



PGA
Employment Services

CAREER NOTES
July/August 2009

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One common challenge for PGA Professionals, regardless of their facility and clientele, is the necessity to attain operational efficiencies while delivering a “high touch” customer friendly experience. In response to business and economic realities, most facilities have become more operationally efficient and have made great strides in forecasting revenues and controlling costs. But golfers still appreciate and respond to the personal touch on which PGA Professionals and their facilities have built their reputations.

Regardless of what hi-tech back office management systems have been put in place, how much money new efficiencies are saving, how well the golf course is manicured, or how enticing the golf shop merchandise displays look, it can all be overshadowed by service that fails to meet golfers’ ever increasing expectations.

A good meal without friendly service is unlikely to get glowing reviews. A round of golf played while grounds staff buzz around in maintenance vehicles is hardly the peaceful respite most envisioned when they scheduled their round. And likewise, a well merchandised golf shop or well run event means little if the staff has forgotten their role as service ambassadors.

Now more than ever, golfers of all demographics and income levels are looking for service and value – and reasons to continue to patronize and spend their money at your facility instead of with your competition. The private club golfer wants to feel at home and enjoy a seamless, hassle free day at their club; the public golfer wants to be treated with respect and have a “country club for a day” experience; and the resort golfer, who has likely gone to great lengths to plan every detail of their trip, wants everything to go as planned so they can enjoy their vacation.

Employers and PGA Professionals who foster that kind of “customer first” philosophy don’t get there by accident. It starts at the top and is continually put into practice, every day, with every customer. Make sure your staff has a clear vision of your customer service standards and philosophy, and emphasize the importance of their role in delivering the overall experience you want your customers to have at your facility.

Train your inside staff on how to greet customers and thank them after transactions, and make sure that everyone who is behind the counter can handle basic procedures such as registering players and ringing up sales, reserving tee times, dealing with returns and refunds, checking on special orders, taking tournament entries, etc. Provide them with clear telephone procedures – what to say when they answer the phone, how to take messages, how long to keep a caller on hold, how to deal with a caller when there are customers waiting in line at the counter, etc.

Make sure your outside service staff knows how to greet customers, handle bags and carts, direct people to different areas of the facility, handle tipping, etc. They are often the first “moment of truth” for your customers and can have a great impact on their initial impression of how their day will go at your facility.

If you utilize starters and course rangers, it’s important that they understand the sometimes confrontational nature of their duties, and that they are able to handle the most delicate situations in a friendly and helpful manner.

And for those times when things don’t go as planned, instruct your staff on how to handle difficult situations – customer complaints, defective merchandise, violations of facility policy, pace of play problems, Rules of Golf enforcement, etc.

While the battle for efficiency and budget management is never-ending, PGA professionals should not lose sight of new and renewed ways to make their golfers the focal point of their efforts.

I hope you are having a successful 2009 season – please don’t hesitate to contact me if I can provide assistance with any PGA employment services.

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