

Accent on management

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How large must a golf club be before it needs a full-time, professional manager to run the whole operation?

Judging from the records available, there is good reason to believe that most clubs with a combined gross income from dues, golf, and food and beverage sales totalling more than \$100,000 have full-time managers.

Add the fact that many clubs around the country have been forced to take on a professional manager just to stay alive to the observation that many others have grown from a struggling golf facility to a civic institution after employing a full-time professional manager, you begin to draw some conclusions. The increasing difficulty of meeting today's rapidly rising operating costs makes the employment of a manager by all but the very smallest clubs a necessity.

In the words of Mr. Edward Lyon, an active manager of clubs for 15 years and Executive Director of the CMAA for 10, "Running a club with a half-million or more investment in plant, plus annual revenues, is simply not an operation that can be handled on a part-time basis or by untrained people.

"Every department . . . needs constant supervision and coordination by someone experienced in cost controls, personnel practices, maintenance, service, promotion, and administration.

"It is difficult to imagine how a group of several hundred men, wealthy enough to afford whatever the club costs them in dues and assessments, would accept an obvious lack of control over their annual investment in a facility."

While most clubs are non-profit organizations, they needn't be uneconomic. There are literally hundreds of ways that

lack of controls can cost a club—and its members—dearly. Waste in many forms and in many areas of the club can mean money going out the back door in the form of food, time, or supplies.

Unless a club has a highly demanding membership that is given complete freedom in their drains on the club's resources—without cost to themselves—a competent, experienced club manager can be expected to save several times his annual salary at a club grossing \$100,000 or more.

A recent survey conducted by the Association indicates that the median salary which clubs can expect to pay ranges from eight to ten per cent of the gross for clubs with an income between \$100-\$200,000, to four to seven per cent for clubs in the \$200-\$400,000 bracket.

This median salary, according to the survey, includes such fringe benefits as housing, car allowance, pension plans, hospitalization, etc., and represents an increase of a little over eight per cent in the last three years.

The benefits of professional management go far beyond the simple economics of protecting an investment. Supervision of personnel, efficient and constant use of the entire club facility, member service and comfort, effective building and equipment maintenance, and imaginative entertainment are only a few of the results that can be expected from a full-time club manager.

Perhaps one of the easiest ways to determine whether *your* club can justify employing a club manager is to consult some of the professionals in your area. If you know of none, drop me a line, and I will be happy to put you in touch with a source of information. ●