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“Why you do dat?”

MY 2-YEAR-OLD'S FAVORITE QUESTION IS “Why did you do that?” though it comes out “Why you do dat?” After a recent conference call with the Sports Turf Managers Association's Editorial Communications Committee, which advises this magazine, I thought it might be time to remind or inform our readers of the whys and hows of *SportsTurf*.

My employer, M2MEDIA360, publishes this magazine; we have an agreement with the STMA to serve as its official publication and beyond their membership, our readers include thousands of other professional turf managers, athletic directors, coaches, parks and rec managers, university turf professors, agronomists, field builders, and architects. I have been the editor for 8 years and work with the STMA Board of Directors, CEO Kim Heck, the above-mentioned committee, and our advertisers to produce a readable, relevant magazine.

Our main goal is simple—provide information that helps those who directly care for, are responsible for, or are professionally interested in sports fields and related facilities do their jobs better. As we succeed in reaching this goal, STMA commercial members and other companies who sell equipment, services, etc., to our readers advertise in these pages and that's how our revenue is generated. It should be better known that a percentage of each and every ad dollar we earn in *SportsTurf* goes to the STMA as part of our contract; supporting us directly strengthens the association.

Part of the recent STMA committee discussion was about how we determine what articles are published. The ideal article is written by an STMA member or another professional sports turf manager on a timely subject, e.g., in the August issue we might run a story on aeration, right in time for when that task normally is performed. Or something on weed control by a university professor or extension agent in the March issue, etc.

We also are interested in presenting the latest information available, whether it is turf-related research findings or news of a product or service that might assist readers. It was in reference to this last idea that some specific questions were brought up in our conference call. How should we handle editorial that is written by commercial members or others who are marketing products to sports turf managers?

The first part of the response was easy—we prefer “not to do dat.” And on the rare occasions we do, we always, as with every article, put at the end where that article originated, i.e., full disclosure. That way the readers can judge for themselves the validity of the information. Further, as one committee member pointed out, the experience and knowledge of vendors shouldn't be automatically discounted as a source of new and valuable information just because they are selling a specific product.

But in response to this concern, moving forward we will add an “Editor's Note” at the beginning of any articles that are provided by vendors, rather than the end, so you know the source before reading.

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