

"How Healthy Is Your Club?"
By Jerry McCoy, MCM

Most people have some sort of physical exam annually. They check all their systems, so to speak, to make sure they are in good working order. Businesses, as well, should examine their systems regularly to insure they are functioning well.

In the club industry there are seven areas where sickness can creep into the organization. Each should be evaluated to insure the club is vibrant and healthy. Let's examine each of them.

1. Membership Levels

Are club membership levels where they are supposed to be? Have recent efforts to attract good new people to the club been successful? Are compaction rates (activity in each service area) meeting club goals and is growth taking place? If not, why not?

2. Competition

Has new competition for the members' disposable dollars affected your club? Competition not just from new golf courses but also from restaurants, banquet facilities, fitness centers and a variety of other opportunities for your members to spend their time away from the club. What are you doing about this competition? Are there plans to compete with these companies that are sapping your operating revenues? If not, why not?

3. Operating Expenses

Are your expenses within the proper range for the products and services you are providing? Have efforts been made to save labor costs, find efficiencies in product delivery systems, purchase better and be good stewards of the club's dues revenue? What are the trends? Are you doing it better today at the same cost or is the club just passing on the increases in costs to the members in the form of dues increases? Is your club more efficient today than yesterday? If not, why not?

4. Member Satisfaction

Is your membership happy with the value they receive at your club? Most clubs have several markets within the membership. Markets such as young married couples with small children, middle ages members with teenagers, older empty nesters, senior couples and widow seniors are just a few of these markets. Each of these groups uses the club in different ways and have different expectations. Are you delivering a high level of satisfaction to each market? If not, why not?

5. Attracting and Retaining Good Employees

Is the quality of your staff what you would like it to be? Can you replace good people when they leave with comparable talent? Are there effective training

programs in place? Are you competitive in wages and benefits so as to attract the best people? If not, why not?

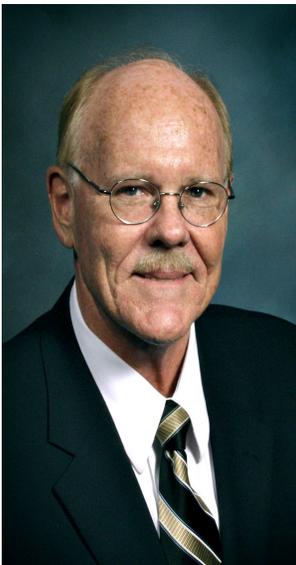
6. Visionary Leadership

Today's clubs need to be focused on the future. An effective long-range planning process needs to be in place with specific goals and timetables for completion. Are your officers and directors thinking of the club in a visionary manner? Have you as a manager helped with direction and leadership to insure the process is effective? If not, why not?

7. A Progressive Management Team

Are the general manager and the department heads staying abreast of what is happening in the club industry? Most of the national associations (CMAA< GCSAA< PGA< USTPA and many others) have educational opportunities and certification programs. They offer a myriad of opportunities to grow and learn. Is your management team actively involved in educating themselves to the newest ideas and technologies necessary to effectively compete in the future? Is the club Board of Directors adequately funding education and training at your club? If not, why not?

Today the most successful clubs evaluate all of these factors. They keep their club healthy by addressing the issues that are important to their success. When an individual gets sick or out of shape the right medicine can cure the problem. The proper medicine may be an antibiotic in the case of sickness or hard work and diet to get back in shape. When dealing with a sick club it is planning, leadership, focus and desire that solve problems. Are you working today to make your club healthier? If not, why not?



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