

Ethics and Product Endorsement

By STMA Editorial Staff

A recommendation from a friend or a peer about the success or failure of a product, service or piece of equipment is an important tool for sports turf managers to use in decision-making. Learning from others' experiences can save time and help you avoid costly mistakes.

Take this one step further to the public endorsement of a product, service or piece of equipment. Again, sports turf managers can learn from other's successes. If you are the endorser, here are a few tips to stay on the ethical side of high integrity.

- Do not accept any payment for endorsement, including personal gifts or favored treatment.
- Do not do the endorsement on "company time."
- Be sure you have no doubts about the product's effectiveness and value.
- Avoid any conflict of interest situations. A "conflict of interest" exists whenever an employee's loyalties may be divided between the interest of the facility's he/she works for, and the employee's own personal interests or those of a supplier. Be certain that your actions do not benefit the interests of the company that makes the product over those of your employer's interest.
- Be especially cautious of endorsing claims supported by research that is funded by the company that makes the product.
- Always check with your employer before agreeing to publicly endorse a product or service. Many owners do not allow their facilities to appear in promotional photos. Some facilities may have policies that do not allow employees to be in promotional advertisements.
- It is a good idea to explore any product liability issues with an attorney and research the company's track record, i.e. longevity in the business, solvency, etc. If you endorse a product from a company that goes bankrupt or is under investigation for wrongdoing, it can affect your reputation.

For links to more information on business ethics, go to www.ethicsweb.ca.