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PUBLIC RELATIONS

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS: **FIRST IMPRESSIONS**



"First impressions are lasting impressions" is a statement that many of you may be familiar with. In the golf industry we know that Public Relations are all about those first impressions. We are constantly being challenged to make that lasting impression on all those that cross our paths to maintain the relationship necessary for a successful business.

First impressions are usually made about people, places or things. They can be visual, audible, a smell, or some other sense. Many times a first impression is made within a few seconds of one of these senses being activated. Negative first impressions are made much quicker than a positive one and are much more difficult to change. At some point in everyone's life they have experienced the importance of making that first impression or determining the outcome of a first impression. And most times we can count on those first impressions to be a true statement of an experience. However, that is not always that case.

Several years ago I had to hire a crew member for Bellwood Oaks. I had a recent college graduate apply for the job and scheduled an interview. He showed up at the interview dressed extremely preppy (well, according to a 40-year-old) with a couple of ear piercings and a tongue stud. My first impression screamed that no way was I hiring this kid. As the interview went on I found out he had little experience with equipment and wasn't real excited about getting dirty with the hands-on outside work. I was thinking my first impression was right on. Due to the timing, the lack of applicants and the extreme need of another pair of work hands I hired the kid. As the story goes on it turned out that this preppy, pierced kid was an excellent worker that caught on quickly. He was dependable, trustworthy and ended up loving the sweat and grime of the job. He worked for Bellwood Oaks for several years and turned out to be not only an invested worker but a great colleague. He is currently a lawyer as a public defender where he is always making his own first impressions.

We definitely are under the microscope of the public when it comes to our facility. First impressions are made every day on a golf course. From the moment golfers drive into the parking lot their impressions begin. They are checking out the condition of the course, the clubhouse workers, the timeliness of tee times, speed of the greens and the list goes on. It is important in our interactions with golfers that we make that "lasting first impression," so they will return one day.

We also make first impressions behind the scenes every day. Whether it is with new co-workers, peers or suppliers, it is important to make lasting positive impressions in an industry where networking is an important part of being successful. When it comes to Public Relations, let's make sure that "a first impression is a lasting impression" and one that is positive. - Bill Gullicks