

Sand Trap Style: Looking Good on the Golf Course



Versatile golfing pants transition seamlessly from the putting green to weddings and funerals.

With a handicap of around 148, I am the world's worst golfer. My classic move is the Nine Iron to Nowhere. Chipping my club into the dirt like I'm digging a shallow grave, I send the ball in a perfect vertical arc, followed by a chunk of turf, which miraculously sails backwards over my head.

But just because I strike oil on the putting green and small children from China emerge from the hole I dig through the sand trap, doesn't mean I'm going to give up all the big business social networking possibilities of golf.

Nationwide seminars discussing "deals on the green" and "business golf" techniques not only stress the literal advantages of hitting the links (closing sales, improving client relationships, humanizing your corporation) but a subculture of golfing gurus draw parallels between understanding the game and learning key business strategies.

In his book *Zen Putting: Mastering the Mental Game of Golf*, Dr. Joe Parent offers wise words that apply to your literal club technique and a more philosophical concept of learning when a business method needs to be completely rethought rather than repeated, "Hitting the same ball from the same spot over and over until you 'get it right' doesn't mean you've 'found your swing.'" Profound!

Just because I prefer courses where you shoot your ball past a little windmill into a dinosaur mouth doesn't mean I can't spruce up and recklessly drive my cart out to the country club for an afternoon of grown-up golf. If I can't play perfectly, I will at least look good and make a few contacts.

Golf fashions have emerged from puffy pantaloons, to plaid polyester pants, to a modern laid-back look with casual flair. Designers like Ralph Lauren have created stylish lines with golfers in mind and I'd like to offer a few suggestions for you, your sales team, or your entire company to look fashionable on the fairway.



a. Fleece hoody b. classy clubs c. endurance jacket d. logo'd tees e. company hat f. branded t-shirt

Today's golf wear is comfortable, sporty, and unpretentious. Clothes of light breathable material are ideal. Keep shirts and slacks tailored but loose enough to accommodate athletic movement. Everything should sway with your swing rather than choke your stroke.

Choose one high-end accessory and match the rest of your wardrobe on a budget. For example, a snazzy set of clubs like the pink and yellow confection above really stand out. The remainder of your apparel can match in coordinated solids, such as hats and t-shirts with your company logo on them or personalized endurance jackets and hoodys.

Monogramming your golf wear maximizes the business networking potential on the course. It works like this:

EXECUTIVE GOLFER: Nice clubs.

YOU: Thanks, I like my bag a little on the wild side; gotta match my clothes.

EXECUTIVE GOLFER (pointing at your personalized jacket) So, what's Bauer Consulting?

YOU: Glad you asked... (reaching for logo'd golf tees)

A company connection is forged!

While I may never find the flow of my five iron, I will at least look classy when it goes flying out of my hands. A sharp golfing ensemble and strategic business plan will definitely improve your game.

After a day of holes-in-nones, I hang up my golf gear, alphabetize the business cards I traded in the clubhouse, and settle in for my version of a Double Bogey: A tub of popcorn, a couch, and a night watching *Casablanca* and *The African Queen*.

