

Winning Strategies

Sustainability

Ten ~~Commandments~~ Recommendations

The theme of this month's BoardRoom is Going Green or Sustainability. I guess that means improve your environment and do no damage. It is also about controlling your environment without letting it control you. One manager friend told me that his club is like a computer virus. It entered his life, shifted his balance, controlled his time and, when he became an old version of himself, it deleted him from the system.

We all know that club culture and politics plays greatly into the ability of the GM/COO to succeed. Fifty years ago there were some highly recognized leaders of CMAA that were really clubhouse managers. Today there are many managers that are true executive leaders of their clubs. However, there are still today good managers who run good clubs, but play the culture / political game and stay somewhat low-key as that is what is needed and expected by the membership.

The positive here is that the industry is doing an incredible job of educating unpaid volunteer leaders sitting on club boards. New management tools are making their way into the industry from corporate America. One such tool is the concept of the Balanced Scorecard (BSC). Below is one of the many designs.



The Balanced Scorecard Institute developed the concept of the BSC Strategy and Management Tool, which has significant impact in corporate America. Basically it provides a template to track and manage strategic and operational goals. It gets somewhat academic but can be summarized for our industry as follows:

1. Assess
2. Strategize
3. Establish Objectives and Performance Measures
4. Measure Performance
5. Analyze and Realign as Necessary

What are the results of using the BSC? Peter Ndaa, CEO of Balanced Scorecard Eastern Africa, identified what caused companies to be rated high by their customers. I selected five areas that are at the forefront of great clubs. They are:

- I. Responsiveness to Members
- II. Diversity of Product Offerings
- III. Reliability and Consistency
- IV. Affordability of Services (High Value Quotient)
- V. Innovation – A Driver of Change

These are solid targets for any GM/COO. Let's look at two recommendations, within each of the five areas that can help your club move more closely towards these highly rated success factors.

I. Responsiveness to Members

1. Solicit Opinion and Respond

Surveying the membership on a regular basis is critical. This is your corporate *Market Research*. Management and club leaders must understand the members' likes and concerns so they can deal with those concerns effectively. So follow the three step Golden Rule of surveying. Ask their Opinion – Tell them what they said – Tell them what you are going to do about what they said.

2. Communication Continuously

Remember, if a member does not know the answer they will make up one of their own that is logical to them. You really can't over-communicate on big picture issues and club culture. However, members want information about those areas of the club important to them. Give members options for what information they want in blast emails. If not you can irritate, which is counter-productive.

II. Diversity of Product Offerings

1. Variety is Critical

There are a lot of companies vying for your members' disposable dollars. Make the club an exciting place by changing up things regularly. Menu changes, entertainment opportunities, and children's activities are all great marketing opportunities. Don't let things get stale.

2. Understanding the Competition

Know what your competition is doing at all times and stay ahead of them. If a competitive club starts doing something interesting, examine options to see if it is right for you. Members repeatedly take ‘the grass is always greener’ attitude with other clubs. Make sure the community understands the grass is actually greener at your club.

III. Reliability and Consistency

1. The Importance of Training

We all understand that training is important. However, we don’t always have a training mentality. Each year the staff develops annual goals. Insure that every department head has a training goal at least quarterly, or even better - monthly. Monitor the training initiatives as part of the department heads evaluation. Training initiatives should impact annual bonuses.

2. Focus on the Sense of Urgency

Members evaluate every aspect of service for both the quality of the service and also the promptness of the service. Many times we get focused on the quality and don’t put enough emphasis on the timing of the service. Remember that especially in the food and beverage areas timing is critical.

IV. Affordability of Services (High Value Quotient)

1. Establish your Brand Level

We have many levels of clubs in our industry. We aren’t all at the level of Congressional, Boca West, Olympic or Augusta. Clubs satisfy different economic markets. Evaluate your overall **Brand** against your immediate competition to insure you are competitive for the members you are targeting.

2. Measure your Value Quotient

Value is the product or service you provide based on the amount it costs. The member’s interpretation of the value they receive regarding a specific product or service is the value quotient. Many times members rate their overall satisfaction higher than they rate the value. When comparing satisfaction to value target raising value levels, the ideal is to have satisfaction rating high and value ratings as close as possible.

V. Innovation – A Driver of Change

1. Provide an Environment for Innovation

Innovation is the driver of corporate America. Each GM/COO should embrace innovation for positive change. Encourage creativity up and down the organization. Provide incentives to innovate at all levels. A perfect example of CMAA’s support for innovation is the Idea Fair at National Conference.

2. Thirst for Knowledge

Education has been a prominent aspect of managers growth for some time. Go after the opportunities there are at the Chapter and National level of CMAA. We all have busy lives, but carve out the time for professional enhancement. It will pay significant benefits in the long-term.

Remember, clubs are funny places. It doesn't matter how effective we can be in planning and management systems, our industry will always be unique. Consider the following:

- We have handicap parking spaces in front of tennis courts.
- We leave beautiful silver out in the lobby worth thousands and lock up junk in boxes in the storeroom.
- We have members complain about walking 100 yards to run 5 miles on the treadmill.
- We have 10 person committees to do the job of one club manager.
- We leave all the doors open and lock up the membership applications.
- We buy hot dogs by the dozen, score cards by the hundreds, golf pencils by the thousands, and towels by the millions.

Realigning club thinking can be a long and difficult task. Keep a sense of humor throughout it all. Remember the nice thing about being imperfect is the joy it brings to others.



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