

president's message

Professionalism— it's about you

One of the most talked about subjects among sports turf professionals is improving the image of our profession. This is a charge accepted by STMA, one that has been the major focus of our marketing efforts the past year.

It should go without saying that sports turf managers cannot rely entirely on their professional organization to make this happen. We all must be involved individually to make our profession respected for what it is . . . and what we want it to be. We are on the front lines of the way people see us and have it within all of our power to build a positive image for what we do. Our individual actions must speak louder than any words from our organization.

If we want to be respected as professionals, we must be viewed as professionals. Perception is reality. Period. In today's world, it is sometimes not so much what you do, but how you do it.

We can control the image we project every day in the way we (and our staff) dress, the condition of our equipment, and the appearance of our maintenance facility. We must also be professional in our interaction with those we work with and for. A true professional is also a member of their professional organizations and should be involved in continuing education to stay abreast of current trends in the profession.

There is one more important way to show our professionalism: certification. Every major profession has some form of certification and the sports turf management profession is no exception.

Recognizing the importance of fostering and improving professionalism within the sports turf industry, STMA developed a certification program a few years ago. The stated purpose of the program is:

- Increase professionalism in the sports turf industry
- Promote better and safer sports turf areas
- Establish credentials that signify a specific level of expertise
- Increase career opportunities and promote the sports turf manager and the profession
- Provide recognition for attaining a level of expertise and performance as professionals in the industry
- Stimulate and motivate improved performance and increased professionalism
- Increase opportunities for education and training

Being a certified sports field manager does not necessarily mean you are better than other sports field managers are. It does show you are committed to the profession and are committed to improving our profession. You are also part of something new we hope will set the standard in this profession in the years to come.

If you are not already a Certified Sports Field Manager, I encourage you to contact STMA Headquarters to receive the information you need to start the process of becoming certified. It is not easy, but would not be worth anything if it were. It takes commitment.

It's in all of our best interests to make our profession stronger. By making ourselves better practitioners of our craft, we can make a better organization and let people know we are more than groundskeepers. We are professionals committed to the best fields and playing surfaces possible.

That's the bottom line.



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