I've noticed a trend developing in our profession that disturbs me, one characterized by a lack of personal commitment to individual and professional goals. I believe that if in all areas of life you aren't improving yourself, you're falling behind. It's easy to fall into the status quo trap. We must look at all areas of our professional ability and identify the areas where we're backsliding or not improving and make the necessary corrections.

What can we do to maintain and improve our professional image and our public relations? The Mid-Atlantic Superintendents have certainly excelled in one area, certification. We have 37 certified superintendents, 42% of those eligible. Why are others holding back from this certain positive step toward true professionalism? Within our local and national association this is only the beginning of involvement as a professional. Holding office and working on committees at both local and national levels is the next step upward. How can a person explain away the minimum commitment of attending meetings? Put something of yourself back into your profession — you owe it to yourself, your fellow professionals, and the generations of superintendents that will follow you.

How do the golfers at our courses see us? Of course, we are judged primarily by the results of our efforts, the finished product, the golf course that we maintain. Are we perceived by our golfers as just another one of the workers on the course? Is our office or maintenance facility organized, neat, and tidy? We can strive to do all these things better and we can make ourselves more visible by addressing groups of golfers and others on various topics related to our profession. We can also make ourselves available to answer questions regarding the operation of our course. Are we recognized as part of the management team by our fellow employees and the golfers?

Do our personal friends, our neighbors, and others in the community see us and recognize us as professionals? We must find time to work in and serve the community. It isn't easy, but many of our fellow superintendents make the commitment. They coach sports, work with youth organizations, serve on church and service groups, and help with charity drives and fund raisers. Community service organizations such as the Lions, Optimists, and Rotary offer an excellent opportunity for us to be visible as professionals.

I'm hoping that these thoughts will awaken in all of our members, including myself, a desire to put a little more of ourselves back into the profession that we all owe so much to. We will be the beneficiaries.

From Greenskeeper to Professional—and Back Again
by Lee Dieter

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