

I'm talking about calling or emailing people back in a timely manner.

One thing I've noticed over the past year or so is that we as professionals in the golf industry have become too busy, too complacent or just don't understand the importance of returning phone calls or responding to emails.

For some reason, many professionals in our industry don't think that this small gesture is important. Now, I fully understand we are all very busy in trying to keep up with our daily lives and finding the necessary balance between our families, our work and our other interests, but really and truly, it only takes a few minutes (sometimes seconds) to get back with someone.

I get that the world does not revolve around me. But I have a theory that I have proven to myself time and again: It really is more productive and more efficient from a time management standpoint if you just take a small amount of time to get back with people who call or email you.

It could be something as simple as "Mark, I don't have the information you requested yet, but I will get back to you as soon as it becomes available." Or, "Mark, I don't have time to talk right now, but I'll give you a call next week." Or "Mark, I got your message but I'm not interested." Or "Mark, go to hell."

In most cases it's just nice to know that, first of all, the person got your message, and second of all, they have enough professional respect to acknowledge it.

Plus, if you're at all like me, you'll feel much better about yourself when you return phone calls and answer emails in a timely manner. It's one more thing you can scratch off your to-do list.

I don't think this practice is obsessive-compulsive. It's more about treating your fellow professionals with the respect you would want in return. I've tried to make it a habit to call people back or respond to their emails within 24 hours of getting a message from them. The longer I wait and the more I procrastinate, the worse I feel.

It's Professional Courtesy, and the Right Thing to Do

BY MARK WOODWARD



IT'S JUST NICE TO KNOW THAT, FIRST OF ALL, THE PERSON GOT YOUR MESSAGE, AND SECOND OF ALL, THEY HAVE ENOUGH PROFESSIONAL RESPECT TO ACKNOWLEDGE IT.

And when I finally do take a moment to call them back I find myself apologizing for the first few minutes about why I didn't return their call or respond to their email sooner. This puts both parties in an uncomfortable situation that easily could have been avoided by taking a few moments to respond within 24 hours.

I can't tell you the number of times I have received comments from fellow professionals in the golf industry telling me how much they appreciate my returning their phone call quickly. It really does make people feel good, and it lets them know you care about them as people and professionals.

Another habit I have adopted is returning phone calls and responding to emails even if the news isn't good or the person I'm responding to is upset. I've found that many times if someone is upset and you take a moment to show empathy, the conversation shifts to a calmer tone. Often then you can work your way through the conversation and solve the problem.

I know this problem isn't exclusive to the golf industry. It spans all types of business. But we happen to work in the golf industry on a day-to-day basis, and we can start with treating ourselves with the respect we deserve. The bottom line is, it really is quite simple. And it's the right thing to do.

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