

This is the work week

"It's our responsibility as club managers to examine our personnel in light of



I, as a club manager, find that today the people we are looking for are becoming increasingly difficult to find. What's more, we can expect the situation to get worse rather than better. But, I also question who's at fault, the club manager and/or his board of directors or the applicant.

Have you noticed any changes lately? How many young men do you find knocking at our doors in their efforts to find suitable employment within the club industry? Where are the individuals who delight in working Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, split shifts or any number of hours you might care to assign them? Where are the young professional cooks, waiters, bartenders, who are willing to work under conditions of heat and discomfort, who look forward to long hours and low pay in an industry which commands little or no social prestige?

Ever since World War II, our industry has been reliant on the marginal worker, the unskilled, the uneducated, those with language barriers, or those who are not equipped to compete in other fields of endeavor. With the advent of the Fair Labor Standards Act, hotels, restaurants, and clubs are now confronted with the prospect of higher wages and a shorter work week. Although hotels, and more recently clubs, have been excluded from some of the provisions applicable to the Fair Labor Standards Act, we can certainly anticipate that within the very near future we can expect that the minimum standards as they apply to others will prevail here.

It is, therefore, imperative that we re-evaluate our position relative to our personnel needs and put ourselves on a competitive basis with not only hotels and restaurants but industries as well.

In the state of New Jersey, where my club is, a Minimum Wage Standards Act was passed by the state legislature in 1966. This act provides that employees in our industry are subject to a minimum wage level of \$1.50 per hour with time and a half to be paid for all time worked over 40 hours in any one week. This has been a direct stimulus and has served to revise the thinking prevalent in our industry that we could not afford the luxury of a 40 hour week.

that was

by E. George Wetmore, Manager Tavistock CC, Tavistock, N.J.

the space age and forget about the horse and buggy days."

Here at Tavistock, we have been on a 40 hour week for almost six years. The only persons not included in this category are the manager and the chef. We are seriously considering right now, the feasibility of giving our chef the advantage of a five day week in the very near future. Our concern is not only that we need to make conditions better, but, in addition, we would like to avoid the probability of physically wearing out an executive who means so much to our organization.

For years we have been content to work these people six or seven days a week, ten or twelve hours per day without any thought as to the actual physical toll. In some instances, the Fair Labor Standards Act may well prevent us from continuing this practice by placing an hourly value on the chef's time. However, it would behoove us to give serious consideration to the many other reasons which should prompt us to accept the need for a complete re-evaluation of our present employment practices.

If we wish to recruit more than the marginal worker, and if we wish to compete with other industries in attracting our share of the young labor market, then we must make a critical analysis to ascertain just who our competitors really are. At this point, I seriously question whether clubs compete favorably even with hotels and restaurants within their communities. In fact, many boards are reluctant to recognize the need to compete with them at all and confine their comparisons to other clubs.

Actually, clubs could be the leaders within the hospitality field. Instead, we lag far behind. In some instances, hamburger chains have made far more progress, which is certainly not a tribute to the progressive thinking which should exist in all clubs.

The first reaction I always receive, to any proposition that our industry should go on a forty hour week and pay time and a half for all overtime worked after forty hours, is that we can't afford the cost. Provided strict attention is paid to scheduling, you will find that it will be far less costly, ultimately, to go on a forty hour week than the normal increase experienced year by year.

In some ways, our own organizations can be strengthened.

For example, if ten employees work forty-eight hours per week, this totals 480 manhours worked. By adding two employees to your staff, and switching to a 40 hour week, then 12 employees would work a total of 480 hours at no extra cost. A side benefit would be the extra strength of two additional employees to fill the gap in time of need, such as sickness, vacations, etc. Of course, in actual practice, we frequently find that we do not pay sufficient attention to scheduling and, as a consequence, we wind up paying some overtime at a premium cost. Strict attention to these details, however, can provide proper control.

According to an analysis by Institutions Magazine, a total of 3,298,500 persons were employed in the food service field in 1966. By 1975 it is estimated that we will need 4 million food service employees. This summer, hotel and restaurant schools in universities across the country will graduate roughly 1,500 students. Contrast this number with the estimated 6,000 managerial openings expected in the industry this year. Also, keep in mind that other industries are bidding for the talents of the better students.

Just because you have been content to work 60 and 70 hours a week, don't get the idea that the youngster we are attempting to recruit today is that interested. We must have a great deal more to offer which, upon careful analysis, might not be such a bad idea. Instead of working the longer hours frequently expected of us, perhaps we would be better advised to become more efficient in our planning to get more done in a shorter time. I'm sure most of us will admit that our schedules are frequently established on the basis of what the board thinks our hours should be as opposed to the hours which are actually necessary.

When we first initiated the five day week at Tavistock Country Club, a number of our employees were not enthusiastic about losing the sixth day. This was true despite the fact that most of them received wage increases in conjunction with the change to the five day week. As time went on, however, they realized very quickly the bene-

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The work week

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fits which accrued as a result of this shorter work week.

Today, contrary to popular opinion, many of our employees must be coaxed to work one of their days off even though they receive a premium pay for doing so. This is particularly interesting in face of the opposition the program received at the beginning.

Employees seem to place a great value on their free time for the second day. Incidentally, we always make every effort to give every employee two consecutive days off, unless he requests otherwise.

It's difficult to assess the indirect benefits of a shorter week, such as increased productivity, safety, longevity, labor turnover, etc. However, it is apparent that they exist and may well contribute substantially in determining the success of your personnel program. Whatever they may be, it is our responsibility as club managers to examine our personnel policies in the light of the space age and forget about the horse and buggy days. We have places to go and things to do which can't be accomplished with our heads buried in the memory of what used to be. □

A menu for

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meal allowing only large, sirloin steaks as substitutes. Request reservations be in one week early, order lobsters by phone, and there is no possible waste on this one.

There seems to be a very bleak outlook on the winter season, which brings forth such interesting things as: raw oysters and clams, braised ox-tails, German Octoberfests, New England boiled dinners, and hot mince pie with brandy sauce. But it is you, the enterprising club manager who can change it from the "saddest of the year" to a time of new opportunity to service your members' needs, as well as adding revenue to your club. □



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