

Some Questions And Plenty of Answers

THE STATE OF THE PRIVATE CLUB INDUSTRY...WHAT'S THAT REALLY MEAN? AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOUR CLUB AND FOR EACH OF THE INDUSTRY'S MANY AND VARIED INTERESTS?


For sure, the many challenges and opportunities the private club industry has encountered during this economic quagmire have required prudent decision-making.

Yes, we know many clubs have not shied away from making decisions. For some, it's really been a question of what decisions are necessary, and which aren't.

And yes, there are answers that can help your club make decisions today, and that's the theme we posed for our contributors this issue...what can you do to help clubs find their way through the economic thicket. Where do our contributors see clubs today? How can they help boards and general managers bridge the gap in tough times? What are the problems...and what are the solutions they suggest?

A deep recession, a nation-wide housing slump and spiraling unemployment are now familiar scenarios, but what does this really mean for the many components of the private club industry.

It means private clubs must be managed to the highest standard, where members come first, where their club is really a home-away-from-home, where families are welcome, where finances are carefully controlled and undoubtedly, where there's planning for the future, because there is a future.

Our many stories on the State of the Industry, and the ideas and suggestions from contributors, are easily identified in this issue with the "Bright Idea" icon. 

To get over the first hump and starting at the top, a 'bright idea' and prime requirement for each and every private club is a very qualified and productive board of directors...and that's the thrust of John Fornaro's Publisher's Perspective (p. 10).

It's not the time for sticking heads in the sand and wishing all the ill will away. Not! Clubs must continue on their mission, recruiting new members, enticing members to stay involved and developing ways and means for greater usage of their club's facilities. There are solutions and so many are often simple, inexpensive ideas that can be such an attraction for members and their families.

But the urgencies of the day require committed, well-qualified and productive boards of directors, who have the competencies, attributes, skills and diversity to establish policies and standards and they work in concert with their general manager for the betterment of their club and its members.

Our cover story, "The Retention Chair", by Ron Banaszak, CCM, general manager of St. Francis Yacht Club in San Francisco, is a fine example.

Membership retention is a sticky wicket every club faces and Banaszak and his colleagues have met this issue head on with an innovative approach, fully supported by the club's board.

Want to know how it's done? Read Banaszak's thoughts starting on page 23.

In one other specific State of the Industry package, three other contributors – Rick Coyne of Club Mark Corporation, Frank Vain of the McMahan Group and Ryan Yakel of CCI Club Design – offer many more ideas for their specific areas.



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EDITOR, BOARDROOM

Dr. Bonnie Knutson (p. 14) offers seven C-worthy strategies for navigating turbulent club water; and Kevin Reilly in his Fact and Figure column (p. 26) explains that clubs need a two-pronged approach today – one for survival and the second looking at strategic moves for the future.

Henry Delozier (p. 44) suggests there are seven significant trends for which alert club leaders should plan and there are strategies your club can incorporate in the locker room (Todd Dufek, p. 34) to aid in your economic survival.

These are just some of the ideas, suggestions and take-aways that you can inculcate into your club's planning process. These are ideas others have used and that work. Now it's up to you to take advantage of these opportunities and face your challenges head-on.



Finally...we continue this issue with more introductions of BoardRoom's 21 Presidents of the Year including Eugene Greene, president, Blainroe Golf Club, Wicklow, Ireland; Gordon Lawson, captain, Royal Dornoch Golf Club, Scotland; Don Jones, president, Hillwood Country Club, Nashville, TN; and Stan Michel, president, Glendower Golf Club, Johannesburg, South Africa. **BR**

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