\$95,001 - \$100,000	\$100,001+
Yes	14.8%	11.8%	14.8%	4.1%	20.8%	15.4%	14.3%	15.4%	6.9%	8.3%	16.0%	23.5%	33.3%	33.3%	10.0%	27.3%
No	85.2%	88.2%	85.2%	95.9%	79.2%	84.6%	85.7%	84.6%	93.1%	91.7%	84.0%	76.5%	66.7%	66.7%	90.0%	72.7%

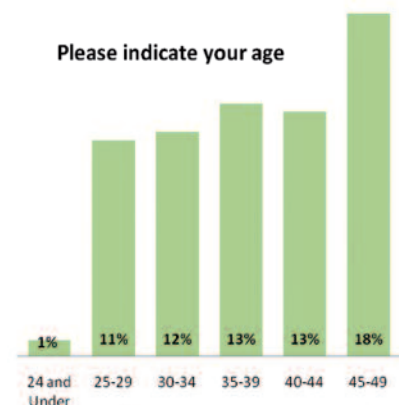
2008 STMA Compensation & Which best describes your position



Gender



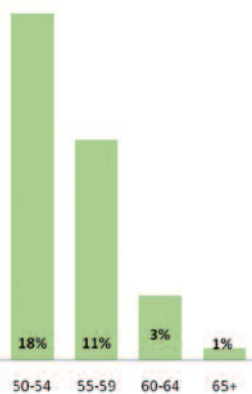
Please indicate your age



Survey Results

Benefits Survey
ation at your facility?

86%

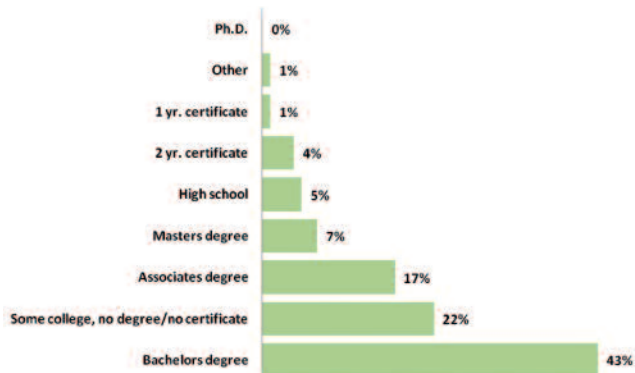


Head Sports Turf Manager Salary by State

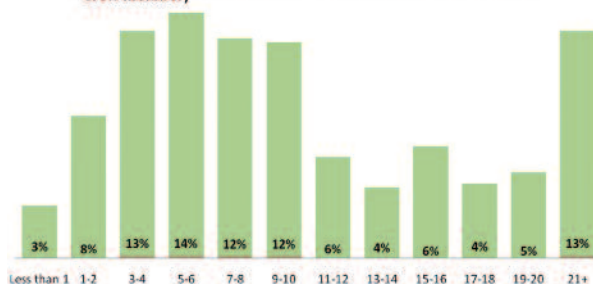
	Total*	What is your base salary excluding bonuses?														
		Under \$35,000	\$35,001 -\$40,000	\$40,001 -\$45,000	\$45,001 -\$50,000	\$50,001 -\$55,000	\$55,001 -\$60,000	\$60,001 -\$65,000	\$65,001 -\$70,000	\$70,001 -\$75,000	\$75,001 -\$80,000	\$80,001 -\$85,000	\$85,001 -\$90,000	\$90,001 -\$95,000	\$95,001 -\$100,000	\$100,001+
Alabama	0.9%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Alaska	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Arizona	4.7%	0.0%	3.6%	6.1%	1.9%	5.7%	2.5%	6.3%	6.9%	0.0%	12.0%	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	27.3%
Arkansas	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
California	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	6.1%	9.4%	1.9%	7.5%	6.3%	10.3%	8.3%	12.0%	5.9%	27.3%	22.2%	20.0%	45.5%
Colorado	5.1%	0.0%	3.6%	2.0%	5.7%	9.4%	0.0%	8.3%	3.4%	4.2%	12.0%	5.9%	0.0%	22.2%	10.0%	0.0%
Connecticut	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	9.1%	0.0%	10.0%	9.1%
Delaware	0.6%	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
District of Columbia	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Florida	6.4%	0.0%	1.8%	6.1%	1.9%	9.4%	10.0%	8.3%	6.9%	16.7%	8.0%	0.0%	18.2%	11.1%	0.0%	9.1%
Georgia	2.1%	0.0%	5.5%	4.1%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%	6.9%	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Hawaii	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Idaho	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Illinois	4.7%	9.1%	1.8%	2.0%	3.8%	5.7%	0.0%	4.2%	10.3%	4.2%	8.0%	5.9%	0.0%	11.1%	20.0%	0.0%
Indiana	1.5%	9.1%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Iowa	1.9%	3.0%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	2.5%	4.2%	0.0%	8.3%	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kansas	2.1%	3.0%	7.3%	0.0%	1.9%	1.9%	2.5%	2.1%	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kentucky	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Louisiana	1.1%	0.0%	5.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Maine	1.5%	3.0%	5.5%	0.0%	1.9%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Maryland	3.2%	6.1%	3.6%	0.0%	1.9%	1.9%	7.5%	4.2%	0.0%	4.2%	4.0%	11.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Massachusetts	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	6.9%	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Michigan	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	1.9%	0.0%	5.0%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Minnesota	2.6%	6.1%	0.0%	2.0%	3.8%	1.9%	2.5%	2.1%	3.4%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Mississippi	0.9%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Missouri	2.6%	3.0%	1.8%	0.0%	3.8%	5.7%	0.0%	2.1%	3.4%	4.2%	8.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Montana	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Nebraska	2.1%	3.0%	5.5%	2.0%	3.8%	1.9%	0.0%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Nevada	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
New Hampshire	1.7%	3.0%	1.8%	2.0%	0.0%	1.9%	2.5%	2.1%	3.4%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
New Jersey	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	1.9%	0.0%	2.5%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
New Mexico	0.6%	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
New York	5.8%	6.1%	3.6%	8.2%	5.7%	5.7%	12.5%	2.1%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%	5.9%	9.1%	11.1%	0.0%	9.1%
North Carolina	4.1%	9.1%	3.6%	4.1%	5.7%	5.7%	0.0%	6.3%	3.4%	0.0%	4.0%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
North Dakota	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Ohio	2.8%	6.1%	1.8%	2.0%	5.7%	0.0%	2.5%	4.2%	3.4%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Oklahoma	1.1%	0.0%	1.8%	4.1%	0.0%	1.9%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Oregon	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Pennsylvania	4.9%	3.0%	3.6%	8.2%	7.5%	7.5%	5.0%	4.2%	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	11.8%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Rhode Island	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
South Carolina	2.4%	0.0%	5.5%	6.1%	0.0%	1.9%	2.5%	2.1%	6.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
South Dakota	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Tennessee	2.4%	3.0%	3.6%	2.0%	7.5%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Texas	6.2%	12.1%	10.9%	12.2%	1.9%	1.9%	7.5%	6.3%	6.9%	0.0%	0.0%	11.8%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Utah	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Vermont	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Virginia	4.1%	3.0%	9.1%	4.1%	3.8%	3.8%	7.5%	2.1%	3.4%	0.0%	4.0%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Washington	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
West Virginia	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Wisconsin	1.5%	3.0%	1.8%	0.0%	1.9%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Wyoming	0.4%	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Eighteen percent of STMA members make more than \$75,000 annually; 60% earn more than \$50,000

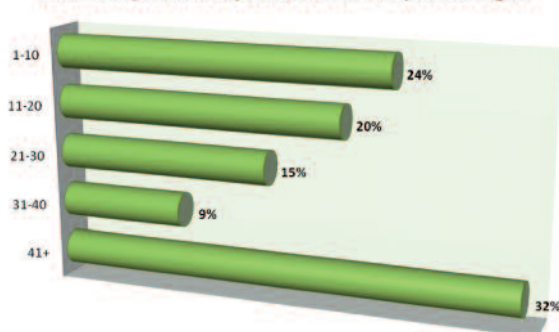
What is your highest level of education completed?



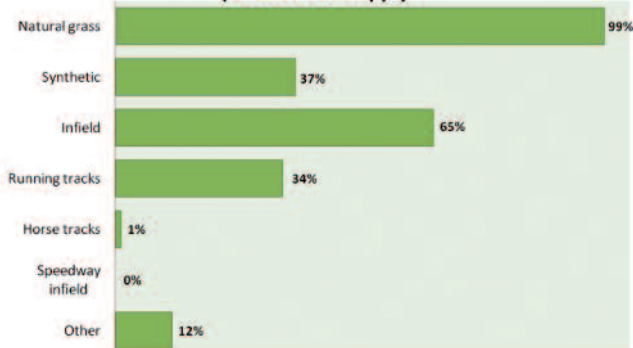
How many years have you been employed as a sports turf manager? (Do not include work as an assistant or grounds crew member)



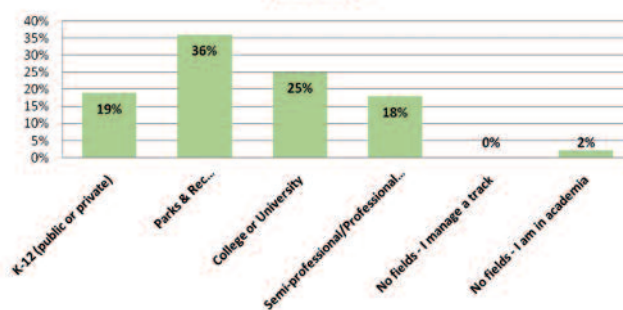
How many acres of sports surfaces do you manage?



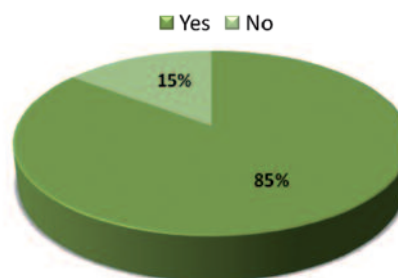
What type of sports surfaces do you manage? (Check all that apply)



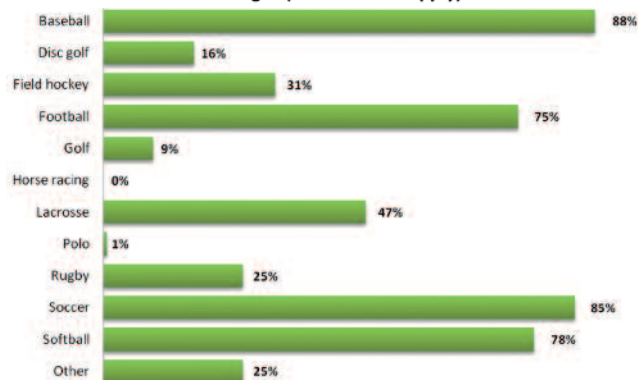
Which of the following terms best describes the use/users of your field(s)?



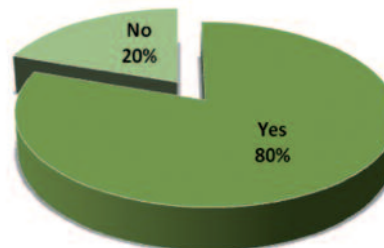
Do you manage acreage in addition to your sports surfaces?



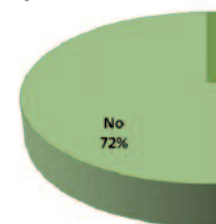
What sports are played on the athletic surfaces you manage? (check all that apply)



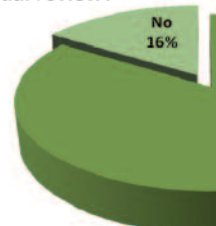
Do you manage any multi-use fields?



Do you have an employment contract?



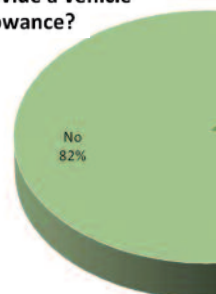
Do you receive and annual review?



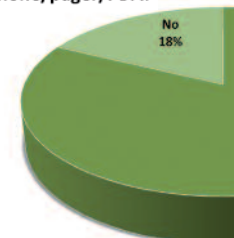
Do you work for a management company?



Does your employer provide a vehicle allowance?

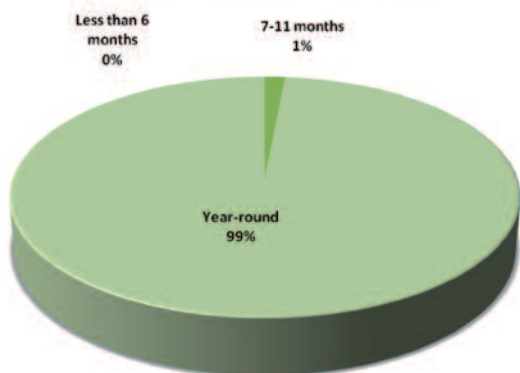


Does your employer provide a cell phone/pager/PDA?

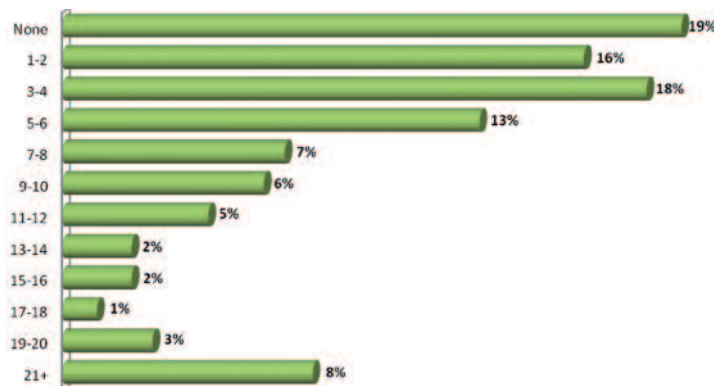


Survey Results

How many months per year are you employed?



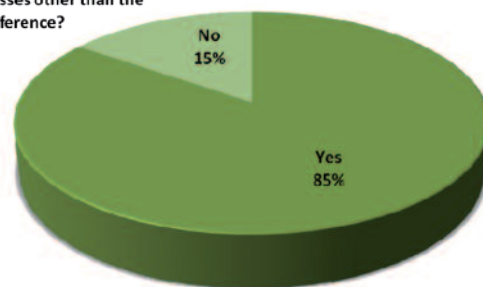
How many seasonal employees are you responsible for?



How many hours do you work during your busiest season?

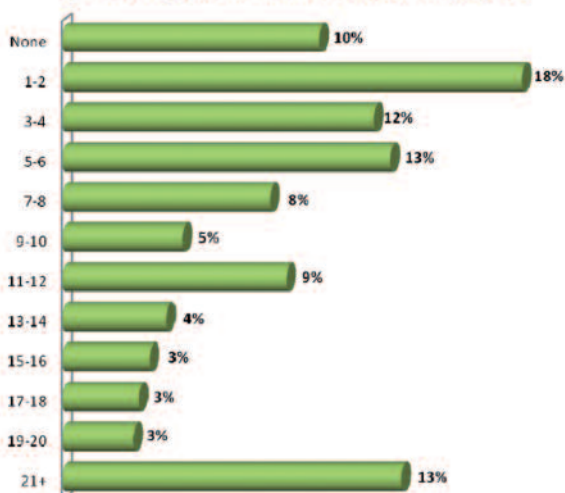
Weekdays		Weekends	
36	0%	Under 4	31%
37-40	6%	4-8	29%
41-45	20%	9-12	11%
46-50	27%	13-16	10%
51-55	14%	17+	19%
56-60	14%	Total	100%
61+	19%		
Total	100%		

Does your employer provide tuition/educational reimbursement for events/classes other than the STMA National Conference?



Does your employer pay for the following?	100% Paid by Employer	Partially Paid by Employer	None Paid by Employer
National Dues	90%	1%	9%
Local Chapter Dues	82%	1%	17%
STMA National Conference Attendance	57%	12%	32%

How many employees are you responsible for at your facility (do not include seasonal employees)



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Top 10 Tips to Enhance Your Image

1. Be flexible and adaptable to workplace changes — even those that are uncomfortable.
2. Follow through on what you say you are going to do.
3. Deal with conflicts positively and with self-control.
4. Adopt a “no surprises” attitude in dealing with your employer and staff.
5. Hang your diploma, certification plaque and other honors in a visible place in your office.
6. Write articles for and give presentations to your chapter, your community and the industry.
7. Be ethical and honest in all that you do.
8. Dress for success.
9. Embrace a, “who else needs to know this” communication approach
10. Follow the golden rule: Treat others as you wish to be treated!

How have you prepared your workplace to see you?

IF YOU ARE LIKE MOST SPORTS TURF MANAGERS, you are focused on your fields, managing them so they are visually stunning, safe and playable. You train your staff and have confidence in them to accomplish their set objectives. You manage the budget, inventory, equipment, and much more. You interact with players, coaches, fans and other user groups. You believe that doing a good job is synonymous with how you should be judged.

And, you are right: doing a good job lays the groundwork for respect and recognition of your work.

Rich Watson, grounds supervisor for Pine Hills (NJ) Public Schools, believes the key to being perceived as a professional lies in exhibiting a strong work ethic. “Your employers need to be able to trust that you are going to be there, doing what you were hired to do. Delivering more than what they expect is also very effective in how they perceive you,” says Watson. He considers the effects of hard work to be a great motivator. “When you and your staff work together to make your fields look great, you can see the results of your hard work. It’s very gratifying and drives us to continue to work at the highest level of effort,” Watson stresses.

He has also worked for a private owner managing polo fields, putting greens and croquet courts. At both positions, he notes that staff has an impact on how turf managers are perceived. “My success is tied to those who work with me,” Watson says.

Triple A head groundskeeper Chris Ralston of the Sacramento River Cats echoes Watson’s philosophy of working hard. “Treat your job as a career, and your dedication to it shows through,” he says. “People will recognize that you are doing a good job, without you having to overly promote yourself.”

Ralston feels that interactions with crew members also affect perceptions of

your abilities. People will also judge you on how well you treat your employees,” he says.

Making visible improvements to the fields brought recognition to Parks maintenance director Patrick Jonas, CSFM, for St. Andrews Parks and Playgrounds in Charleston, SC. He planted ryegrass, a first for the fields under his care, 9e years ago when he joined St. Andrews. “The fields were in bad shape, and my first priority was to improve them. When people saw how the fields changed, they knew it was due to our work,” he says.

Manage yourself

Steve Wightman, QualComm stadium & turf manager in San Diego, acknowledges that working hard and good management of your field is important—and expected; however he emphasizes that perceptions are formed from day-to-day interactions. “You are rated, whether you realize it or not, when you interact with people in your private and professional lives,” Wightman says.

He believes that how you manage your own self significantly affects perceptions. “People notice if you are on time, follow through, and act with integrity,” he says.

This philosophy is supported by management guru Stephen Covey, who uses the term emotional bank account as a way to describe trust in a relationship. Acts of trust are like deposits in the account; damaging behaviors, such as failure to keep commitments, are withdrawals. Higher trust levels in the workplace between you and your employer leads to greater appreciation for the work that you do. Then, when problems occur, the higher the trust level the less likely that your job security will be affected.

Ralston also used a more formalized strategy to gain trust and awareness: he asked for feedback. He conducted a survey of stakeholders in his league: players,



People only see what they are prepared to see.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

coaches, managers, and general managers. "This survey provided a very important opportunity for our California League groundskeepers to find out how their work is viewed, and helped us to open lines of communication," says Ralston.

In addition to conducting yourself as a professional, Wightman also believes that sports turf managers need to be the solution people. "When you bring workable solutions to a problem, even if it may not be the easiest solution for you, others begin to trust you and have confidence in your abilities," he says. Professional success, according to Wightman, is also gained by participating in the industry. "It is very important to get involved in the industry and connect with this large network of professionals who can help you," he says.

Effective communication impacts respect and recognition in the workplace. When Watson made a job change, verbal and written communication was critical to understanding expectations. "I wanted to make certain I was giving them what they wanted, so I checked in often with phone calls and e-mail," he says.

Eric Fasbender, CSFM, sports turf manager for Louisiana State University cites communication as the key to facilitate change, and throughout his career he has been using a coaching style of communication. "We look at what needs to change for us to be successful," he says, "and then do what's needed to make that happen."

He believes that if you create the right culture and provide the right training, the results will be seen on the field. "Growing grass is the easy part; it just needs food, water and light to grow. The hard part is in managing to the strengths and weaknesses of your team," he says. Fasbender's team has been very successful at LSU and regular-

ly receives praise from the coaches and players of the 15 fields they manage.

Fasbender also believes in communicating about the field management activities. "We constantly are providing information about what we are doing to the fields and why we are doing it," he says. When people gain a better understanding of your work, they begin to perceive you as a professional."

Jonas uses face-to-face communication almost exclusively with his boss, his bosses' boss and his employees. "That way, communication is direct and not filtered," he says. "I consider my boss a good friend and ally and talk with him daily, which really keeps him informed."

Good communication has helped him build relationships outside of St. Andrews. The parks district uses church and high school fields for overflow games, and Jonas' efforts to get to know those in charge have paid off. "If there are problems, I know who to go to, and we can easily resolve any issue because we know each other," he says.

Add credibility with Certification

Being a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) has added to Fasbender's credibility, especially as he pursued new positions. "My degree is in history, and being able to show that I am certified by the STMA has helped me convey my qualifications," he says. "Being certified is one of the things that I'm most proud of," he says.

Jonas recently pursued and attained the CSFM designation. He says that he realized that he needed to build on his agricultural experience of growing up on a farm. "Becoming certified helped me improve my core knowledge, and shows my employer that I am committed to being the best I can be," says Jonas. "My certification has definitely made me a more valuable employee."

Gaining the recognition for your work within your community may be a bit more challenging, but showing your community that you are committed to sound environmental practices can be very effective,

according to Ralston. "Northern California is experiencing its third year of a major drought and saving water is on everyone's mind," says Ralston. He has implemented new irrigation technology that conserves water, and he and his irrigation partner are holding educational outreach sessions to teach others. "We just had 50 people at a session. I'm able to actually report the exact number of gallons of water I saved over a specific time period," he says.

Jonas believes that proactivity in the area of the environment is important, and he is taking initial steps to be more 'green.'

"It is our responsibility to move to greener practices," he says. "We have a strong recycling program, have a hybrid vehicle and have limited the heat of our asphalt parking lots by creating islands with shade trees." Although he says these are small steps and may not have much recognition within the community, he has the environment squarely in his future plans. "We want to capture water from condensation from our air conditioning units to reuse on our softball field," he says.

Individuals advance the industry

The sports turf management profession is gaining in influence, as measured by the interest of other organizations that want to work with STMA. "STMA's partnerships and collaboration have more than doubled in the past several years," says President Abby McNeal, CSFM, and Sports Turf Manager for the Colorado School of Mines in Golden.

She attributes some of the interest to STMA's efforts, but believes members are at the heart of this advancement. "STMA as an organization has been reaching out to other organizations, which has resulted in many joint initiatives. I believe, though, that it is because of the great work of our members and their individual efforts to be recognized for their professionalism, that these relationships have developed and strengthened," says McNeal. ■

➤ STEVE WIGHTMAN, CSFM

