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PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Importance of Public Relations

By **BILL GULLICKS**

*Bellwood Oaks Golf Course
MGCSA Public Relations Chair*



Many superintendents tend to stay away from having to deal Public Relations. For me personally, public relations wasn't something that I thought about daily. That was until elected to the MGCSA Board of Directors and appointed by Paul Diegnau, our president, to be the Public Relations Committee chair for the MGCSA. Public Relations is important toward the image that we create outside of our industry and as well as within our industry. Many great things are happening daily at golf courses and the sharing of those happenings can only better our industry. We need to take Public Relations off the so called "back burner" where it is placed for a variety of reasons.

What makes PR such a scary term to many people?

I think that public relations makes us step outside our comfort zone, and that is not an easy task for anyone. Having to do a presentation to a Greens Committee, Board of Directors, an owner, or an interview with the local media isn't a task that many people would volunteer for without some hesitation. Most of us would much rather be spending our time using our agronomic skills. That is what we were trained for and where our specialty lies. However, when we risk stepping outside of that comfort zone, we grow professionally. We discover things about ourselves as well as others.

What many of us don't realize is that we use PR skills daily in very simple ways. Whenever we interact with anyone outside of our crew we are using PR skills. All those daily chats with golfers on the putting green, dealing with some type of inspector or taking time to meet with a salesperson are all examples of our PR skills being put to use. Those people are developing an opinion of us and our facility with every interaction we have.

Our industry has come a long way since its beginning. Just as the agronomic part of our job has evolved, so have the many other challenges that we face. We are called out on many issues that become very sensitive to the public eye. From water usage to pesticides and fertilizers we are constantly under a watchful eye. Now more than ever we need to increase the emphasis of PR skills on a day to day basis.

This column will bring some new ideas on how we can better our PR skills in the work place. It is my goal to have topics and share stories that will be great resources for all superintendents. I welcome any topics or stories that you may wish to share. With my first month's writing under my belt I already feel a little more at ease about my own personal quest to develop and further my own public relation skills.