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# Why Central Control Brings Efficiency In Management

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One of the principal, though generally unspoken, objections to the general management plan in golf club operation, is fear that the other guy'll get the job as boss.

Pro and greenkeeper, in numerous instances, have their fingers crossed for fear the manager will become general manager and hard to get along with.

But, on the other hand, there's no law against a pro or greenkeeper becoming general manager in case he's qualified to handle the increased responsibilities of the job. Pros and greenkeepers are successful as general managers under the centralized control system that is spreading among golf clubs.

Leonard Mattson, successful as the general manager of St. Paul's famed municipal course, Keller, highlights some of the points a pro must bear in mind should he be ambitious to handle general management responsibilities.

This article gives the highlights of Mattson's talk at the Minnesota clinic.

**M**ORE efficient management of golf clubs lies in the establishment of centralized control. I believe that the golf professional is the key man in this set-up.

Every successful business or organization of any kind is run on sound business principles and its control is centralized. A golf club to be operated successfully must follow this same general pattern.

Too many clubs today are guided by a system carried over from an era of better times, when a club could meet an operating deficit by assessments, and before the public courses were raised to their present high standard.

We know that a good many clubs have failed and a good many more are in unhealthy financial condition today because of unsound business practices. I think the first clubs to establish the centralized management policy were the small town clubs, where the economic pinch was felt first and where adjustments could be made faster because of more modest plants.

A man for this centralized management work must have certain definite qualities; qualities which are demanded of any good business man or manager. He must be an organizer and an executive. He must maintain good personal appearance, be pleasant, tactful, and diplomatic, and he must have at least a general knowledge of each department. He must have a sense of values gained from experience at a golf club and he must be able to correlate the various departments and see them as a unit.

This centralized control has existed in many clubs in an unofficial manner. We all know of clubs where some person, usually an old retired member with business ability and an extensive knowledge of golf, virtually managed the club in a very efficient manner, merely as a hobby or because of his love of the game. Clubs which possess such individuals are very fortunate indeed. But at the majority of clubs, officials do not have the time or

Sleepy Hollow CC (New York Met. district) put on a unique afternoon of golf May 15 when members 'competed' with Horton Smith in an 18-hole handicap event. Publicizing the event with the words (printed on lively two-color posters) "Want to play against Horton Smith?", Sleepy Hollow members posted their scores, with full handicaps, against Horton's hole-by-hole score. Prize was awarded the member who beat Horton by the widest margin.

the experience necessary for the co-ordinating of the various functions of business management.

It behooves the professional, because of his knowledge of golf, his love of the game and because his welfare is dependent upon the progress of the game, to take a vital interest in the financial stability of his club. He should make himself indispensable in his own department and look for new ideas that will be of help to his club. Then in visiting and playing other courses, he should study the practices that are maintained at the better managed clubs so if his club adopts this progressive move, he will not be unprepared.

Good business management is predicated on two general phases: to increase the number of golfers in addition to holding the ones we have by making conditions as pleasant and enjoyable as possible, and to see that the golf dollar is wisely spent.

In regard to the first point I think the golf promotion program in reaching students in schools and colleges and the encouragement of juniors and caddies has done a good deal. The surface has only been scratched. And with the great health movement being organized, a great many people will be attracted to golf because of the pleasant exercise it affords and because, due to the handicap feature, members of both sexes and of every age group can play on equal terms.

Without pretending to set myself up as an authority but merely as a basis for comparison, I shall outline briefly some of the practices I employ as general manager of my club.

We operate from a budget. In arriving at that budget we try to conservatively estimate what our income will be for the following year. Then we try to allocate the funds equitably to the various departments. There is the administration department which covers the business manager and certain other expenses. Then

there is the operation and maintenance of the course.

The operation covers the professional, assistant, caddiemaster, ranger and miscellaneous small supplies. Maintenance covers the greenkeeper and all the labor and materials such as fertilizer, seed, water, electric power, new equipment and repair of old, fungicides, gas and oil, paint, and various other items. Then the labor item is distributed over greens, fairways, tees, rough, traps, trees, nursery and tournament expense.

Then we have the operation and maintenance of the clubhouse and restaurant. This includes the help, fuel, light, all the supplies, repairs to building and equipment and many other items.

In addition most clubs have a general expense fund to cover taxes, insurance, workmen's compensation, social security and amortization charges. At many clubs these charges eat up a third or more of their income.

In going over our records we try to find out how much is spent for necessities and how much for what someone has appropriately called the "trimmings." These trimmings may be listed as swimming pools, tennis courts, archery ranges, bowling greens, and that part of the clubhouse other than the restaurant and locker room.

These things are nice to have, provided they are not had to the detriment of the golf course, because we presume that a person joins a golf club primarily to play golf.

In regard to the golf course, without lowering our standard we have effected savings of about \$1500 a year by adopting power equipment. By an intelligent fairway fertilization program we figure we save \$500 a year in water and electric power. Also by sodding certain sand traps we save about \$300 yearly in sand and maintenance.

I agree with many others that the converting of certain severe sand traps to grass bases should be done. It will make the game a little easier for the average golfer because most sand traps are a nightmare to him; whereas we know for the good golfer, getting out of say a 3-inch rough, presents more difficulty than getting out of sand.

A person plays golf for pleasure, exercise, relaxation and sociability. Good business management of the golf club will do much in providing him with these wanted values at reasonable cost.