

# Responsibilities of Correct CLUB MANAGEMENT

By BERNARD E. O'GRADY\*

WAS approached in my office by one of our members recently. He said, "Mr.

O'Grady, I have a nephew who has been in the club quite a number of times with me and he tells me he would like a job like yours." I said, that was fine and asked him just what experience his nephew had had in club work. "Well, really none," was the reply, "but as I see your position, about all you have to do is to be around on the job and receive complaints."

As far as I could see, about all the credit I was getting from the man was for putting in long hours and being a good listener! However, I told the gentleman that if I heard of any vacancies—and upon investigation should find that the club members were willing to stand for an assessment of about \$1,000 apiece each year, I would be glad to recommend his nephew!

The question that this man asked me just goes to prove the average man's conception of what a club manager's responsibilities really are.

You managers may have reached your position from the back of the house; if so, it is your duty to study up on accounting and gain a definite knowledge of this angle of your work. Or, you may have been promoted to your position from that of auditor; then, it is your duty to gain a knowledge of the restaurant department. In all cases, however, responsibility lies in gaining a *definite* knowledge, not a hit or miss idea, of all departments and the manner in which they function. I cannot over-emphasize the importance of this.

As I see it, the responsibilities of a manager can be divided into three parts:

1. With relation to his position.
2. With relation to his membership.
3. Combined relationship of both.

In the first, we are dealing with the employes, and the work carried on by them, of which there are four phases, *buying, maintenance, selling and service.*

\*Address given at Chicago Club Mgr's. special meeting.

## Manager Must Know Buying

If a club is small, the manager must do his own *buying*—if it is a large club he must employ a purchasing agent to operate under his guidance and in both cases his knowledge of this phase is a most important factor towards success.

The manner in which an institution is *maintained* is often the real source of its reputation—good or bad. To some managers, and perhaps more so to boards of directors and house-committees, there seems to be an endless chain of expenditures necessary for the proper upkeep of club properties.

## Selling Duties Important

*Selling* starts with the most menial employee and carries on up the line to the manager, and it is the manager who is entirely responsible for the way this work is carried out.

You must sell your bedrooms, your gymnasium, swimming pool, restaurant, golf course and any and all of the departments that go to make up your particular club; and above all you must be capable to *sell yourself*, that is, to create in those with whom you come into contact, both by personality and results, the confidence that you are the best man for the job, and give those with whom you deal the proper confidence in you.

*Service*, which is directly allied to salesmanship, is governed, or at least should be governed by your membership and the type of club you are operating.

If your club is a wealthy one, give them the best, providing your members are willing to pay for it, but do not let yourself be fooled by the man that expects you to be "*penny-wise and pound foolish.*"

And now, we are coming in direct contact with our membership.

It may sound like an easy matter when we say that one of the requisites of a club manager is to be loyal to his job and be loyal to his membership. He must be a diplomat. If John Blank gets on a com-

mittee and thinks that this entitles him to special privileges or perhaps the opportunity of telling you how to run your business and you know that his version is wrong; or if he tries to get some employee fired because of some petty incident, you are going to make an enemy, unless you bring diplomacy into play.

When occasions such as these arise, some managers are apt to follow the line of least resistance, and this as we all know, is harmful for the club. We are only too well aware what a *sore spot* this matter is, especially with new committees taking office. We can expect a busy day in the office, or sometimes a busy month, getting new ideas, finding out our past mistakes and sometimes be ordered to rectify these immediately. If we were in the wrong it's too bad; if we are right, we should have enough nerve and confidence in ourselves to get up and fight for our rights—if we haven't got this, we are spineless managers and have no right holding our positions.

If you were willing to accept your position as manager, be ready to take the good with the bad—the credits and discounts. As for club presidents and house-committee chairmen, if they expect a manager to

accept full responsibility for club operation, they must be sure to give him the proper amount of authority—let him manage in the real sense of the word and if his operations are not successful, fire him and hire another!

**T**HE average club serves its members with the same quality of food, gives the same service, and charges approximately the same prices as the average first class hotel. There is no reason, therefore, why the food department of a club should not be able to show the average profit found in a first-class hotel.

If your dining room is run at a loss, it is time to check up on the causes, among which the major ones are:

- Too much "ritz."
- Prices too low.
- Prices too high.
- Unappetizing service.
- Unskilled food preparation.
- Too many idle waiters.
- Menu too elaborate.
- Menu too limited.
- Dining room unattractive.
- Antiquated equipment.

## TO NON-MEMBERS OF THE CLUB MANAGERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

There are more than 10,000 club managers in the United States. Of this number we believe through surveys which have been made, that about 5,000 or half the total number have the experience and capacity to qualify them to successfully pass the requirements for membership in the Club Managers Association of America.

The work which this association can carry on to right the wrongs which exist at the present time in our profession and to give adequate aid to club officers and their membership in improving the quality of management and thus insure a maximum of financial success and a high type of service, will be more productive as our numbers and strength increase.

If ever there was a need for co-operation in the profession it exists today when many worthwhile managers are unemployed and when a number of clubs are finding themselves in financial difficulties due to improper management.

Join the Club Managers Association of America, add your weight to the steadily growing momentum which is carrying the aims and ambitions of this Association, forward.

Don't think that you are self sufficient unto yourself—don't be an ostrich with your head in the sand—no man goes forward whose eyes are closed and who will not hear. Unite with your brothers in the profession for its elevation, for education and for success.

Address your inquiries concerning membership to the National Secretary. Do it now.

## CLUB MANAGERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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