

## **Use the Easiest Non-Verbal Communication Strategy to Enhance Your Professionalism**

By STMA Editorial Staff

Good communication is the cornerstone of great professional relationships. One communication strategy that is often overlooked is dress. How you dress is another way you communicate to your peers, your staff, your employer and the end users of your sports fields.

Dressing in a professional manner suggests that you are well organized and portrays self confidence. The impression is of one who is knowledgeable and in control. (Wow, all of that from a pair of Dockers and a golf shirt!). Obviously, we aren't talking coat and tie — unless the occasion calls for it. When you are physically working beside your staff on the field, of course you will be wearing work clothing, but think about keeping a change of clothing at your office for meetings or when you will be spending several hours in the office more visible to your employer.

Consider providing collared staff shirts to bring a more unified appearance to your crew, but wear a different color shirt so that you are distinguishable as the manager in charge. Be conscious of what your clothing says about you — faded tee shirts promoting old rock groups may bring a bit of nostalgia to your day, but they do not do much to position you as a professional sports turf manager.

Impressions do count. According to Ollie Stevenson, author of *101 Great Answers to the Toughest Job Search Problems*, found that in an interview situation, interviewers make an immediate overall judgment about you in the first **five** seconds. That applies to all first impressions. Five seconds isn't long so you are being judged on what you wear and how you react. Make the first five seconds count. Be dressed appropriately and remember, professionals do shake hands. Be sure your grip is firm and sincere and you make direct eye contact when you greet someone.

How do you dress for your chapter meetings? What type of role model are you for those who are just entering the profession and what type of message are you sending to them?

The job of a sports turf manager requires a strong knowledge of agronomy, pest management, environmental issues, sports strategies, and intimate knowledge of rules and regulations so that you can manage safe playing surfaces for your athletes. Be recognized for the knowledge, skills and abilities you bring to the game and garner the respect you deserve. Don't let a sloppy appearance downplay your importance when it is so easy to dress more professionally.