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# PCA *Plus*

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*A Letter Written Exclusively for Executives and Administrators of Private Clubs*

## July-August 2017

**BE MORE EFFECTIVE...** Stressful times demand that busy managers set clear goals, develop effective and efficient methods for getting the work done and effectively communicate performance results up and down the management team. That's according to Henry DeLozier of Global Golf Advisors, who believes most clubs are understaffed, underfunded and overstressed.

DeLozier offers advice for managers to increase productivity and value:

- Set clear goals. Your team will perform at the top of its game when the players fully understand what they are there to accomplish.
- Organize the work needed into smaller, time specific increments.
- Determine who will actually do the work and what resources are needed to complete the job successfully.
- Look for synergies—actions that you can combine—to increase efficiency.
- Identify detailed checks and follow-up systems so nothing falls through the proverbial cracks.

“Begin effective communication with a clear and concise description of expected outcomes and the steps needed to achieve the goal. Provide regular updates and let team members know the status of the project and that their efforts are appreciated,” concluded DeLozier

**IF THE DOL KNOCKS...** At the recent National Club Association conference in New York City, attorney Jeffrey Ruzal, a former trial attorney for the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), provided invaluable advice for GMs should they fall victim to a DOL audit.

“The DOL does not call you or provide any advance notice,” Ruzal warned. “Rather they simply knock on the door and ask for the GM.” Investigators will tell you that they are going to investigate and talk to employees at random and use leading questions suggesting that the club has violated wage and hour laws. From the time the DOL shows up, the process occurs very quickly and employers often don't know what to do about it.

You should immediately inform the DOL that you will be contacting your attorney and shepherd them to a private room or area of the club outside the view of members and guests, Ruzal advised. They may respond aggressively, claim that you are not cooperating and perhaps even threaten to return with a subpoena. They may show you their badges which can be very intimidating.

Ruzal says although you may be caught off guard, you should calmly but clearly reiterate your request to speak with your attorney before the investigation commences and request that they return at a later time that is more convenient and less of a disruption to club business, members and guests.

Many investigators will likely accommodate your request and perhaps return at a later date. Nevertheless, “The audit is likely going to happen; the DOL will continue to demand your records and they will interview your employees. Make sure you are being guided by your lawyer through this critical process,” he advised.

**YOUR ENERGY ENEMY...** Mastering multitasking was once thought to be a badge of honor. Bob Litwin, Wall Street performance coach and former club tennis professional, says multitasking is not a good thing. He calls it our own worst enemy.

“Multitasking decreases your energy,” he explained. Focus increases energy and when you are

multitasking you are never truly focused; therefore you are just expelling energy and not receiving any energy back.

“In order to have total energy, there are four key pieces: emotional, physical, mental and spiritual—you must focus on each of the four in order to be extraordinary,” he said. “If you are missing any one of these, you have energy deprivation and you are not as amazing as you should be.”

Litwin suggested starting by focusing on your breathing at least one time per day. “Notice your breath. Take a deep breath in and exhale. Practice this type of focus on everything that you do and stop multitasking,” he urged.

**DIG FOR DATA...** Getting people on the same page builds trust and enhances leadership, according to Kevin Kopanon, president of Metrics First. In a seminar at the National Club Association conference, Kopanon and Ray Cronin of Club Benchmarking emphasized the importance of club managers finding and utilizing data in every way possible to help in decision making.

“Uncover the data that already lives in your POS system,” Kopanon urged. “You can figure out what attrition looks like for each membership category. You can determine average number of covers per dining room per day of the week. Take the guessing and assumption out of the decision making and use the facts,” he said.

Kopanon and Cronin argued that many clubs have the data but maybe don’t know how to pull it from the POS system or haven’t taken the time to run the report. They encouraged managers to find the data and harvest the information and then share it with their boards and committees. “You will have much better meetings when you get the insight and facts that you need,” they said.

**KEEP IT SIMPLE...** George Bodenheimer started in the mailroom at ESPN Sports and worked his way up to the boardroom. He was the company’s longest tenured president for 13 years and led the company

during an unprecedented period of growth. Bodenheimer, now the author of *Every Town is a Sports Town*, credits his success to three key things: mission, brand and culture.

“Define your mission and drive it home,” he told an audience of club executives. “Our mission was to serve sports fans and that’s what we did.”

Your brand is nothing more than what you think about when you think of your club. Build and nurture your brand, he urged. The ESPN brand promise was “Sports (what we do) with authority (how we do it) and personality (what sets us apart).”

“Our culture was one of optimism and hard work. We set three to five specific goals every year and communicated them to every employee. A company is about every employee, not just the guy at the top,” Bodenheimer said. “We made sure every employee knew our goals and where we needed to focus.”

At ESPN the definition of leadership was leaders make people better. “Employees resonated with this and strived to lead, not just manage. Develop a culture that breeds and feeds on success,” he concluded.

**MATCHING TEAM, STRATEGY...** As your club develops a strategy for the future and sets goals, is your staff adjusting to help accomplish those goals? This is especially important if priorities in services and activities for members change dramatically, according to John Young, a business consultant with North Castle Partners. (Example: The club shifts focus from golf to family, or wants to establish a more casual atmosphere.)

Young reminded his seminar audience of club executives that meshing the work team with club strategy is a matter of “matching qualified people to the roles and challenges strategy requires” (fitting people to jobs or fitting jobs to people). Under the best of conditions that means, “Have only team members who can achieve world-class standards in their roles,” Young said. “It also means removing or reassigning those who cannot—and being willing to handle the consequences.”

(continued on page 4)

## Idea Bank

**Pivot Points.** If you would like to give your club service a boost, consider assigning “pivot points” to staff. These assigned points are intended to be the designated standing areas for staff when they are in down time (or in between tables as an example). These areas are highly visible to members and allow staff to see the entrance, table sections, etc., so they can quickly respond to member needs or promptly greet members upon arrival. Pivot points reduce chit-chatting among staff and increase staff presence with members. Consider this with dining room staff, snack bar servers, golf staff, tennis personnel and even floor managers.

**Flexible Wellness.** If your club is seeking ways to add wellness options for members, you may want to check out the Ultimate Personal Infrared Sauna. These portable saunas resemble chairs with lap desks that completely enclose around your body when you sit in them. The sauna only warms the lower half of the body so it provides the benefits of a sauna without many of the negative side effects. Clubs are placing these portable saunas in locker rooms and fitness areas to provide members with wellness options that are less expensive and attractive to all demographics. [www.totalhealthimmersions.com](http://www.totalhealthimmersions.com)

**The Biggest Loser With a Twist!** Looking to add a little friendly competition among your membership? Hold a biggest loser competition to see which golfer can lower his or her handicap score the most in a specified period of time. This fun competition can be held during golf season or in the off season. Be sure to share and celebrate the results with the whole club.

**Sous-vide.** The term “Sous-vide” is French for “under pressure or under vacuum.” The Union

Club of the City of New York, NY, purchased a Sous-vide machine recently and it has been incredibly beneficial. The machine vacuum seals the food item in a plastic pouch and then it is dropped into a temperature controlled water bath with circulators that cooks the item for an extended period of time (1-48 hours). The longer cook time evenly distributes heat and retains natural juices and flavoring which greatly enhances flavoring, tenderness and texture. The machine creates healthier (no need for added salt because the natural vitamins and juices are retained during cooking), quality and consistent food items that also reduce food cost due to the individual portioning.

**Discreet Signals.** During busy times it may be necessary for staff to park in alternate locations to accommodate additional members or guests parking at the club. The Country Club of Virginia, Richmond, VA, created discreet signs with the club logo on a bright background to be placed at the club entrance to signal staff upon their arrival of a change in staff parking location. The small signs noticeable only to staff, signal the employees to park in the back up location for that shift.

**Holiday Events Guide.** As the holidays draw near, consider creating a Holiday Event Guide for members with all the details for the upcoming events. Make the guide to look like the story of *’Twas the Night Before Christmas* for an added touch.

Send us your ideas and we’ll feature them in the Idea Bank in an upcoming issue!

Email successful ideas, events, policies or programs implemented at your club to  
[pca@privateclubadvisor.com](mailto:pca@privateclubadvisor.com)  
or call 972-756-9037.

“Leaders also must adapt their skills and style to match the planned business situation and to drive needed change,” Young added.

**MORE PRAISE, LESS CRITICISM...** Damon DiOrio, a past president of the Club Managers Association of America, has drawn attention from his peers because of his golden rules for management, one of which deals with complimenting the staff. The rule: Praise your staff at least twice as much as you criticize.

While achieving that ratio may be difficult, being mindful of this guideline should assure that you do not become stingy with the plaudits. DiOrio, the new CEO at Desert Mountain in Scottsdale, AZ, believes written notes of praise to staff members should be a weekly ritual.

**KEEPING THEIR ATTENTION...** It can often be challenging to keep staff attention during meetings, especially during the busy season. Communication specialist Vincent Ivan Phipps suggests three ways to keep your listeners engaged:

**Use storytelling.** People want a personal and emotional connection to your message, so share why you feel personally invested and what motivates you. Share short stories that are relevant and be sure to practice leading into and exiting the story.

**Ask questions.** Help your audience feel smarter by asking questions throughout your presentation. Allow discussion time if necessary because when people are talking about your topic, they are engaged with your message. Avoid asking “yes/no” questions and keep questions simple. Use intriguing questions such as “What would you do if...?”

**Customize content.** Research your audience and adapt your message to your listeners. Use their buzzwords or terminology. Incorporate terms that apply to their demographics.

Have a great 4th of July!



Jackie Carpenter, CCM  
Editor

## RESOURCES

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