

ORGANIZE FOR PRO SHOP PROFITS

The key to successful management is organization. Set down your policies in a procedures manual that covers "cabbages and kings"

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Several years ago, a young and very successful dentist came to me for golf lessons. He was the ideal student: physically adept, intelligent and extremely strong-willed. His enthusiasm and drive had helped him to succeed in several other endeavors prior to his venture into dentistry. At his invitation, I visited his office, curious to find out how he had progressed so quickly in only a few years (at 35 he was approaching \$500,000 in assets).

There are many good dentists, but this one was more than good. He was "super good." His extraordinary success originated in the way he had organized his office. His system made maximum use of facilities, equipment and staff. The formula behind that system, I found, was contained in a two-inch thick, ringed notebook labeled, "Policies and Procedures Manual." The dentist had worked out a precise procedure for every function the office performed: he had formulated policies for every situation with which his staff was normally confronted. As we left his office, his priceless comment was, "We even have a procedure for unlocking the front door in the morning, and if one of my assistants forgets his key, there's a procedure for that, too."

This story is a roundabout way of

showing how much a man's success hinges on organization. All of us could be better managers of our business. Too much time is wasted on inconsequential matters. When a head professional knows he has reliable help, yet feels compelled to stay in the shop all the time, he is failing as an administrator. Because he fails to delegate authority, which stems from the failure to be properly organized, he encourages club members to ask only for him, even for the most routine services. The request could as easily been handled by an assistant. This is not good management. It's an ineffective use of people.

A refreshingly simple explanation of good management, which I heard at a recent seminar, was:

1. Know what you want to achieve;
2. Realize that you can't get there without the help of others;
3. Find good people and hire them;
4. Provide them with the necessary resources and guidance to succeed.

The last part is where a policies manual becomes important.

The numbers of people who have failed in their work must be legion. Part of the reason for this high incidence of failure stems from never really understanding what it was they

were supposed to do. That's why a job description, a precise definition of duties and a definite assignment of responsibilities are imperative, because they maximize the potential of any staff.

Two of the best policies manuals were formulated by golf professionals Jack Lumpkin, formerly of Oak Hill in Rochester and now at Cherokee CC outside of Atlanta, and Jim Bailey, from Adams Park Country GC, near Denver. Both these young and energetic professionals have given their employees a precise picture of what is expected of them, what employees can expect in return and an authoritative decision-maker in the absence of both pros. Lumpkin and Bailey have also been wise enough to realize that no employer is smart enough to remember everything let alone tell it to each new employee. It helps to write everything down, eliminating the accusation, "but you never told me that."

Here are some of the ideas contained in these two gentlemen's manuals, ideas which were incorporated into a PGA "Procedures Manual for Total Operation of the Golf Shop." The manual is too lengthy to duplicate here, so an outline is given with a few topics treated briefly.

INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Employee benefit coverage. (The professional might find it helpful to outline the benefits extended to each employee in every job classification. Be sure to include a statement of costs to the employee, effective date of coverage and limits of coverage.)

Vacation policy.

Overtime.

Employee merchandise purchasing. (Establish the discounting procedure you offer on each category of merchandise. If certain job classifications receive different discounts, make this clear.

More important, remind all personnel that purchases are to be made only for themselves, not others, if this happens to be your philosophy. A special accounting procedure should be adapted to such discount purchases, *i.e.*, specify who can transact such sales, including a statement on how and when payment will be made.)

Leave of absence.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Organization chart. (An up-to-date organization chart has sev-

eral applications. First, it sets forth the lines of authority. Second, it designates areas of responsibility. Third, it is a convenient place to list the names and telephone numbers of the entire staff. Fourth, it graphically depicts the working relationship among club manager, superintendent and professional, precluding unnecessary staff confusion.)

Enumeration of job responsibility. (In business, listing the responsibilities, duties and obligations of a particular job often helps a person see how his job

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relates to the entire work scheme. Care must be taken to make sure the list is neither too narrow to stifle initiative nor too broad to render it meaningless. Properly written, it can serve as a contract between employer and employee. The professional can personalize it by annually updating this section to include the names of his staff as well as their areas of responsibility.)

List specific duties. Example: Frank Smith—Supervise golf cars; straighten stock room; change displays; straighten shirts and tie rack; junior golf chairman; coordinate activities of caddies, shop boys; golf lessons; practice daily; help keep shop straight; fill stock rack; empty ash trays.

List general duties. The *late man* must see that all tickets are run up; see that shop is vacuumed; put money away; make sure all golfers are in; golf cars are put up; range balls ready; lights are on; golf shop is locked. The *middle man* must not leave the late man if there's a jam up of cars, golfers or on the range. The *early man* must leave at 6 to 6:30 provided his job is done, and we are not shorthanded.

Personal evaluation forms. (It's a good idea to draw up an evaluation sheet that can be used to check the progress of personnel in each job classification. Sit down regularly with each employee and review his progress. The evaluation form can help you gauge the promotional and monetary incentives offered for continued service. Remember, an evaluation only has merit if you are personally satisfied with its format and comfortable with its application.)

Tardy and absence procedure.

Salary schedule and pay policy. (List here the starting pay for each job classification with some indication about the possible incremental increases or bonuses which might be realized. Also include under this heading the days of the year designated as pay days. Finally, a procedure for handling time cards could be established.)

Playing privileges.
Work week schedules.

PERSONNEL RULES

Telephone.

Negative behavior. (This might raise a number of questions you may wish to ask yourself regarding how you feel about activities in which your staff may engage. May members of the staff drink during working hours? Do you allow card playing in your shop? What type of wagers are permissible when playing with members? Is there a personal grooming standard that should be met? Are you a stickler for punctuality? Do you expect your employees to police their areas regularly? Do you require employees to know the club or course rules completely? Have your employees learned the names of club members or course regulars? Do your employees have a tendency to gossip or speak out of line? Caution your employees about the hazards that can result from participating in club politics.)

Professional qualities. (Although defining unacceptable behavior is important, it is not a bad idea for the professional to spend a little time defining and discussing the qualities that a prospective PGA member professional should acquire and exhibit throughout life. Some examples are: loyalty; faithfulness; punctuality; dependability; honesty; kindness and thoughtfulness.)

COURSE RULES AND REGULATIONS

Operating hours.

Charges, costs, guest and green fees.

Advance reservations. The professional should outline the factors involved in his reservation system. Include:

1. the lead time necessary to secure a reservation;
2. the days when reservations may not be accepted;
3. the starting interval to be used;
4. a means of disciplining those individuals who abuse the privilege of making reservations;
5. the requirements for retaining a reservation;

6. and the corollary, the policy utilized if those requirements are not met.

Etiquette and rules.

GOLF SHOP MANAGEMENT

Meeting salesmen.

Merchandising and sales.

Club repair.

General shop operation. (Each golf shop is too unique in the way it handles its record-keeping procedures to offer absolute suggestions about what is the "right way." However, this does not diminish the importance of a procedures manual as a training or reference guide in maintaining a stable shop operation. It is hoped that in all business transactions, the professional has outlined an easy-to-read, step-by-step, posting and recording procedure for handling all the shop business. Here are just a few of the areas where such consistency is required:

Write your policy on how you want each of these handled:

- Disbursing petty cash;
- Finalizing sales of hard goods;
- Finalizing sales of soft goods;
- Clearing the register;
- Receiving shipments;
- Ordering merchandise
- Processing credit returns;
- Handling invoices;
- Filing charges for merchandise;
- Recording gift certificates and prize certificates;
- Inventory accounting.)

National Golf Day.

EXTERNAL OPERATION

JOB DESCRIPTION AND DUTIES

Area of responsibility (job description). Ranger (example):

It is the direct responsibility of the golf ranger to assure the proper pace of play on our golf course.

It is a secondary function of the golf ranger to enforce golf course rules:

1. Electric cars and pull carts

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CLASSIFIED

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Send ad copy and payment to: GOLFDOM, Attn. M. C. Ansbro, Class. Adv. Mgr., 380 Madison Ave., N.Y. 10017.

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must not get inside cart signs or off car paths where provided;

2. Two bags and two riders only on all cars;

3. Repair all ball marks and replace all divots;

4. Help find lost balls;

5. Explain "letting people through" and demonstrate where necessary;

6. Act always in a courteous manner as an arbiter of rules. Example: Shirts must be worn on the course at all times;

7. At times, we must remove people from the golf course because of their misconduct or lack of skill. Removal should be a last resort. This can be done effectively. Example: We have group lesson plans available and would like to have you play when you are more skillful;

8. A positive program to encourage proper pace of play must begin on the first tee and continue with management supervision being extended to the entire course;

9. Maintenance practices that tend to encourage slow play must be submitted in writing to the management at the close of your shift;

10. The utmost discretion and diplomacy must be coupled with the necessary degree of firmness to perform effectively as a golf ranger;

11. Periodically we will time our golfers on various holes with a stopwatch, beginning when the foursome tees up. They will be told after holing out the elapsed time for playing the hole, and suggestions for improvement will be given in a diplomatic way.

Although the task of writing a procedures manual may seem formidable, don't put it off. The initial effort and investment in time will be returned many fold. □