

THE PGA SPEAKS

Club services and you

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PGA President Henry Poe has written that nothing the association has undertaken in the past 20 years is more important to the club professional than the creating of the Club and Professional Relations Department as a full-time service to all its members.

Therefore, we welcome the opportunity GOLFDOM has given us to explain briefly some of our activities and objectives. Because like any new program, there are questions and concerns many of our members and associates will have.

While this new program has only been publicized in recent months, it has actually been in existence for more than a year. It began with the annual PGA meeting in December of 1974 when the delegates, recognizing that golf business was facing severe problems that could have great effect on their jobs as golf professionals, voted to create a full-time department to help them meet the potential problems that accompany a period of change in any business.

The PGA's officers and executive director, Mark Cox, shared the members' concern about the professional's future role, as well as the future of the game itself. While the country had a record number of nearly 12,000 golf courses, the unparalleled combination of a recession with run-away inflation has placed many facilities' future in jeopardy. This has an adverse effect on PGA member's jobs.

The officer's wisely decided that before they could determine the job to be done, they had to know exactly the present status of their 7,500 members who are club professionals. Consequently, in 1975 they invested in making an in-depth market survey to update an original survey made in 1972. The 1975 survey not only gave the present status of a club professional, but showed

changes that had taken place in his job over the past three years. Because more than 50 percent of PGA members participated in both surveys, the information was valid statistically.

While results of these surveys have had wide distribution, it is possible some of you might have missed it, so let me repeat a few of the more significant points. The study revealed the average club professional has an annual net pre-tax income of \$18,000 which is an improvement of \$3,000 over the average in 1972, but still below the standard for such a multi-skilled and highly trained professional person and about half as much as the average club member thinks he makes.

Figures show the average sales volume in pro shop merchandise has moved up a bit to about \$50,000. An interesting point, this increase in volume has been accomplished without a significant increase in inventory. In general, the golf professional is getting a better inventory turn, and has better inventory control. He is a better buyer, better manager and a better businessman. Despite this astuteness, he only averages a net pre-tax profit of a little less than 21 percent from his sales. The study further reveals that only 28 percent have any kind of pension benefits, 45 percent any kind of hospitalization plans and 25 percent any kind of life insurance programs.

It is obvious the average golf professional's position needs to be improved. This can be accomplished by first, improving the skills of the professional to maximize his value and contribution to the club, and second, by creating more of an awareness among the golf club management that the PGA professional is the key to a successful and enjoyable golf program.

A majority of the facilities are unaware of the new PGA recertification program for its members. This program requires the member to earn a certain amount of points

every three years to maintain an active PGA membership classification. These points are earned by attending the PGA's educational seminars, management workshops and at home study courses. All are designed to improve and modernize his management, and teaching skills. Few people are aware that the PGA invests \$500,000 annually in this program to ensure members become complete business and professional people. The PGA golf professional is a manager in golf business. There are very few professions that have invested more time and money to upgrade the qualification of its members than has the PGA.

To assist the more talented and capable PGA golf professional is a major effort to develop new job opportunities for him. This will be accomplished by segmenting golf professional positions into five categories; (1) private clubs; (2) daily fee; (3) municipal; (4) military and (5) resort type golf courses. With this breakdown we can determine which of the markets offer the greatest job opportunities for our members. The next step, naturally, is to develop a marketing program that will help us secure these positions for the qualified. The necessary program and associated tools will be designed by the national office, but the implementation will be done by the employment chairmen in the 39 PGA section offices. There are approximately 4,000 golf courses of different types in this country that do not have PGA golf professionals on their staffs. That is our major market.

The national office will work through the sections in creating and coordinating the elements to get the job done for them. We have already begun to produce materials that will be helpful to new employers, existing employers and to the PGA members. There are two new publications, "How To Hire A Golf Professional" which will be helpful to persons responsible for interviewing and selecting the golf profes-

sional. This piece suggests how this effort should be organized, points to be considered in the interview, preparing the job description and drafting an employment contract. The other piece, "How To Capitalize On A Job Opportunity" was prepared for the PGA member to guide him through preparing a resume, writing the appropriate cover letter, how to conduct himself during the interview, and points to be covered in preparing and negotiating the employment contract. We strongly recommend that the PGA golf professional seeking a new position or discussing a new contract with his present employer avail himself of this publication. Anyone wishing information on either of these new books should contact their section office or the director of club and professional relations at the PGA national office in Lake Park, Fla.

There is obviously a great deal of work to be done. I have spent a great deal of my time since joining the PGA staff in January of this year, visiting our section offices and their officials. We have discussed ways we can help them and have suggested they can help by sharing their successful employment service programs with other sections who do need assistance. This will be accomplished by my office serving as the clearing house for all such information. I have been impressed by the excellent organization of the section offices and the quality of the staff, especially the golf professionals that have been chosen to be chairmen of the employment committees. It was also apparent that there are no two PGA sections exactly alike or whose needs are identical. Therefore, our programs have to be designed with a certain flexibility so they can be tailored to the section's requirements.

The next five years will bring new challenges to our association, but there is no doubt the PGA's continued growth will come with better educated and trained golf professionals serving an increasing percentage of golf facilities, so that these facilities have the expertise to offer better golf programs to the players and be more profitable to owners and members. This is the goal we must strive to with renewed dedication. □

They even wrote a book

If you or your club will be involved in the selection process for a club professional in the future, you can get needed assistance from the national PGA office and its department of Club and Professional Relations.

Recently, the PGA has made available a manual on the employment process of getting a club professional entitled, "How to Hire a Golf Professional." You can obtain the book from the PGA by writing Employment Assistance, Box 12458, Lake Park, Fla. 33403. A short excerpt from the manual follows:

How to evaluate your club. Someone once said that a golf club is like a person. No two are exactly alike. When you think about the clubs and courses in your area, this becomes obvious. While they all fall in broad classifications like private or public, 9, 18 or 36 holes, many that seem to be similar are as substantially different in club personality as they are in course construction.

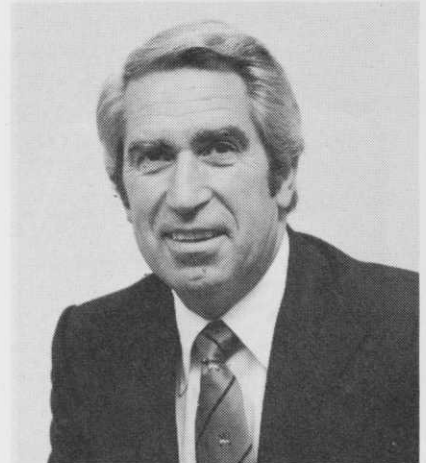
For example, take two 18-hole private clubs with 300 golfing members each. One might have twice the number of rounds played a year. Although the two clubs might look statistically alike, members of one might require three times the lessons of the second. The golf shop volume may vary significantly between the two, both in dollars and in type of merchandise sold. So the net profit from the golf shops may be entirely different.

So it is apparent that there are many yardsticks that must be used to measure the club prior to hiring a new man.

- How many golfing members?
 - (a) By Type (men, women, juniors)
 - (b) How many of each play more than 15 rounds per year?
 - (c) How many guests play if a private or semi-private club)?
- What is the total number of rounds played annually . . . by month?
- How many months will the

golf shop be open? What is the golf shop sales volume by type of product . . . clubs, balls, shoes, soft goods, etc.

- What is the average value at cost of inventory? What is the average turn of various types of products?
- What is the number of lessons given? The rate, individual and group?
- Does the professional receive income from the bag storage and driving range? If so, on what basis?
- Does the professional have an income from the golfers . . . greens fees, carts, headcount. If so, on what basis?



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The way in which you answer these preliminary questions will have a direct bearing on the type of professional you should hire. These questions, and others to meet your specific needs, are the same type, incidentally, you would ask before hiring any other management man or woman.

Here is a cross-check you can use in relation to your answers on the preliminary questions. Because golf professionals, like any other management person, will have varied strengths and weaknesses, be sure to look at your man by comparing his strengths to your club needs. For example, if the applicant you are considering for interview excels in teaching than other aspects) you will probably save time by not interviewing the applicant. □