

Fixing Computer and Club Problems

Being Prepared for the Worst When Things Crash

Many problems of all sizes are faced daily by managers of private clubs. There are operating, membership, facilities and governance issues that must be dealt with on a regular basis. The one thing all problems have in common is that they can cause frustration and sometimes discord within the organization. Great managers are prepared for what they believe is the inevitable – ***there will be problems.***

Recently the worst possible problem happened. My computer crashed. Talk about frustration. There is the isolation of realizing you have a big problem and a lot of work ahead to get things back to normal. I was partially prepared. Actually a little better than that and kept the problems to a minimum except for the loss of time. One thing became evident. The same formula that can overcome the potential computer malfunction can be used to address the multitude of problems faced by the general manager.

Problems come in all sizes. Repairing a small software issue is one thing. Having to reinstall Windows is a whole different issue. That is a big problem. This is an issue you must be prepared for, or there may be a giant headache ahead. Based on this premise we can build a system that addresses both big and small problems. The following computer jargon can be a roadmap for a plan to address any issue that comes our way.

- 1. *Make sure you have repair and recovery tools.*** Today many computers come with repair tools and recovery CDs. They are a ready made plan to address problems. The goal is to get things back to normal as fast as possible. Do you have safeguards in place when big problems occur? Managers should have planning sessions with both their staff and club leaders that address the potential for the myriad of problems that may come their way. Being ready for the ***What ifs*** is the key.
- 2. *Having access to tech support.*** Many times we just can't do it alone. We need counsel as to what actions may be appropriate. Certainly the plan must include the ability to access club leaders. Department managers can be a key as well. We should not overlook other managers and professional organizations. This is why it is critical for every good manager to build a support network around themselves. It is important when the big problem comes along.
- 3. *Get your display screen back in order.*** This is one of the first things you must do after any big change. The display screen is not only your work environment but also your public image. If your work environment is not organized, you will spend a lot of time and get less accomplished. When

problems strike we must be ready to deal with them and present a positive public image. Disorganization will only exacerbate the problem.

4. ***Reinstall supplemental software.*** Have back-ups ready so that all your support systems can be working properly. You need these systems to be able to do the difficult work needed to solve problems. There is no sense going to war over a problem if you are not fully armed. Weak department heads or poor relationships with club leaders only multiply your problems.
5. ***Copying, repairing, cleaning and sorting files.*** This is obviously the time consuming part of the process. If you have not made a backup then you may have permanently lost valuable information. It is about taking effective actions to address and correct the problem. You know how it is suppose to work. Now it is about making it happen in an organized fashion. The goal is that things will be as good as, or better than, before the problem.
6. ***Getting reconnected to the internet.*** Prior to the problem the club may have been well connected to the membership and the general marketplace. Big problems can cause connectivity issues. It is important to get back on track with the membership and repair any damage the problem may have caused with the club image in the community. This can be more difficult than just re-accessing your DSL.
7. ***Downloading your protection.*** Firewall and anti virus protection is mandatory in today's world. Big issues may impact your built-in problem detection systems, affect membership communication tools, or even your firewalls such as insurance. Many times large problems require re-evaluating your present detection systems and at least restoring them to pre-problem levels. It may also be time to make upgrades based on their ability to handle the present concerns. As the GM it is your responsibility to be ready if something like this occurs again.
8. ***Stay focused and get past frustration.*** Computers have become such a big part of our lives. We keep everything there. So the thought of having to start over from scratch or even to reorganize everything can be overwhelming. There is the same kind of frustration when something big "hits the fan so to speak" at your club. The key is to manage the problem from a position of strength in a calm and steady fashion. When it appears nothing is going right is when true leadership is exposed.

My computer problem was certainly an ordeal. However, it paled in comparison the issues you can face. Look at the hurricane devastation, acts of God and to other problems that have wreaked havoc on many clubs. You can have terrible political problems with club leaders, be facing trying financial times, be pressed with membership shortfalls to deal with or just have a small sexual discrimination

lawsuit on the books. Whatever, it is time to get prepared to manage problems and not let them manage you.

Now back to the computer. You have work to do.

Jerry N. McCoy, MCM, is the President of Clubwise, LLC, a consulting firm specializing in strategic planning, master planning, operational audits and governance issues. He is the author of The Director's Guide for Understanding Club Governance, The Governance Checklist and The Board Resource Manual all of which are publications of CMAA's Premier Club Services®, the new Strategic Management Handbook for private clubs and is an extensive contributor to the new CMAA Facilities and Amenities Texts Volume I & II which are available through Bookmart. He can be reached at www.clubwiseconsulting.com or CMAAMCM@msn.com