

## The Expansive Representation of One

Board Room Magazine March/April 2017

Member Mark stormed up to the first tee box, “Bob, you’re the president, what are you doing about these bunkers, they’re terrible? I had buried lies or hard pan: I couldn’t get out of any of them.”

President Bob called superintendent Jim, “Jim, what are you doing about these bunkers? I’ve got Mark and all the Members complaining about the conditions.”

Jim radioed assistant superintendent Robbie, “Robbie, I thought we had a good plan to keep these bunkers groomed. Did you follow up and see that Billy is following our procedures?”

And, Robbie spoke to section person Billy, “Billy, what the heck? I’ve got Jim all over me about these bunkers. What are you doing?”

President Bob was on the first tee getting ready to play when Mark, a weekend golfer who only knew Bob because of his presidency, shared his frustration about his bunker play. Bob immediately called Superintendent Jim (using his cell phone from the first tee, a clear cell phone violation) as his fellow players looked on, to share his frustration over Mark’s complaint. Jim radioed his assistant Robbie and shared his frustration over the bunkers, and Robbie went to the break room, where Billy was enjoying his lunch break, and shared his frustration. Quite a lot of frustration on this particular morning.

Manager Chris was walking through the Grill when a commotion was heard: one member in animated conversation with six others all grinning, laughing, and virtually in tears as the story unfolded. “Man, he chili dipped his first one and it rolled back into the divot. Then he topped it into the bunker face. He tried to hit it out to the side, fanned it, and jammed it further into the face. Then he just hacked at it and it rolled back into the original divot, which was now down to the liner because of the previous two hacks. He took a nine, with about an 18-footer. Boy he was mad!”

Chris seeing the joy in their eyes, smiled and asked “What’s this all about?”

“It was Mark, he had a great round going until 18 and then he bunkered. Oh, it was priceless, we’re not sure where he is now, but it can’t be good. Hey, Chris, maybe you should be on suicide watch. Boy, he was mad!”

At that point the group clapped and cheered as Mark walked in with a sheepish grin on his face. “That was pretty rough! I’m sorry to say that I just gave it to the president. Poor guy was on the first tee. I need to apologize to him the next time I see him. Chris, maybe you could send out his favorite drink and tell him it is from me – better make it for the whole group, I feel awful!”

There was a good bit of activity at the course in the short span of five minutes with even more consequences. Each of the issues has a normal basis and, while most likely not happening daily, is quite common around clubs.

Mark was simply frustrated at his poor bunker play. There was nothing wrong with any of the bunkers, he was just venting his frustration and Bob was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Bob, as president, has a more interesting side.

Members have preconceived ideas of what powers and capabilities the president has. Unfortunately, with the average club being over 400 Members, that means a lot of differing expectations. While Bob has his own ideas of his responsibilities and powers, Mark set the tone when he said "... you're the president, what are you doing..." Under situations of uncertainty, such as being accosted on the first tee, the *Uncertainty Reduction Theory* suggests that people naturally tend towards conforming to their peers' views. In this case Mark was looking for, and expecting action. *Behavior Confirmation Theory* suggests that Bob's actions are natural in confirming Mark's projection that Bob is in charge and should do something. Additionally, research tells us that a label is very influential in the dynamics of social interaction. By specifically reminding Bob that his "label" is president, Mark influenced Bob's response. In the time it took Mark to hiss out his statement to Bob, about seven seconds, all these natural influences overcame Bob, and he took action. He probably didn't even realize why he was doing what he was doing, he just did it. To further promote the importance of the issue to superintendent Jim, Bob added "all the Members" confirming the *Expansive Representation of One*, a naturally occurring phenomenon in the club business whereby one person can make a statement to an official and it takes on extraordinary importance as if it represented "all" the Members. Sometimes the person is a friend whose opinion carries more weight or, in this case, a person who has hit the right buttons to naturally influence another person.

In order to combat these natural forces, one age old technique might be helpful: Thomas Jefferson was noted as saying, "When angry count ten, when very angry one hundred."

Being president carries a great deal of weight; peer pressure can be significant. Understanding those pressures, being prepared for our natural tendencies, and taking a moment before responding may help make the journey a smooth one, because it will surely be eventful!

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