



SINGAPORE CLUB MANAGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CLUB MANAGERS ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE

Addressing Golfing Trends

• by Spencer Robinson

Many of the brightest brains from the global golfing industry are preparing to converge on Kuala Lumpur, seeking to address the most pressing issues facing the Royal and Ancient game.

Headlined by keynote addresses from golfing legends Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player and Peter Thomson, the third edition of the Asia Pacific Golf Summit will be held at the prestigious, multi-million dollar purpose-built Putrajaya International Convention Centre in the Malaysian capital from October 26-28.

“The global economic meltdown has placed a dampener on the golf



Photo courtesy of Sentosa Golf Club

industry as a whole, but we are seeing a real spike in interest in our event and current trends point to a record-setting Summit in Kuala Lumpur,” said Mike Sebastian, managing director of Asia Pacific Golf Development Conferences (APGDC)

Pte Ltd, the owners and producers of the Summit.

The theme for this year’s Summit is focused on protecting the huge investments made in golf courses in the Asian region.

Continued...

INSIDE

From the President

2009 is increasingly looking to be the turnaround year ...



• Page 3

Changing Courses



Could Brown be the new Green...!

• Page 3

Effective Club Governance

Is It Time To Revisit Committee Job Descriptions..?



• Page 5

Engaging the Next Generation



19 May 2009 saw the graduation of Temasek Polytechnic’s pioneer batch of students ...

• Page 6



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NEWSLETTER

Singapore Club Manager is the quarterly e-newsletter of the Club Managers Association of Singapore. Submissions are welcome and should be forwarded to the Editor, David Brightling, at brightling@one15marina.com.

Addressing Golfing Trends

• Continued from cover story



Spencer Robinson
Managing Editor, Asian Golf Monthly

Conservatively put, hundreds of millions of dollars have been invested in golf course development over the years and there is now a critical mass in the region that requires a general scaling up of services to cater to the needs of these establishments.

Collectively, there are more than 4,000 golf courses in the region, employing some 400,000 workers.

"This is a large industry and in Asia it is growing at an exponential rate," said Sebastian. There is, he added, a frenetic pace of golf course development in the 'new frontiers' of golf, which comprises China, India and South Korea.

The global golf industry is now heavily focused in Asia as it is about the only geographic region of the world where there is growth being recorded, both in terms of new golf course development and new players taking up the game.

"This is a very exciting trend because as golf clubs face closure in the United States of America and Europe, Asia is experiencing an unprecedented rate of growth in new business. This augurs really well for the region," Sebastian explained.

The 2009 Summit will put up more than 30 world-class speakers who have been commissioned to address a range of topics relating to matters on new trends in club management, improving membership services, upgrading the standard of turf care and maintenance and golf development in general.

Sebastian said: "We have designed the three-day programme to address specific topics that are of critical relevance to club owners, operators, general managers and course superintendents. These are the people who need to be brought up to speed so that they know exactly what is available to them to help protect and grow the millions invested in their respective golf clubs."

Besides very industry-focused keynote speeches and panel sessions, there will be specially organised workshop sessions held under the auspices of the Asian Golf Industry Federation (AGIF), the sanctioning authority for the Summit.

AGIF president Wong Khen Jee said: "Working together with the organisers (APGDC), we hope to provide direction and guidance to make this very important event more meaningful for all of us in the trade."

Asia Pacific Golf Summit

Dates: October 26-28, 2009

Venue: Putrajaya International Convention Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Sanctioning Body: Asian Golf Industry Federation

Supporting Organisations: Asian Golf Business; Asian Golf Monthly, R&A.

**For further information, please visit the dedicated conference website at www.golfconference.org*

****For further details, please contact Georgina Wong at georgina.wong@golfconference.org
Tel: +65 6323-2800 Fax: +65 6323-2838**

*****For registration, visit www.golfconference.org or contact the Summit's secretariat and speak to Alice Ho at +65 6323-2800 or e-mail alice.ho@asiangolfbusiness.com**

Changing Courses: Could Brown Be The New Green..!



Photo courtesy of Sentosa Golf Club

Last year, Ronald G. Dodson, president of Audubon International, told a Wall Street Journal reporter that while he applauds Augusta National Golf Club's effort to be environmentally friendly, he believes that the course's big budget has created an almost unnatural beauty that most other courses are unlikely to achieve without extreme measures. It would appear, in the face of economic concerns and environmental pressures, that many are ready to stop trying. Some industry experts suggest that ultimately the game may be better for it.

The kind of firm-and-fast playing conditions that come from a dryer course are common in the United Kingdom. While they are not yet the accepted standard in the U.S., water restrictions and the rising costs of course maintenance are pushing things in that direction. In areas of extreme drought such as Las Vegas, some clubs have started stripping out sod in favor of xeriscapes and naturalized areas that do not require irrigation, based on an assumption that water issues are unlikely to improve. Most report that members have been accepting of the changes and that the move has generated positive PR in the local community.

Golf course architect Pete Dye believes that not all improvements actually improve the course. Dye told attendees at a 2008 seminar that he spends about 50 percent of his time talking clubs out of

renovations. "We need to get to a greater acceptance of a course that is not emerald green," Dye said. Other consultants agree that golfers often fail to recognize the difference between normal course conditions and tournament conditions, which can lead to an unfair comparison of courses. Member-guest invitationals add to the confusion because guests are playing on courses specifically tailored to impress the members' friends.

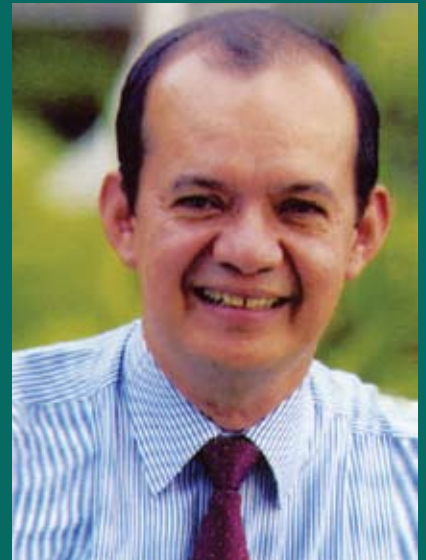
The American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) has long endorsed the value of establishing a master plan for the golf course. Current changes to the golf landscape make now a good time to undertake that project. Having a plan in place reduces the likelihood that a new green committee will come in and derail the work of their predecessors. Consistent direction makes the board's job easier over the years and builds trust with members. The ASGCA also encourages superintendents to create an ongoing management plan as part of any design or renovation. Project management software that allows online collaboration (www.sharedplan.com for example) may be a practical way to keep everyone on the same page.

From

The
PRIVATE CLUB ADVISOR
A Letter to the Directors, Officers, Owners and Managers of Private Clubs

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From the President



Roy Higgs
President

2009 is increasingly looking to be the turnaround year to the current economic crisis with a more positive outlook for 2010.

The CCOC with Ben Tan as the Chairman has therefore chosen "Riding the New Wave" as the theme for next year's conference to be held on 19-20 April 2009. It looks to be an interesting theme for participants to share their thoughts.

Do mark these dates in your diary as we hope that the topics chosen will be relevant to Club Managers as they set a steady course out of the stormy waters of the crisis.

Kind regards
Roy

Member Retention

Developing a Plan for Success



Photo courtesy of ONE°15 Marina Club

Private clubs face many challenges today. It is increasingly difficult to attract and retain members due to increased competition, changing lifestyles and a difficult economy. In order to succeed, clubs must offer their members a quality experience in each of the activity areas, as well as a programmed environment that facilitates the growth and development of social capital. Very few members are ever going to be able to analyze their membership in a private club on strict economic terms. They decide to remain members only when there is a combination of a vibrant social network and quality facilities and programs.

There are five areas where top private clubs – those that have at least 90% overall member satisfaction and 33% or more very satisfied members – tend to excel against their peers. These are:

- 1. Clarity of Mission Purpose:** The top clubs have a clear sense of their mission and purpose, and there is strong congruence among the membership that this is the type of club they want now and the future.
- 2. Quality Facilities:** A club's facilities are outward signs of the quality of the club and the vehicle through which they live their mission. The appearance and condition of the amenities at successful clubs have the look and feel that encourage use and engender a sense of

pride among membership. They allow the programs to flourish.

- 3. Food and Beverage Excellence:** This typically challenging area of the club operations is a success story at top performing clubs. The vitality of a club depends on a vibrant social network and the food and beverage operation plays a critical role in drawing the membership to the club for personal use or member events.
- 4. Excellent Staff and Service:** People join private clubs for a special experience. This happens mainly because a well-trained and friendly professional staff offers a personalized level of service to membership.
- 5. Sound Leadership and Communication:** The leadership at top clubs knows the bounds between governance and management, they keep the membership abreast of the operational and strategic issues at the club.

In today's fluid environment, these five areas can serve as signpost for club leaders. Putting in place processes and plans that identify the clubs strategic direction and developing action plans that lead to measurable improvement in each of these areas will improve the chances that your club will succeed in the future. As the case studies from winners of the McMahan Group/Club and Resort Business Excellence in Club Management™ Award show,

excellence is only achievable when there is a real understanding of needs and an effective response on the part of the management team.

Private clubs are complex service business that are expected to consistently perform at very high levels. Effective Boards and managers recognize that it is imperative to spend the time and resources to have an intimate understanding of member desires and satisfaction. This provides the data necessary to plan and customize the services and programs, so they are on-target for individual members as well as various member groups; i.e., regular members, juniors, seniors, families, women, etc. In addition, private clubs must understand that if they want to perform at the highest levels they must compensate their staff accordingly, and they must fund the types of training programs that puts and innovative and responsive team at the members' disposal. While fiscal responsibility is a must, price and efficiency are not the hallmark of a service business, member satisfaction is.

Leadership is obvious a key delivering the kind of excellence and satisfaction discriminating club members expect. Board and management working together must be able to articulate clarity of purpose by developing a Strategic Plan that defines important club objectives and delineates an appropriate application of resources. Once the plan is established, it is important to communicate its priorities effectively to the membership and to implement the programs and policies that will deliver the targeted experience.

From

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Committees and Accountability Effective Club Governance



IS IT TIME TO REVISIT COMMITTEE JOB DESCRIPTIONS..?

In the early 1900s, it was not uncommon for a private club to be established and managed by a board of directors, with the day-to-day operational concerns entrusted to a house committee. Times have changed, so it might be wise to review the core language in your bylaws to be sure they still serve the club's purposes in the 21st century.

Over the last century, the structure of most clubs in the US has evolved to include a professional general manager / chief operating officer who has full responsibility for the daily operation of the club. Unfortunately, antiquated bylaws or policies defining committee responsibilities remain on the books in some clubs that contradict their current leadership model. If (or when) a zealous committee member decides to interpret the job description literally, board and management could easily find themselves at odds.

We have seen several examples with potential for conflict including: giving a house committee the authority to hire or fire staff; giving a house committee direct oversight of the club's manager, and giving a house committee final say so on daily operational decisions. Committee job descriptions (house or otherwise) should always make it clear that all committee decisions are "subject to the approval of the board."

In contrast, one club we spoke with prints its official "House Committee Mission Statement" on the bottom of every meeting agenda. "The House Committee is responsible for the general supervision of the clubhouse, furnishings and property, grounds, repairs and maintenance. It also formulates and enforces the house rules of the club which include the dress code and rules of conduct. The

House Committee also investigates and makes recommendations concerning reciprocity with private clubs around the world. "

The same club also has language embedded in the bylaws, which identifies the general manager as being specifically in charge of the day-to-day management of the club, its operations and its affairs. Visit us online in the "Focus Today" section at www.privateclubadvisor.com to see more in the "Governance Handbook."

ACCOUNTABILITY IN CLUB GOVERNANCE...

In the wake of recent federal taxpayer bailouts of large corporations brought down by sloppy management, and the high-profile corporate scandals earlier in this decade, business decision makers will be closely watched more than ever by those they serve and that will include boards of directors of member-owned clubs.

While private clubs and other nonprofit organizations are not bound by the Sarbanes Oxley Act (SOX) requiring more financial disclosure and oversight within companies, a club tax and financial consultant believes there are advantages to bringing a club more into compliance with SOX. "Many club board members are already addressing SOX in their companies," said Kevin Reilly, "and it may be beneficial to bring the club into compliance now with practices that may be mandated in the future," Reilly said club board members should:

- Follow club policies and rules to the letter. This applies not only by the general membership but to club leaders and their manner of governing.
- Be familiar with major club policies, and legal and legislative issues facing the club. Be proactive when you see things that could harm the club.

- Follow established procedures in member and employee discipline, and apply discipline in a manner that is fair and consistent.
- Conduct long-range planning to assure a sound future for the club.
- Choose directors and officers who have the trust and confidence of the members and will provide true leadership. Avoid "single-issue" candidates.
- Consider diversity on the board so its make-up is truly representative of the club's membership.
- Ensure that all directors fully understand their duties and responsibilities.
- Readily accept and do not relinquish fiscal responsibilities (approve and monitor budgets, set dues and fees, review financial controls, ensure proper use of club assets) and fiduciary responsibilities (evaluate the adequacy of the club's internal controls, risk management and financial reporting) to others.
- Ensure ethical standards of conduct, including acting in the best interest of the club and avoiding dealings based on self-interest.
- Identify and address emerging issues and trends, and communicate openly with members regarding board activities and concerns.
- Identify and develop future club leaders.

Even if these concepts are never made mandatory for private clubs in a legal sense, Reilly calls them "qualities basic to sound club governance." The practices strengthen internal controls, lead to more reliable financial reporting, assure members that the club has strong governance and that fiduciary responsibility is taken seriously. "If you don't have certain practices that are necessary to good club governance, or you have rules you simply don't follow, you could run into legal problems with members," Reilly warned.

From

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A Letter to the Directors, Officers, Owners and Managers of Private Clubs

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Club Industry— Engaging The Next Generation

• by Joan Ho



Group photo with CMAS president, Mr Roy Higgs and Chairman of the conference, Mr Peter Goh

19 May 2009 saw the graduation of Temasek Polytechnic's pioneer batch of students from the Diploma in Leisure & Resort Management (LRM). On that day, a total of 95 Leisure and Resort Management graduands received their well-earned diploma. The subject 'Club Management' is one of the diploma core subjects to prepare them for a head start career in the Club industry. It should be highlighted that Temasek Polytechnic is the only poly offering this subject.

Many industry partners such as our very own CMAS member Mr. David Brightling (General Manager, ONE°15 Marina Club) were present to grace the occasion and support our graduands.

Our Gold and Silver medal winners, Asmond Chew and Chan Si Liang were presented their awards by the Guest of Honour of the ceremony, Dr. Victor Gielisse, Associate Vice-President from the Culinary Institute of America. Special thanks to Club Managers' Association Singapore (CMAS), for sponsoring the Gold medal as well as the book prize for the subject 'Club Management' while ONE°15 Marina Club had sponsored the silver medal award.

Such tremendous support from the Club industry is most pertinent as a testimony of the support rendered to nurture the next generation of leaders in the Club industry.

In addition to the above awards, CMAS'

effort to improve manpower development could also be exhibited via the 2008 Asian Club Managers' Conference organized by the Club Managers' Association Singapore (CMAS), where 26 Leisure and Resort Management students were selected as volunteers as hospitality officers, event photographers and tour guides at the world class ONE°15 Marina Club. The opportunity to be involved had attracted 100 students to apply as event helpers! The international conference drew more than 200 renowned Club Managers, CEOs, GMs and professionals from Asia, Australia and America.

The focus at the conference was Club Management in a Global Competitive

Continued...

Engaging The Next Generation

Environment. The international speakers lists included Dr. Andy Nazarechuk, Dean of UNLV Singapore; Joe Purdue the famous guru of Club Management and Academic Advisor of CMAA amongst others.

The attendees as well as the CMAS members commended that the students displayed excellent attitude in their respective conference event helper roles. They were there

on their feet from 7am to 7pm and yet none of them had complained about the fatigue. In essence, they had lots of fun and had enjoyed the invaluable rewarding experience. The new batch of student helpers are definitely looking forward to be part of our 8th Asian Managers' Conference in April 2010.

So Club Managers, are we ready to engage the next generation?



Students' Quotes (17 Years Old)

"I've learnt how a conference is organised. I've also gained knowledge through the talks held at the conference that helped me understand the various functions in the resort industry."

Charlene Tan, LRM Junior Year Student

"Through this conference, I managed to get out of my own world and get to meet people who are industry leaders."

Hui Min, LRM Junior Year Student

"An enriching experience with opportunities to meet delegates of different nationalities..."

Jasmine Seah, LRM Junior Year Student

"I was impressed by how I could translate what the speakers were presenting with what I had learnt in class. This conference also made me realise that communication skill is very important in our industry. Through conversations with the delegates, I realised the importance of understanding various terminologies as it enables me to engage in the conversation constructively too."

Xavier Khoo, LRM Junior Year Student

"... through conference topics such as club rankings and talent recruitment & retention, I have gained a deeper understanding of the industry and the common issues related to the management of clubs, which is highly relevant to my course ... Both Mr. Peter Goh and Mr. Adrian Quek had shared with us about the workings of a club and some of their experiences, which gave me a better understanding on the nature and job scope required of a club manager..."

-Kang Zihui, LRM Junior Year Student

WHO WHAT & WHERE

Managers on the move, keeping in touch, and much more.

Herbert Hofer is General Manager of the Tanglin Club.

Ronald Teo is now the Sports & Recreation Manager of The British Club.

Rene Verhulst is the new General Manager at the Hollandse Club.

Apologies to **Carsten Kjeldmann**, General Manager of The British Club, for misspelling his name in the last issue.

Legal Matters

Expunging Files In Member Discipline Cases ...



A member is caught “behaving badly,” He has committed an egregious violation of club rules—an incident that could jeopardize his relationship with family and business associates as well as club employees and other members. There were witnesses. The member faces a disciplinary process that most likely will lead to expulsion from the club. The member’s attorney proposes a settlement. The member will quietly resign if the club promises not to pursue the case— and clears the member’s file of any record of infraction. Generally, a club will agree to all terms of the proposal so that the objective (to rid the club of the member) is attained without the emotional drain of a hearing.

An attorney specializing in the club field warns, however, that a club should think twice about destroying “evidence” of a club rules of infraction, just in case a lawsuit results from the infraction. Robyn Stowell, who provides legal counsel for clubs, said this is especially true in cases involving club employees.

Stowell was responding to a club manager’s question about a specific case in which a male member “hit on” a female employee. The member agreed to resign from the club, and the GM was asked by the board to get rid of any documentation of the incident. The manager feared that he and the club would be in serious legal jeopardy of the employee subsequently sued and “evidence” had been destroyed. Stowell acknowledged that this is a tough call and said legal counsel should be consulted on any action taken by the club. Stowell’s stance: “I would keep it in the employee’s file, or the manager’s file, in case there us a lawsuit.”

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DIARY

Forthcoming events from around the world for club management professionals.

3-7 October 2009

• Annual Conference, Canadian Society of Club Managers, Victoria, British Columbia.

15-20 October 2009

• BMI International Club Managers Association of America, Stockholm, Sweden.

26-29 October 2009

• Asia Pacific Golf Summit, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. www.golfconference.org

8-13 February 2010

World Conference of Club Management, Club Manager’s Association of America, San Diego, California, USA. www.cmaa.org

Final Thoughts

“If I were a car, I’d be a Porche!” - Peter Schultz, former CEO of Porche Ag. on the company underlying philosophy.

“There is no future in being a low cost producer” - H.K. Ping, Chairman, Banyan Tree, on the evolution of the Banyan Tree experience.

“I know no company – with the possible exception of Disney – that comes within a mile of overtraining its staff.” - Tom Peters.

“If you dont know where you are going, any road will take you there.” The cat to Alice in Lewis Carroll’s Alice in Wonderland.

“An asylum run by inmates.” - David Brightlight’s first boss explaining private clubs