

How to get hired: advice from two savvy employers

A WORLD LEADER in providing quality service solutions for daily life for clients in virtually all major industry sectors, Sodexo knows a few things about recruiting and hiring the right person for the job. Similar to other large employers, Sodexo uses an online application to start the process. Unique to Sodexo is John Fik, CSFM, CGM, and his counterpart Greg Fear, LEED AP, who provide service solutions for sports fields, and grounds and landscape management at colleges and universities and private K-12 schools. A portion of that management includes hiring high level managers and supervisors and providing continuing education.

Sodexo uses a comprehensive selection process to assess a candidate's qualifications, experience and competencies. After the initial review of the online applications by a Sodexo recruiting team in Human Resources, candidates whose background and experience appear to be a close fit for the position receive an initial phone screen by the recruiter. Next, the candidate undergoes a competency interview to assess the candidate against the key competencies for the specific position. Based on the application, phone screen and competency interview results, Sodexo's recruiter will present Fik with the candidate slate to conduct formal interviews.

"After I complete the interviews, I introduce the top two candidates to our client, as their feedback is helpful," says Fik. During his review process and interviews he hones in on three areas. "I seek applicants who are strong in managing people, have the right technical skills, and a solid track record in financial management," he says. He also puts stock in STMA certification. "I know if someone has CSFM after their name, that tells me that he or she has taken that extra step in professional development," says Fik. Sodexo also strives to identify current employees who are eligible to become certified and help them achieve certification.

Fik has seen an increasing number of job openings that require both grounds and sports fields management experience. He believes that broad experience is the key to a successful career. "If you put yourself in the turf management-only box, you'll miss out on the many opportunities that offer career progression," he says. He advises,

"Know your weaknesses, and then go after the education and experience to overcome them."

Chris Calcaterra, M.Ed, CSFM, CPRP also likes to see diversity in work experience for those he hires. "I like to see experience from different facility types, managing different types of turfgrass, and a mix of high-use and low-use fields," says Calcaterra. The City of Peoria, Calcaterra's employer, hires approximately 75 people annually for sports field work, which includes full-time and seasonal. Although Calcaterra does not participate in the screening of all of these candidates, he has hiring responsibilities, like Fik, for high level managers and supervisors. The City of Peoria also uses an online application process that is multi-leveled and thorough. He says that the online system does help to streamline the process, but advises job seekers to focus on relevancy when applying. "It's really important that the applicants exhibit the work experience and other qualifications requested in the job description," says Calcaterra. He also specifically develops in-depth questions for the online process for the second level of applicant review. "The answers to these questions further define our pool of candidates," he says.

When it gets to the interview stage, Calcaterra uses interviewing techniques and HR tools to find the right fit for the open position. "We call it a 'visual résumé.' Interviews are provided markers and paper and asked to illustrate answers to various questions," he says. Throughout the hiring process, Calcaterra encourages applicants to personally follow up. "Although my name is not listed in the online information, I have received personal emails from candidates who researched our facility hierarchy, and let me know that they applied for a job in my department. I can't and wouldn't override the online system, but if they make the cut, they now have some name recognition with me," says Calcaterra. For those candidates who are being considered for supervisory and above positions, the City also conducts a personality trait test. For Calcaterra, personality is a huge factor in hiring the right fit. "We can teach anyone the technical skills required," he says, "but, flexibility, creativity and being personable can't be taught." ■

12 tips to make your résumé stand out

By Career Expert Tory Johnson

- Search job boards and the websites of employers that appeal to you. Print out the job postings that you're interested in pursuing before you apply.
- Use a highlighter to mark the keywords and industry language used to describe the requirements and responsibilities of each position.
- Compare those words and phrases to the language that appears in your current resume.
- Figure out how and where to add the most relevant keywords to your resume, assuming you have the specific knowledge, skills and experience. Applicant tracking systems will search for keyword matches; the more matches, the better, which often determines if a recruiter opts to view your resume.
- Once you're confident that your resume reflects a strong match, go ahead and submit that targeted resume online.
- If the system requests a cover letter, write a short one that expresses why you're a strong match and why you'd like to join the organization. This is a chance to tout your research on the role.
- Never submit a generic, one-size-fits-all resume or cover letter. If you really want the position, you'll customize all documents for each job.
- Once you apply, get to work to find an internal referral to make a personal introduction. Here's how:
 - a) Make a list of 50 people you know and ask each one if they know someone who works (or has worked) at that employer.
 - b) Attend job fairs to meet face-to-face with employers and other professionals.
 - c) Create a free profile and become active on LinkedIn.com or Facebook.com, which boast a combined 60 million users. Surely you can find someone who knows someone to make that connection.
 - d) Create a free Twitter.com account and "follow" friends and post requests for help. (You can follow Tory Johnson at Twitter.com/ToryJohnson where she posts job leads and where followers can help with contacts.
 - e) Join an association in your field and network with like-minded peers.
 - f) Connect with your high school and college alumni groups. Old pals could be new connectors.
 - g) Talk to your unlikely network. For example, look at the class list of the parents of your kids' friends. Anytime my kids hear about a friend's mom or dad who's lost a job, they tell them to call me. Even though we don't know each other, we have a common connection that can sometimes lead to a contact.
- Follow up with a call or email to the recruiter responsible for filling the position. Never say, "Did you get my resume?" Instead be ready to reiterate your strong qualifications and interest in the role. You'll have just a brief moment to sell yourself, so rehearse before making the call or sending the email.
- Don't know the name of the right person? Cold-call the company and ask an operator to put you through. If that doesn't work, Google the term "recruiter" or "human resource director" along with the name of your employer of choice. The results may reveal the name you're trying to find. LinkedIn is another resource to find the correct name.
- Stay top of mind. Every recruiter is different, which makes this a challenge. Some say you're welcome to follow up weekly. Others say every other week is enough. And then there are some who'll tell you to never call. Find the right balance so you're politely persistent without crossing over to a pest.
- Ask directly for advice on how and when to follow up. A simple question, "What's the best way to keep in touch?" will give you the details you need to stay ahead of the pack.

The Nominating Committee asks for your help

THE STMA NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE has issued its annual “Call for Nominations” to STMA voting members to indicate if they are interested in national board service. Please take a moment to consider serving on the STMA Board of Directors, or urging a qualified colleague to consider service. The benefits are many. By serving on the board, you’ll:

- Contribute to your professional association.
- Be a part of a decision-making body.
- Hone your listening, collaborative and other personal development skills.
- Strengthen your leadership abilities.
- Make a difference in the strategic direction of the profession.
- Garner respect from your employer, your peers and your staff.

In 2012, the Director Positions that are up for election include:

- Sports Turf Manager representing Higher Education facilities
- Academic
- Sports Turf Manager representing Parks and Rec facilities
- At-Large (any category)

All Directors will be elected to a two-year term except for the At-Large Director, who is elected to a one-year term.

The STMA Board of Directors sets policy and strategic direction for the programs and services STMA provides and is accountable to its membership. Individual Board Member responsibilities are to:

- Attend and actively participate in quarterly board meetings (4 per year): January,

March, July, and October.

- Chair one or more committees.
- Attend special events, as needed.
- Attend and actively participate in the annual conference.

For more information on board member duties, please contact headquarters for a copy of the Board Handbook. To have your name considered by the Nominating Committee, please fill out the Board Service Interest Form in this issue, or go to www.STMA.org to fill out an electronic Word document. Be sure to answer the two brief questions included on the form. The STMA Nominating Committee encourages you to also share this form with your peers. The deadline to submit your interest is Aug. 31. ■



2012 Board Service Interest Form

Name _____

Title _____

Facility _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

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Telephone _____

Category Representation

- Academic
- Commercial
- Higher Education
- Schools K-12
- Parks and Recreation
- Professional Facilities

List any STMA Committee Service

List any Chapter Involvement

List any Service with Other Organizations

Please answer the following questions: (350 words or less)

- What qualities would you bring to board service?
- What is your vision for STMA?

For an electronic copy of this form, go to www.STMA.org, or contact STMA at 800-323-3875. Mail, e-mail, or fax the completed form to STMAinfo@STMA.org, (f) 785-843-2977, or mail it to STMA, 805 New Hampshire, Ste. E. Lawrence, KS 66044 by **August 31**.

STMA Affiliated Chapters Contact Information

Reminder: The following materials are due to STMA Headquarters for your chapter to be considered in "good standing":

- Signed Affiliation Agreement Annually by June 1
- Affiliation Fee (See Article 8 above for amount) Upon Receipt of Invoice - Annually by June 1
- Officer List Annually by March 1
- Bylaws Once (when adopted), and as Updates Occur
- Articles of Incorporation Once (when incorporated)
- Secretary of State In-Good-Standing Documentation Annually by March 1
- Year-end Financial Report (Simple-unaudited) Annually by June 1

Sports Turf Managers Association of Arizona:

Chris Walsh cwals@scottsdaleaz.gov

Colorado Sports Turf Managers

Association: www.cstma.org

Florida #1 Chapter (South):

305-235-5101 (Bruce Bates) or Tom Curran CTomSell@aol.com

Florida #2 Chapter (North):

850/580-4026, John Mascaro, john@turf-tec.com

Florida #3 Chapter (Central):

407-518-2347, Randy Fisher, rfisher@kissimmee.org

Gateway Chapter Sports Turf Managers Association:

www.gatewaystma.org

Georgia Sports Turf Managers

Association: www.gstma.org

Greater L.A. Basin Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association:

www.stmalabasin.com

Illinois Chapter STMA:

www.ILSTMA.org

Intermountain Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association:

www.imstma.org

Iowa Sports Turf Managers

Association: www.iowaturfgrass.org

Kentucky Sports Turf Managers

Association: www.kystma.org

Keystone Athletic Field Managers

Org. (KAFMO/STMA): www.kafmo.org

Michigan Sports Turf Managers

Association (MiSTMA): www.mistma.org

Mid Atlantic Sports Turf Managers

Association (MASTMA) (formerly the Chesapeake Chapter STMA)

Ph. 410-704-2197 www.mastma.org

Minnesota Park and Sports Turf Managers Association:

www.mpstma.org

MO-KAN Sports Turf Managers

Association: www.mokansstma.com

Nebraska Sports Turf Managers

Association: 402/441-4425

New England STMA (NESTMA):

www.nestma.org

Sports Field Managers Association of

New Jersey: www.sfmanj.org

Sports Turf Managers of New York:

www.stmony.org

North Carolina Chapter of STMA:

www.ncsportsturf.org

Northern California STMA:

www.norcalstma.org

Ohio Sports Turf Managers Association (OSTMA):

www.ostma.org

Oregon STMA Chapter:

www.oregonsportsturfmanagers.org

oregonstma@gmail.com

Ozarks STMA: www.ozarksstma.org

Pacific Northwest Sports Turf Managers Association:

www.pnwstma.org

Southern California Chapter:

www.socialstma.com

South Carolina Chapter of STMA:

www.scstma.org

Tennessee Valley Sports Turf Managers Association (TVSTMA):

www.tvstma.com

Texas Sports Turf Managers

Association: www.txstma.org

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Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers

Association: www.wstma.org

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Ask a CSFM

**Joe Collins, CSFM,
Director of Grounds, Samford
University, Birmingham, AL**

Benefits of certification verified

Editor's note: This is another installment on how becoming a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) can benefit turf managers professionally as well as improve their facilities



How did you prepare for the CSFM Exam?

Collins: I prepared for the CSFM exam by attending a couple of the "preparing for the exam" sessions at the national conference. Those gave me valuable insight on what kinds of information the testing would be on. I also took the practice exam online. I then studied the parts of the exam I felt weakest on.

How did you approach your employer to support your certification, both financially and in the time needed to prepare for the exam?

Collins: My employer has supported my membership in the STMA for many years and we, together, thought it was a good idea to gain certification. He felt it would be well received across campus giving our department some recognition and adding to our credibility as professionals. I used the STMA website to outline the amount and the diversity of the knowledge needed to perform well on the exam and my boss was impressed with the extent of the information processed every day by sports turf managers, he had no idea. It also helped to show that only a select group of professionals have achieved certification and adding our university to the list would gain us some measure of national prestige.

Why did you decide to pursue certification?

Collins: I decided to pursue certification to add to my value as an employee. I think of myself as a professional and this validates my credentials to a certain extent. I also like the aspect of being one of a few in the world who have achieved this status.

How has certification helped your career?

Collins: Certification came for me at a critical time in my career where there were changes in upper management and roles within the university were being evaluated. There had also been a time where I as an employee and my bosses had settled into a routine verging on complacency. Becoming a certified professional reaffirmed my commitment to my profession, to me, and to my employer. It also made a positive statement to our working community of my dedication to continue to learn and evolve as a professional. I was promoted to a larger role a year later. ■

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 H Other (please specify) _____

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 B MANAGER/SUPERINTENDENT — Superintendent, Landscape/Ground Maintenance Manager, Foreman, Supervisor
 C GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL — Government Commissioner, Agent, Other Government Official
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 E \$500,001 - \$1 million B \$25,001 - \$50,000
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Q&A

Protecting our precious water



BY DR. DAVID MINNER

Professor, Iowa State University

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I WAS DRIVING THROUGH SOUTH DAKOTA on my way to the Bighorn River in Montana to set myself right with the world by way of a tranquil float with rising trout when the phone beep interrupted my favorite annual dream. With trees left behind in Iowa the open expanse of bluffs, buttes, and badlands helps me imagine what it would look like to first take away the telephone poles and wires, then the fences, railroad, and boundaries, then buildings, and all those annoying “Wall Drug” signs. Once everything created since 1870 is gone I can just about see Sitting Bull on the horizon with a band of Hunkpapas, Lakota, Oglalas, and Sioux; I’ll spare you my living in a tipi dream. The phone beep instantly recovers the earth with technology and progress as I decide to take another call because there is no phone service in Fort Smith on the Bighorn River; an important point when you really want to get away.

The Iowa DNR Source Water Protection Coordinator needed athletic field nitrogen recommendations for community planning teams who are addressing high nitrates in the source water capture zone for high schools. The simple answer is 2 to 4 lbs N/1000sqft/yr for soil-based fields and 4 to 6 lbs for sand-based fields.

It’s also important to consider nitrogen source and timing of application to reduce nitrogen contamination of public water supplies. At least 50% of N applied should be from a slow release source. Soluble applications of N, such as urea and ammonium nitrate, should be made in a manner to avoid runoff from rain events and should never be applied to frozen ground where N easily runs off in winter or early spring. Leave



at least a 10-foot nitrogen-free buffer around all open grate drains and avoid fertilizer application on hard or impervious surfaces.

We are correct to point out that there is good evidence that a thick stand of grass slows surface water movement and reduces nitrogen runoff, but intense traffic areas having less than 50% turfgrass cover can experience a two-thirds increase in surface runoff, so a rapid re-vegetation strategy is not only necessary for playability but also important to reduce nitrogen loss.

Athletic fields are usually built with a network of subsurface drains and a crown or surface slope up to 1.5% for the sole purpose of encouraging drainage and reduction of soggy fields. Think about it; that water goes somewhere down the stream of flow, and what you should be asking yourself is does it contain some of the products I have applied and am I doing everything possible to reduce contamination of water that leaves the property under my control?

Does your environmental report card contain any of these positive steps to reduce nitrogen runoff on your entire facility and not just the field? Examples are slow release nitrogen, bioswales, maximum turf density, maximum turf height, re-

duced or no fertilizer buffer zones near water ways, water catchment and water reuse systems, and rain gardens.

Also, avoid or sweep up any inadvertent fertilizer application on hard surfaces such as sidewalks, streets, or parking lots. Do not use a hose to wash fertilizer down the drain or storm water system, it all ends up in our rivers or lakes that may be used for drinking water.

So, every time I momentarily lift one of these amazingly beautiful trout from many of the rivers fished from Iowa to Montana, I ask myself, is my turfgrass industry doing everything possible to reduce contamination of the precious water they live in? You can answer that for me by turning your awareness into action. Tell me your environmental stewardship story and I’ll make sure it gets told to those who need to hear it.

I really wanted this message to be about making sure you take some time to recharge your spirit along the way as I know you put in many long seasonal hours to get your fields ready during the playing season. Trout fishing is a passion that rekindles my spirit and also reminds me that we all have a role to play in conserving and protecting our precious water supply. ■

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