

# Measure of a Manager Shows Club Operation Is Complex

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*National Secretary, Club Managers' Association*

*(Concluded from November)*

THE ideal club manager must be a skilled person with keen judgment in buying; good taste—call it an artistic taste, if you will—and he must know values. Inasmuch as thousands of dollars are expended each year in the purchase of such items as linen, china, silver, glassware and kitchen equipment, the manager should have some knowledge of the science and manufacture of these articles, and have that technical information to guide him in the purchase of them on a sound basis as to quality, desirability and price, and as a purchasing agent, although he may not buy directly the food items, leaving this to his steward, he must, nevertheless, have a thorough knowledge of this angle of the business. The purchasing of food is one of the most important of all the details coming under his consideration, for it is in the club restaurant the biggest loss is sustained through waste, inefficiency, dishonesty and ignorance.

You will obtain, therefore, an opinion from your applicant in regard to his familiarity with the subject, encourage him to recount his experiences in other clubs with these various items, and inquire of those who have employed him in the past as to his efficiency in regard to the matters just covered.

## They Must Know Food

I said before that the restaurant was of utmost importance from a financial standpoint, and no one, I am sure, will argue this point. It is, therefore, understood that the knowledge of food in all its various ramifications is highly technical. It is not gained overnight, neither is it gained from cook-books or correspondence school courses. It comes only through hard experience and experience gained under actual working conditions, extending over a period of years.

No man who has not had the opportunity to work his way from the receiving

room to the storeroom, through the pantry, bakeshop, butchershop, kitchen and thence to the dining room can hope to compete in knowledge and ability and get the same results in the restaurant as the man who has had these experiences can. The ideal manager insofar as food is concerned knows how to buy, when to buy and where to buy, quality to expect and the price to pay, and he knows these things only because of his experience. This manager knows further how much to buy, what yield to expect from the kitchen, how food should be prepared and how served. He knows the steward's job, the chef's art and the correct method of service, which should be employed by those in the kitchen and the dining room.

Through this experience he can discover waste and inefficiency in a moment. At a glance, he can detect proper quality in cooking and correctness in presentation. He can demand those things through the fact that he has had practical experience which gives him the knowledge, and this further brings to mind that he gets better work from his employes because they respect him for his knowledge.

In late years, a vital factor has been introduced in restaurant merchandising, call it food control or restaurant analysis, as you wish, but in its varied forms both limited and comprehensive it is invaluable, and I might say indispensable to efficient restaurant operation. Especially your manager must know methods of food analysis and their proper application. He should know normal percentages and be able to correct such percentages as are out of line.

## Graduate of "The Mill"

For one engaged in the business, the discussion may go on indefinitely, but the gist of it all is that this manager must have "gone through the mill," as the saying goes, and his experience in restaurant work must have covered at least ten years,

and preferably longer. If your club is one where banquet service is an important factor, make certain that your manager has had this experience also. Unless you as a committee member have been yourself engaged in the restaurant business, hotel or club work, the measurement of your manager in this particular unit, restaurant operation, will depend largely upon the thoroughness with which you investigate your man's experience with those for whom he has formerly operated in similar businesses. I cannot stress too strongly at this time the importance of rigid investigation, personal where possible, instead of perfunctory letters which bring the reply that "Mr. So and So served in the capacity of manager for so many years and proved thoroughly capable in every respect." Such letters are very easy to write and, particularly after a lapse of years, they mean nothing. Rather see financial statements, menus and get the reaction of those who were associated with your candidate in his previous employment. Too often is this matter of investigation a mere gesture when in any other profession a thorough searching of the records is the first step in judging his availability.

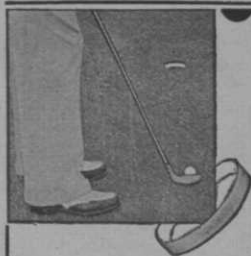
I realize, of course, that it is not possible to be an expert in all things, but club management covers a multitude of detail and embraces lines of endeavor more varied than in any other line that I know of except perhaps the department store.

A general knowledge of the various subjects, however, is absolutely essential, and there must be sufficient business background of executive ability and personality which will fit him to handle such specialized departments as you operate. For instance, he must know something of the cigar business, the operation of the barber shop, the baths, athletics, and as your golf club manager, certainly he should know the game, play the game, understand something of greens and grounds upkeep and the problems involved.

One has only to consider the various problems coming up in the course of a manager's day in the club to further realize the diversified knowledge which must be his and to appreciate the importance of the club as a business.

### The Manager's Day

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which he must make. He has his dictation to do and his instructions to issue for the various departments, and department heads. He may possibly make it a practice to set aside a certain portion of his morning to inspecting the various departments and in addition to this, perhaps he has some bookkeeping problems that have to be gone into with his bookkeeping department. There may be the question of the budget to be discussed with the finance committee, there may be some special banquet arrangements that have to be made that he himself wants to be responsible for. He calls in the head of his banquet department to go into these details with him or perhaps he wishes to confer with the people responsible for the giving of the banquet. He may call to his office next his purchasing agent or steward depending upon the size of the club and the manner in which his buying is done, or he is anxious to keep in touch with market conditions and the type of merchandise which is being purchased for the club restaurants. Furthermore, there may be certain mechanical details concerning the club's plant, questions of lighting, or plumbing, or heating, refrigerating and other such propositions which his chief engineer may wish to talk over with him.

### A Membership Aid

Next comes a member who wants to know something about membership conditions, or the possibility of putting up a friend on a guest card, or then again he may wish you to give some special attention to a guest that he expects to arrive; or on the other hand he may have a complaint concerning the service given him in some particular department. Here your tact and diplomacy must come in to play and your knowledge is such that you can give immediate explanation and advise him as to what definite steps will be taken to correct this situation. Then in a few moments you are consulting with an equipment concern for some new kitchen equipment you have in mind, and here too a knowledge of kitchen layout, kitchen requirements, service requirements, the difference between the utility and the desirability of monel over polished steel, of a drop-cover dishwasher as opposed to the sliding type. Perhaps, too, the architect is with him because you are reconstructing your building, and you have got to make decisions concerning the location for drains, and sleeves for steamlines, etc.

Now I could go on almost indefinitely

with these various diversified problems which come up in the course of a day, but to sum them up briefly, the manager has to consider many different unrelated problems whether it be steam, electricity, laundry equipment, methods of laundering, purchase of textiles, silver, china and glassware, furniture, judgment in painting and decorating, knowledge of kitchen equipment, of dining room and bedroom equipment, methods of controlling and handling his organization which might be called in general terms "employment," methods of selling, of publicity, of advertising, of merchandising, consultation with members on a multitude of problems, musical matters, entertainment problems, quality of coal based on thermal units of heat, the same in relation to gas supply, the general upkeep and cleanliness of his plant, the appearance and department of his employes, the laying out of various systems, the proper functioning of his organization and the routine work. These and a hundred other details come to his hands each day, each week, and month, and year.

Committees and managers too must admit that here is a big job for a big man.

To recapitulate, therefore, I will say that in taking your measure of your man, you must judge him to be familiar beyond a doubt with the many phases of club details which I have mentioned before—not necessarily an expert to the point of holding a degree in these subjects, but a general knowledge, above the average, to fit him to dictate intelligently to those heads of departments who have the various matters in hand.

As a man, he must be able to elevate himself to the point of equality with those whom he hopes to serve, his honesty and integrity must be above question, he must have all the requirements necessary for good salesmanship, he should be well grounded in the business of accounting, he must have vision and be ready to adopt new methods, new ideas and all the modern improvements which come day by day to this great profession.

### Good Manager Grows

His aim should be the continual seeking of new knowledge through study and experience, he should be familiar with the operation of various departments, such as barber shop, cigar stand, candy counter, baths, sports, recreational features, grounds, and all those departmental activities which are part of the club service.

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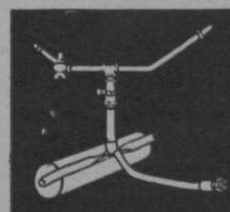


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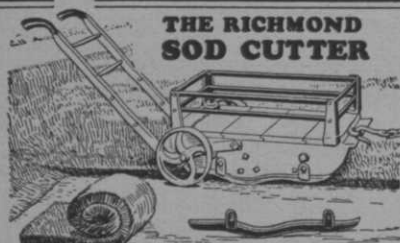
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Judge your man as you would a prospective member in regard to personality, character and education. Regard your club as a big business and realize that inasmuch as we have proved that this business requires the services of a specialist, don't forget that you have to pay a specialist's salary; for nothing was ever truer than the saying that a cheap man is more expensive in the end. Certainly you would not turn over a plant with five or six million dollars' investment with a turnover of a million or two million dollars a year to an incompetent, and that is exactly what the average club amounts to today, a big business with tremendous investment, and its success depends upon the leadership you give it.

The history of clubs and hotels proves the theory often advanced that these two businesses reflect as do no others the personality of those directing them. This is particularly true of clubs, and is the reason why you mark the difference in the general tone and atmosphere and satisfaction of members in one as opposed to another. This can be attributed only to the personality of the manager himself with due consideration of course to the committee which is back of him.

You will have no trouble recognizing the right man for the job which you have to fill if you will give due consideration to the job itself and what it entails. Be certain that your man has the necessary technical knowledge, and see to it that his records bear close scrutiny, not based on the size or number of positions that he has filled, but on his achievements and the financial records which he can produce. Be sure that he has courage and confidence in his ability, as certainly no one wants a "yes man," and his value will prove itself in his ability to disagree where he conscientiously believes he is right.

In other words, get your applicant from the right source, measure him thoroughly and without bias, carefully, painstakingly, and then give him a free rein to do the job. Any house committee or board of governors of a club which will follow this procedure will be assured of freedom from many of its present worries.