



In Bounds: Professionalism

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A very good friend of mine is also a vendor at the Minnesota Green Expo. When the MTGF joined ranks with the MNLA and began attending the show a few years ago, my chum Paul said, "Jack, it was a pleasant surprise to see so many sport jackets and ties at the show. I can only attribute the radical change in professional attire to the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents' Association because, prior to your appearance, the crowd was typically conspicuous in seed caps and work boots."

Indeed ours is a respectable organization and most of us express ourselves in appropriate manner with clean slacks, dress shirts, sweaters and even a blazer when attending professional functions, but there is room for improvement.

Recently I attended, as an invited guest, an educational program at a private country club. The format and content were exceptional, but the lack of professional attire was surprising to say the least. Many of the attendees were wearing baseball caps inside the building. A big oops if I am stepping on toes here guys, but when invited to a private club, or inside any building, show a bit of common courtesy. Regardless of the club rules, my mother always told me to take my cap off indoors out of respect for her and any woman in the vicinity. Being a gentleman, I will always cater to her request.

Some will balk at my suggestion that they are uncouth to wear a hat indoors, just look at the gangbangers and rap superstars who cop a cool attitude with oversized, slant angled and crooked hood

ornaments. They sure do epitomize respectfulness in my book. NOT! Maybe we should regress, I mean redress, with our pants down to our knees as if to express an anorexic plight. Or perhaps wear Carhart coveralls at our next golf event.

Hardly practical or acceptable. Dress professionally including the removal of a cap inside a building. You never know whom you will meet or the impression you will make with your visible state-

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ment.

And for the sake of the industry please wear clean clothes, a sport coat or a neat sweater. Leave the holey jeans at home along with the hooded sweatshirts and Sorel boots. Let me reiterate, we are invited guests and representatives of our profession when we attend functions at venues beyond our club borders. Why would anyone dress down when there is an opportunity to express our leading status in the green industry?

Don't you think that golf professionals are easily recognized because they look good? And how much respect would you give Dr. Vargas, Dr. Rossi or Dr. Horgan if they wore their polar fleece

vests when giving a presentation? They do not dress down and neither should we!

It also strikes me as funny to converse with someone inside a building when he or she is wearing a pair of dark sunglasses. Unconsciously two ideas cross my mind. The first "must have been a late night for my friend." And the second "I wonder if they are checking out my swimsuit area, I sure hope my fly isn't open!" But of course, more often than not, the individual just doesn't understand the discomfort they add to the conversation when their eyes are shaded.

I have heard it said that the lies are in the eyes. Poor eye contact, or none in the case of sunglasses, often conjures up deception. Bank robbers wear masks and eye coverings are commonplace at masquerade balls; both are used to cover the obvious. Because communication is more than just listening and talking, mannerisms such as facial expressions and eye movements can elicit opinions.

Not only should sunglasses be removed inside a building, but also it is a sure sign of respect and interest when an individual takes off their shades outside while talking with somebody. Wear a lanyard around your neck and allow your specs to dangle, hang them in your shirt, or simply hold the glasses in your hand when doing a meet and greet on the course or around the clubhouse. Don't leave them wondering where your eyes were wandering or leave them guessing that you were mind messing.

A few would say that my suggestions are petty and that it is not my place to recommend the outfits my peers should adorn, but guess what, we represent each other in our actions, words and yes, the clothing we wear. No longer should we be indicted by the impression left by Carl Spackler of Caddyshack fame. Take it to the next level my friends, "dress the professional turf manager... be the professional turf manager."

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