

PRO2PRO BEST PRACTICES "GENERAL MANAGEMENT"

BY: CHRIS HUNKLER



For over thirty years I have been a big advocate of PGA Professionals serving in a dual role at a golf facility. I found it very rewarding and enjoyed the opportunity years ago. The role of General Manager/ Head Professional is not for everyone but there are many middle and smaller size facilities, both in the public and private sectoral, who would or should consider hiring a PGA Professional for this position.

Is it for everyone – NO but as a PGA member you have learned many of the things necessary to make this a terrific job. Good time management skills, ability to delegate and follow-up, understanding the importance of being visible in the right place at peak hours, customer service skills and willing to work more hours than usual are just a few traits necessary to be successful in this dual position. A GM position or dual position does give the PGA professional several important things:

- Enhancement of job security
- Better compensation
- Ability to provide significant influence at the facility where employed
- Better opportunity to advance career and better jobs in the future.

However with that said, the facility must understand splitting time between two positions does require significant time management of the GM. The GM/professional must understand the importance of being visible in key times of the day. It also requires a support staff that is well trained and who the GM can depend on at all times including a very competent food and beverage person (assuming GM does not have a significant food and beverage background).

Would you rather be the Leader of a facility or take direction from someone else? Do you have the confidence in yourself to do this job? Would you like to earn more compensation than presently making? Then consider this dual role.

The following items are some things which I feel are important in order to be successful in this dual role:

- **Strategic Plan and Business Plan** – Both of these plans are important to the success in a facility. Does the facility have a 3-5 year Strategic Plan outlining goals and visions that the facility would like to accomplish? This Strategic Plan should be reviewed annually and updated. The Business Plan is annual and should spell out in writing very specific objectives of each and every department of the facility. It would include budget assumptions supporting the objectives.
- **The Team and Hiring Process** – As the GM, you need to assemble a TEAM which understands the importance of achieving the annual business plan. They should be involved in both the

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business plan and the assumptions created to achieve the plan. Daily, weekly, monthly meetings are a necessity to review and update the Business Plan. In order to achieve a successful business plan you must understand the hiring process including the job description, advertising the position, interview process, follow-up process and your training program to ensure you have the best hires.

- **Balancing Work and Life** (see February 2016 issue of PGA Magazine) are very important in order to achieve success.
- **Having written Standards** for each department in order to help all managers and employees to understand what is expected of them and the ability to hold managers accountable for their departments.
- **Understand the importance of your financials** for every department. Are you on budget? If not why not? Can you adjust to make up loss revenue? Are you reviewing financials daily, weekly monthly with all department heads?
- **Are your Policies and Procedures** manual up to date? Does every old employee and new employee have a copy? Do you have a signed copy from all employees indicating they have read and understand the importance of this document?
- Who handles **your HR** information at your facility? If this is your responsibility are you up to date on all HR procedures including hiring, firing, COBRA, etc.
- Are you abiding by the **Wage and Hour Laws** of your state and nationally (PGA of America publishes a document specifically geared toward the golf professional and his staff)?
- Have you reviewed **your insurance policy** with your insurance company reviewing all aspects of the club? Do you have business interruption insurance for the club and golf shop? What type of insurance do you have on the golf course itself? If a major storm hits your club or a disease destroys your greens and fairways are you covered?
- Do you **have written policies** in place to cover things like cash control policies, food and beverage inventory procedures, golf shop and maintenance facility inventory procedures and many more?
- What type of **training** is in place for all staff especially staff who serves alcoholic drinks at your facility? Is all staff CPR certified?
- **Are staff meetings** in place for your management team and other staff?
- How old is **the software** at your facility? Can you get important information when required? An example may be rounds played.

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How is it broken down? Member rounds, guest rounds, tournament rounds, outings. Do you know how many rounds are played by junior players, senior players, women players or are rounds broken down by membership classification?

- Is your team committed to **facility goals**? Are their roles clearly defined? Are decisions made by consensus of your management team? Is communication clear? Do you and your staff know how to handle and resolve conflict in a professional manner? Do you have a plan to continually improve your staff?
- Have you created an **organizational chart** from top to bottom which shows reporting requirements for all employees? Consider putting it into your Policy and Procedures Manual.