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SOMETIMES IT TAKES ONLY “ONE GOOD IDEA” TO IGNITE YOUR TEAM’S MOTIVATION TO ACCOMPLISH THE CLUB’S MISSION- AND MOVE AGGRESSIVELY TOWARD REALIZING THE CLUB’S VISION STATEMENT.

Our BoardRoom articles have dealt with step one of our five key steps to club success today, which is having the right vision, mission and brand Position statements for your club and its unique market position – and how those missives relate to membership marketing.

Balancing the “Member Experience” and the club’s “Financial Performance” is the second key step to a club’s success. In the early 2000s, when literally hundreds of golf communities were opening each year, the member experience in many of them substantially exceeded the financial performance as these new clubs were funded by runaway real estate sales.

With the economic downturn in real estate, the financial performance quickly took center stage. As well, most managers are only too aware of clubs that maintain positive club income statements because the club is “eating its own flesh” (deferred maintenance, staff cutbacks, reduced hours and services). Both situations are headed to difficult times and may indeed jeopardize survival.

To truly understand where the club sits on this balance board, the members’ perception of the “member experience” has to be measured regularly and frequently. There are multiple ways to do this – here is our short checklist:

- Annual member survey
- Mini-surveys of special events
- Interactive club website
- Member spending
- Membership growth and referrals
- MBWA

The “One Good Idea” described here is to more effectively use the results of the most comprehensive of these processes - your annual member survey. It should be a component of your club’s strategic plan with compensation, bonuses and performance appraisals tied to the results.

Appropriate use of the survey drives accountability and synergy at the club toward improving the “member experience” in every department. It should be more than “just

One Good Idea Is All It Takes

what the members think.” It is the link between their assessment, the annual business plan and accountability.

Begin to maximize the value of your survey results throughout the year by using a focused action plan and an enhanced member communications process.

Design your action plan: PCA’s survey reports contain tolerance charts that color code each issue in the survey: Green – members’ perception is acceptable or better; Yellow – caution – members’ perception is on the borderline and red – requires corrective action.

You can create this chart manually: Green ratings are earned when the cumulative positive results (four and five responses on a five-point scale) are 65 percent or higher; negative results (one and two responses) are 15 percent or lower and the overall rating is 3.50 or higher.

Begin with your problem ratings (red) and list them by the highest priority and include the costs to fix, time involved, personnel required. Add to this how success will be measured. Then schedule what you can, as soon as you can.

Enhanced communications plan: We recommend sharing the entire results of the survey with the membership as soon as possible after the survey report is complete. Accompanying the results should be a cover letter explaining what will happen to these results: *1. Club board and staff are evaluating members’ responses and designing a plan to address each issue. 2. Here is when the issues will be addressed and/or resolved (Be up front –some issues cannot be resolved this year or next – or ever!) and 3. Here are four items we have already completed (and you just took the survey three weeks ago!).*

Every time you accomplish something on your action plan – take a “victory” lap –tell the members: *“This is what you told us; this is when we said it would be fixed; it is fixed”*

Letting your members know you heard what they said, telling them what can be done and when – and sharing with them what has actually been accomplished when you said it would build credibility, trust, enthusiasm, loyalty and, perhaps, member referrals. **BR**

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