

A View from the Top or What the New President Should See

As the newly elected president of your club you enter the office with a certain set of expectations. Sometimes those expectations do not meet the realities you face. What should your expectations be? If your club has a history of progress based on quality decisions by past boards then you should see the following:

1. Competent Directors

The number one role of the President is to insure that sound thinkers are nominated to serve on the Board. Past presidents of your club have taken this issue seriously. They have insured nominees can set aside their own personal agendas to support programs that are in the best interest of the club as a whole. Potential nominees for Board service are provided the current policy and procedures manual for the Board. Potential candidates agree to support these policies and procedures regarding how the Board functions prior to accepting the nomination.

2. A Talented and Energetic GM/COO

Your club knows that for the club to function well and make real progress it must operate under the GM/COO concept. The Board is confident in their management professional and gives him, or her, the freedom to operate the club. One stated function of the Board is to evaluate the GM/COO's performance against agreed upon goals and provide guidance and oversight during the year. Board members never interfere in club operations or attempt to micromanage.

3. A Vibrant Committee System

At your club advisory committees play an important role. They provide a vehicle for member input into what the club should be and the products and services it should offer. The key is that committees are advisory. They do not make policy, commit the club financially or make operating decisions.

4. A System to Measure Satisfaction

Board members believe that in the club business perception is reality. Club products and services meet member expectations and provide value. The only way a Board can insure they are moving in the right direction is to measure progress. Your Club surveys the membership regularly. Once benchmarks were set from the initial survey the club resurveyed again to determine if member ratings have improved. The most important role a Board at your club is to measure customer satisfaction.

5. Quality Products and Services

Your club provides products and services in a fashion that meets member expectations. This does not mean that the club provides food and beverage services better than the 21 Club in New York or maintains the golf course equal to Augusta National. It means that based on available resources the club provides high value and excellent member satisfaction. This is accomplished through the talents of the management and staff and performance is continually monitored via member feedback.

6. A Trained & Dedicated Staff

Leaders understand that the club business is a service business. All progress is made through people. Only with a trained and dedicated staff can the club meet member expectations regarding products and services. Therefore the club funds training and education for club staff at all levels. It also provides a competitive compensation and benefit program to attract the best and brightest performers.

7. Financial Integrity

The club has a history of making the difficult decisions to fund the operations at a level where progress will result. Club leaders understand that they are not in the golf, tennis, fitness or food and beverage business. They are in the dues business. Leaders understand that dues increases can be painful to the membership. They also understand that this type of pain is short lived compared to the day to day pain of continuing to regularly receive products and services that do not meet expectations or are provided in less than adequate facilities.

8. Well Maintained Facilities

The club has a history of maintaining their facilities in first class condition. This includes the investment in a maintenance staff for day to day concerns. It also includes adequate funding of capital improvements necessary to offset depreciation. Periodically the club has made the hard choices regarding major renovation and has not been reluctant to use debt when necessary or assess the members if required.

9. A Progressive Strategic Plan

A strategic plan was completed some years ago and it is revisited regularly from year to year. Leaders understand that a strategic plan is a living document that changes when needed to react to internal and external forces. The strategic plan has resulted in a facility master plan that is also regularly updated to insure the club maintains its competitive advantage. The leaders have been willing to make the difficult decisions that have maintained all assets in a quality fashion.

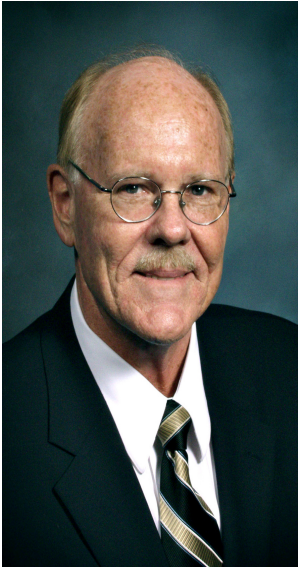
10. A Full and Vibrant Membership

Because all of the above nine items are being accomplished the club has had no trouble maintaining maximum membership levels. There is a waiting list and some applicants have made the decision to move their membership from another local club to your club. Initiation fee levels have increased and capital improvement dollars from initiation fees are at an all time high.

If, as the new President, you have observed all of this, you then realize that your club has positioned itself at the top of the club industry. Your job is then caretaker of something very special. Your agenda for the upcoming year is already established. You will support policies and programs presently in place and continue the secret charge of your predecessors and concentrate on finding good new people to serve on the Board.

If you review the organization and this is not what you find then your goals and objectives for the upcoming year have just been written for you. Meet with your

GM/COO and discuss how the Board and management can together create positive change. Your reward will be future presidents looking at the club, seeing all of the above and realizing that you helped make it happen.



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