



WHAT MAKES A GREAT GENERAL MANAGER?

Whether you are a current Manager or a Board Director seeking your next General Manager, have you ever stopped to consider the skills and traits needed to become a truly 'great' Club and hospitality Manager in today's increasingly competitive Golf industry?

The Club management profession has changed dramatically over the past two decades and just as customer demands and expectations have increased, so have the skills required to manage and lead a Club's diverse range of businesses.

The world's leading authority on the education of Club Managers, the Club Managers Association of America (CMAA) has, over time, identified not less than ten key areas in which both the aspiring or seasoned manager is required to be competent.

This foundation has at its base, core operational knowledge in such areas as:

Golf and Recreation Management

Golf Operations, Course maintenance, Retail and Recreation facility management including pools, tennis, fitness, Spa, children's activities and event management.

Food and Beverage Management

Service, trends, Menu development, Cost control, Catering sales and Hygiene.

Membership and Marketing

Membership strategies, Marketing, Communication, Member orientation, Member technology, Surveys, Websites and Media.

Human Resources

Recruitment, Retention, Employee motivation, Employee education, Labour laws, Performance evaluation and Mentoring Programmes.

Finance

Financial analysis, reporting, short and long term forecasting, Financial technology.

Facility and Asset Management

Preventative maintenance, Housekeeping, Security, Insurance, Energy and Water Management, Renovations and Project Management.

Regulatory

Hospitality legislation, privacy laws, liquor licensing, tax laws, labour laws and occupational health and safety.

Governance

Board relations, Policy formation, Committees.

It is interesting to note that in this highly competitive economy where Club's must operate as a corporate business and far less as a social organisation, possessing such a comprehensive skill-set is considered to be essential as the vast majority of Club's and Manager's are quite simply operating several small businesses under one roof. However, the other key skills for today's Manager's and those which provide the point of difference between good and great, lie in the areas of interpersonal attributes and leadership. Good managers tend towards stability, consistency and efficiency, whilst good leaders tend to be flexible, innovative and are able to empower employees. As we know you have to follow a manager but you want to follow a leader. Today's General Manager needs to be both a great manager and a great leader.

Club leadership can be simply defined as "Accepting the responsibility of living up to the highest standards daily".

GENERAL MANAGEMENT

Over the past 23 years of having the privilege of leading some of Asia Pacific's best Club facilities and having met some of our best practitioners, the following list of attributes I believe define the very best leaders in the Club management business:

- **Build trust in all around you.** Good leadership is about your ability to inspire trust, loyalty and commitment in your team. Credibility comes from competence (what you do) character (who you are) and connection (your relationship with your team).
- **Be dependable and accountable.** You must be genuine, do not pretend to be someone you are not.
- **Be visible in operations and lead by example.** Pitch in and do the work for any task. This helps to provide an understanding of what you need others to do and underlines the team spirit needed to get things done.
- **Be calm under pressure.**
- **Be a great communicator with all levels of staff and members.** Articulate your vision clearly and often. Spell out your plan of action and keep those around you in the loop.
- **Be a great listener.** This builds empathy and cultivates a sense of compassion and responsibility for others.
- **Have an ongoing thirst for knowledge.** A key factor in continuous improvement and learning from mistakes.
- **Recruit top talent, mentor and empower.**
- **Possess energy, passion and vision.** Always look ahead and develop a compelling vision of the future.
- **Be a great planner.** Effective leaders know where they are going and how they want to get there. Be flexible and evaluate alternatives if necessary, consider resources and plan constantly and carefully.
- **Remember your character and sense of humour.** People work more efficiently if they enjoy the work environment. Most importantly ground yourself in the core values that never change over time: Honesty, respect, perseverance and caring. Treat others the way you would want to be treated.



The leadership journey begins with an understanding of your own strengths and weaknesses in order to enable continual improvement and a balanced team to be created. I will conclude this article by leaving you with a quote given to myself many years ago by one of my own personal mentors which I still believe succinctly summarises what true leadership is:

“Demanding more, not of others, but of yourself and never forgetting that to remain a leader you must be worth following”

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Clockwise below: Links Hope Island – Queensland, Australia, Twin Creeks – New South Wales, Australia, Pacific Harbour – Queensland, Australia, Settlers Run – Victoria, Australia



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