

Sea View Golf Club



**REPORT ON GOLF MANAGEMENT AUSTRALIA
NATIONAL CONFERENCE**



**Crown Promenade Conference Centre, Melbourne.
October 2011**

THEME:

“Lead – Learn – Inspire”.

**Phil Elliott,
Managing Secretary,
Sea View Golf Club**

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October 2011**

THEME:

The theme for 2011 was “*Lead – Learn – Inspire*”.

INTRODUCTION:

Like many sports golf is going through a period of considerable change which is having an adverse affect on traditional club memberships and in some cases is affecting the economic structure of individual clubs. In staging the 2011 conference, the organising committee sought to explore the many and varied issues that confront and challenge golf managers in their daily roles. The intention was to provide a thoughtful and provocative forum.

The organisers were acutely aware that there is more to a successful conference than merely engaging interesting personalities to speak on a diversified range of topics. The opportunity to network with ones peers whilst enjoying the convivial surroundings and hospitality was considered to be of paramount importance and was factored into the conferences busy schedule.

This year’s content program was developed to address some of the biggest concerns faced by clubs during these challenging times, resulting in a comprehensive education program themed “*Lead – Learn – Inspire*”. The national and international speakers were selected for their ability to educate and motivate. The content of the program included:

- Current economic analysis and the long term outlook
- Club membership – marketing, recruiting and retention
- Growing the business
- Use of technology and social media opportunities
- Strategic planning
- Corporate governance
- People and personal management

More than 200 delegates plus partners from all States and Territories attended, including 17 from WA.

Keynote speakers from the USA included:

- Michael Leemhuis, CEO of Congressional Country Club (host of the 2011 US Open Championship),
- James Kane, loyalty consultant,
- Gregg Patterson , General Manager of The Beach Club in Santa Monica.

Other speakers included:

- Phil Turnbull, the Executive GM Business Operations of RAC Victoria;
- Kim Hughes, former Australian test cricket captain;
- Martin Hiron, Director of Sports Business Partners;
- Mark McCrindle, social researcher;
- Janine Allis, the founder of Boost Juice;
- Brad Smith, superlite motor bike champion;
- Lisa McInnes-Smith, personal performance mentor;
- Allan Bolton, health expert;
- Phil Laurie, social media presenter;
- Ken Burgin, hospitality professional;
- Mark Normoyle, Executive Chef at the RACV City Club and
- Sam Cawthorn, CEO of Empowering Enterprises.

An industry forum to discuss the Future of Golf in Australia was also held and participants included:

- Stephen Pitt, CEO Golf Australia
- Brian Thorburn, CEO PGA Australia
- David Burton, GM Golf Management Australia and General Manager NSW Golf Club.
- Alan Devlin, Australian Golf Superintendents Association and
- Mark Hayes, Herald Sun Sports Projects.

Master of Ceremonies for the conference was popular television personality, Andrew Daddo.

SUMMARY:

From conversations with other course Managers, it was quite apparent that many clubs, particularly those of a similar size to Sea View, are faced with common issues such as:

- Member retention and new member generation
- Member loyalty
- Speed of the game and the total time taken to play golf.
- Ageing of membership base
- Fee structures are a barrier to many prospective members
- Members do not readily accept change
- Cost of maintenance particularly on course

These issues are consistent with those openly discussed some 4 years previously at the Queensland conference.

From an operational perspective the conference highlighted the needs of clubs to:

- Have a strong leadership starting with the Board of Directors right through general management to course and hospitality staff and others.
- Ensure that everyone is working to a common goal and strategy and that there is a focus and belief in those goals. Have the desire to do something, have the ability to do it and have the commitment to do it.
- Develop plans (both long term strategic and shorter term marketing and business) and the need to continually review those plans.
- Remain focused
- Be prepared to be different (see things from another perspective) and consider other options to those historically used.
- Think about diversification (eg: combine land and facilities with other users).
- Embrace new technology to spread the word about your club.
- Ensure environmental procedures and safeguards are in place.
- Maintain margins and profitability

The golfing side of operations identified the following:

- Golf Australia recognizes that they need to take a more pro active role in the marketing of the game of golf in general. This includes television coverage and the way major events are covered.
- It is essential that the game of golf needs an injection of younger members at club level
- Many regional clubs are facing smaller competition fields.
- The need to consider different types of competitions particularly aimed at attracting the 25-40 year olds and females who have been identified as the most time challenged demographic.
- Many clubs have, or are considering, introduced 6 hole competitions.

CONFERENCE TOPICS:

“Clubs and Membership Growth”

Speaker : Phil Turnbull, the Executive GM Business Operations of RAC Victoria

The Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) is a motoring Club and mutual organisation, providing services such as roadside assistance, vehicle, home and contents insurance, personal and car loans, driving instruction, tourism services and home security products. The RACV runs a lifestyle club known as the RACV Club, with locations in the Melbourne CBD and at Healesville. It also operates 4 resorts in regional Victoria and 2 in Queensland, on the Gold Coast and at Noosa.

Topics covered included:

- Loyalty Rewards Programs and doing the right thing
- Changing members from transitional to loyal members
- Managing your brand
- Being bold and be prepared to transform.

One key factor to appear from this presentation was RACV’s strong commitment to its’ members and how the implementation of a rewards program (ie a sliding percentage discount on all product streams) has resulted in continued grow over a sustained period of time. It was also very evident that the promotion of a strong brand and image goes a long way to ensuring member loyalty. Managing your brand requires the need to continually improve your business.

Another important outcome was the need to be bold and to be prepared to transform your business to ensure continued growth and improvement. By way of example, in 198 RACV City Club had 26,000 members however by 2004 this had declined to 14,000. At this time the Club undertook to transform its premises and undertake a major renovation and facelift as well as relaxing some of its traditional practices eg: dress codes, family orientated club. The club now boasts a healthy membership base of 31,000 and is still growing.

“Good to Great”

Speaker: Kim Hughes, former Australian test cricket captain

Kim Hughes is a former cricketer who played for Western Australia, Natal and Australia. He captained Australia in 28 Tests between 1979 and 1984 before captaining a "rebel" Australian team in a tour of South Africa, who at the time were subject to a sporting boycott.

A much sought after corporate speaker, Kim’s presentations are entertaining, informative, motivational and include many humorous anecdotes. He has also worked in senior positions in the finance and building industries.

The theme of this presentation was to find reasons to do rather than reasons not to do and to aim to get an edge to help you improve. Aim to find the positives aspects when things are not going well and to focus on these.

Success comes from **experience, good judgement and a positive attitude**. A winner is a participator prepared to give 100% to the task ahead whereas a loser is a spectator who finds excuses.

The basics for success consist of:

- having fun and enjoyment in what you do,
- being positive
- being passionate
- being accountable for your actions
- developing a healthy work / lifestyle balance
- being productive
- being profitable
- being efficient
- being safety conscious

People with a burning desire to want to get better bond together to make a great teams.

“Modern Leadership – The ABC’s of Leadership”

Speaker: Michael Leemhuis, General Manager of Congressional Country Club (USA)

Mike is a Certified Club Manager (CCM), a qualified PGA of America Class A13 Golf Professional, a tennis professional, an avid tri-athlete (two time Hawaii Ironman finisher), a marathon runner (40 marathons completed), fisherman, member of the PGA of America; PGA of South Africa and of the Club Managers Association of America for the past 12 years and a National Director for CMAA (past six years and Vice President in 2008).

Between 1984 and 1997, Mike managed and operated:

- the Gary Player Country Club and Lost City Golf Course at the Sun City resort in South Africa,
- the 80,000 seat multi-function Ellis Park Sports Stadium
- Sports International, a sports marketing company,
- the Nedbank Million Dollar Golf Challenge Tournament at Sun City,
- the TPC at Avenel, a PGA Tour property.

In 1997 he returned back to the United States in 1997 to assume the position of General Manager/Director of Golf at the Tournament Players Club at Avenel in Potomac, which is a PGA Tour property. Since 1999 he has managed the prestigious Congressional Country Club in Washington, DC which hosted the US Open in 1997 and again this year.

The value of leadership today is a hot and sometimes controversial topic. **Are you born a leader or is leadership a learned trait? And does leadership equate to success?**

Talent alone is not the be all / end all – you also need the desire to succeed. Very few Managers have been taught leadership skills at school and maybe this is because of a wrong emphasis within various educational systems.

According to Mike the 5 top qualities of leadership are:

- Courage
- Confidence
- Passion
- Concentration and
- Values

And his definition of leadership is *“Having the personal power to influence others to achieve”*

Key attributes of a good leader include hiring the brightest and the best you can find, surrounding yourself with people who have a great attitude and want your job. Clearly communicating what it is that you want done and how it should be done and then empowering others to get the job done. Making sure your employees are well trained (training isn't a 'one time' thing but an 'every day' thing.)

Trust, respect and empowering your staff and make sure you spend time with them. You set the tone in the club from the time you set foot in the door. Remember, your staff are always watching you and how you handle situations at the club. You have to lead by example, you are the standard.

Understand the mission of the club as well as its' goals and long term objectives and communicate openly and truthfully. Dealing with the operational issues, training and delivering are what the members want.

As a Manager you need to remove yourself from political issues, these should be the domain of the Board.

Above all remember that no matter how much time the job seems to take, you need to spend quality time with your family. Most importantly, enjoy what you do.

“With Passion, Enthusiasm, Commitment and Integrity - help others to help themselves be the best that they can be!”

“Overview of Strategic Planning”

Speaker: Martin Hirons, Director of Sports Business Partners

Martin's experience in the sport industry spans twenty years across sporting bodies, agencies, sponsors, merchandise, media and events. Martin joined Sports Business Partners (SBP) in 2007 to develop and direct SBP's market research division.

He was previously a Director at Sweeney Sports, recognised as one of Australia's leading sports and sports sponsorship research agencies, where his work involved detailed industry, event, sponsorship and broader research studies for various national sporting bodies, sponsors and event organisers. He was involved with the bi-annual Sweeney Sports Report from 1996.

Prior to joining Sweeney Research Martin worked in the sport and sponsorship industry in basketball and golf within Australia and Canada.

This presentation was aimed to change perceptions about Strategic Planning including that it is not complicated and certainly not about having a huge document,

- providing simple and effective tools for managers
- leaving participants with the confidence of how to revisit the plan or simply to get started
- emphasising that the CEO is the chief strategist in any organization and should lead the way in the development of the planning exercise.

Questions to be asked are:

- has your Club got a Strategic Plan?
- does your Club reference your Strategic Plan?
- how to get your Board to embrace having a plan?
- or does it all just sound too hard?

Today many things are changing rapidly and need to be considered. These include demographics and lifestyles, technology, family issues, competition from other sports and clubs, time efficiency, high market saturation, stress and the need to add value. Further the need to plan is driven by factors such as the fact that in the past the golf industry has under invested in assets and is now paying the price, Boards have a responsibility to plan, planning helps in our roles, increases the chance of success and finally provides a focus.

What needs to be considered is that decisions made today have a lasting effect and need to be carefully thought through.

Any strategic plan should take no longer than 3-6 months to produce and must involve and engage staff during its development. Also the preparation of any strategic plan must deal only in facts. Of importance also is the need to use others to test the thinking and to publish the results AFTER testing the report.

Once a plan has been approved then the themes of the plan MUST be included on each Board and Committee agenda to ensure regular updates and reviews are undertaken.

Options to consider when developing a plan include:

- Reaching up - Value adding
- Reaching down - Discounting and price cuts - represents DANGER tactics
- Reaching out - new target areas
- Single entity - survival mode
- Sell up or move - economically driven
- Merge - brave new frontier

Martin's final quote:

“You can live on the whims of a new President and hope that he is smart – OR you can Plan”

“The Loyalty Switch”

Speaker : James Kane, Consultant

Considered to be the world's foremost expert on what makes someone truly loyal – to another person, to an organization, or to a cause - Jim has helped some of the largest and most well-known organizations in the world build nearly unbreakable relationships with not only their clients and customers, but with members, fans, guests, patients, volunteers, vendors, sponsors and employees, as well. His work reveals the science behind the real human emotion called loyalty, and what anyone can do to receive its benefits.

James Kane says our beliefs about what makes someone loyal are often wrong - a premise he supports with intriguing research into the human brain and the emotions that control our behaviours. His work reveals the science behind the real human emotion called loyalty, and what you can do to make sure a Club receives its benefits.

“Loyal Relationships aren't born, - They're made.”

Think about all the things you have been taught to do in your life, not the stuff you just picked up through casual observation, but those skills you were actually taught. It started with learning to walk, then talking, then reading and writing, and eventually to solving algebra problems, playing a sport or instrument, and driving a car. All things incredibly useful that you could have never mastered on your own without the instruction, practice, and support that came along with them.

So of all the skills that are important to us as human beings, is there any one more essential to our survival and our success than our ability to build strong relationships with others? Of course not. And yet, when were we taught how to do that? When did we receive the formal instruction, practice and support we need to build the loyal bonds with those who will help us not only feed our families, but accomplish our goals, and live out our dreams? The fact is, we never did. Some of us picked it up by watching others or through trial and error. But unfortunately, most of us have no idea how to do it effectively.

There is a process to building and maintaining loyalty. It begins by establishing a strategy for those relationships that are most critical to you and your organization's success. It requires fostering a culture within the organization that understands and embraces the value of strong, personal relationships. It entails teaching, practicing and supporting a set of fundamental relationship skills to every person within the organization. And finally, it involves the development of tools and systems that support those relationship-building skills.

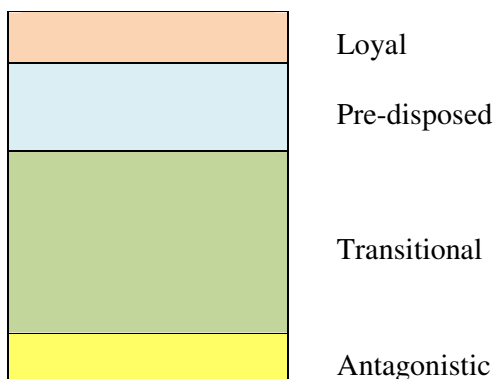
Satisfaction is a mood, and is in the past as it is what you, the Club, can do for your members,

Loyalty is for the future and is what the members can do for you.

You, the Club need to manage the expectations they desire.

Loyalty – is having trust – having a sense of belonging – having a purpose.

Levels of relationship



“Best HR & Management Practices”

Speaker : Mark McCrindle, Director of McCrindle Research

Mark McCrindle is one of Australia's foremost social researchers with an international reputation for tracking emerging social and demographic trends. He is the Director of McCrindle Research, whose clients include over 100 multinational organisations. Mark has a degree in Psychology, a Masters Degree in Sociology and he is the Author of three books on changing generations, language and culture.

His highly valued research and reports have developed his renown as a futurist, demographer and social commentator on programs such as Sunrise, The 7pm Project, The Today Show and Today Tonight. He extensively researches the new generations and accurately tracks emerging trends. By taking the social pulse of the nation, he is able to analyse the constant changes and communicate the implications these will have on our lives. He focuses his qualitative research to help leaders in sales, marketing, HR, and management to do just this.

The focus of Mark's presentation was to identify current HR trends within, and affecting the golf industry, as well as to identify what drives each generation and how we can enhance our awareness and prepare ourselves to manage more effectively.

The current national average tenure for a Golf Manager is between 4-5 years, which is an increase from 3 years some 7 years ago.

Current studies and trends indicate:

- An ageing workforce
- A shrinking workforce
- Cultural diversity
- Decreasing vocational mobility
- Increasing geographic mobility

which all lead towards a rotating employment door, better educated and more technologically savvy workforce.

Today Generation Y (born 1980 – 1995) –make up 18% of the Australian workforce, however by 2020 this figure will rise to almost 35%.

The Technology Timeline

- 1923 – First radio broadcast in Australia. Radio takes 38 years to reach a global audience of 50 million
- 1956 – First Australian television broadcast. TV takes 13 years to reach a global audience of 50 million
- 1980 – Pacman launched and as a computer game sells 7 million copies
- 1982 – Commodore 64 launched – sells 1 million units in 4 years
- 1991 – WWW is launched. Takes 4 years to get 50 million people online
- 1998 – 143 million internet users
- 2006 – Facebook opens to the public. Takes 12 months to get to 50 million users
- 2010 – Google puts Pacman game on its logo to celebrate Pacman's 30th anniversary. 126 million people play it in a day
- 2010 – iPad launched – sells 1 million units in 4 weeks
- 2012 – Forecast 800 million active Facebook accounts

“Business Management – When Life Hands You a Lemon – Juice It”

Speaker : Janine Allis, Founder, Boost Juice

Janine Allis is the Founder and Managing Director of the hugely successful Boost Juice Franchise. Janine will share her tips on managing the Work / Life Balance, understanding what each generation within your team is looking for out of a job. She will share her secrets on SOAR and VERB – simple and practical tools to help you manage your time and your team.

Yes, you’ve heard it before. Mother of four starts new retail concept. It explodes, she makes a bucketful of money and everything s just dandy. Or is it? The truth is that since founding Boost Juice in 2000, Janine Allis, a woman with no formal business training but a brilliant simple approach has met with relentless pressure and a myriad of problems in getting Boost to where it is today: a company with more outlets in more countries and any other juice bar in the world and well on the way to achieving their aim of being the world s most loved and favourite brand. Being underestimated has been one of Janine’s great strengths and she has utilised all her natural abilities to achieve the unthinkable.

It was very evident during Janine’s presentation that we need to control our own destiny and have the focus and desire to achieve those goals. Her philosophy is to ensure that everyone learns from mistakes and corrects whatever goes wrong. A combination of small ideas and things ensure success – not just one thing. One key element in her approach to business is to stop and review every 6 months and to plan for the next 6 months. Do not get lazy – always focus on your core business.

She also asks the following:

“*Why do what you do?*” and in answering ensure that there is a commitment to do what is being done, give a guarantee and above all understand what the customer wants,

”*How do you do it?*” be prepared to make mistakes and at the same time be prepare to learn from those mistakes.

Businesses should be prepared to push the boundaries and adopt the following attitude “*There is no try – just do*”.

Finally, she believes that if you live on the SOAR mentality and not the VERB then we would all be successful in everything we do. If our communication, thoughts and how we are follow then life is great:

SOAR

S- Solutions

O- Ownership

A- Accountability

R- Responsibility

VERB

V – Victim

E – Entitled

R – Rescue

B – Blame

“Its not rocket science”

Speaker : Brad Smith, Founder, Braaap Industries

Bradley “Brad” Smith (born 1987) is an Australian entrepreneur, speaker, champion Superlite MX mini motocross rider and advocate for safe motocross riding practices. Smith is best known for establishing the motocross brand “Braaap” and the recipient of several achievement awards including 2010 Young Australian of the Year for Tasmania, Australian Young Entrepreneur of the year and International Young Entrepreneur of the year runner up.

In 2008 Brad launched the first Braaap store, a retail outlet intended to be “the motocross equivalent of a surf shop”. Braaap has since expanded to four retail outlets across Tasmania and Victoria, with a franchise model to enable further expansion throughout Australia, and the rest of the world. Braaap is the 3 time Australian specialised retail business of the year.

It was very evident that a strong passion and energy can be utilised to create advantages and opportunities for your business. However throughout all it is necessary to never give up and to work smarter instead of working harder.

In developing a very successful business he makes sure that he has well developed plans and systems in place and that these are constantly reviewed to ensure they are working efficiently. One adage he also uses is that Team Ideas are manageable as opposed to Management Ideas.

He is of the view that golf needs to appeal more to Generation Y and that we need to embrace the use of Social Media as there are many more potential members using this form of media. Of interest was his observation that many “other” sports identities play golf in their recreational time and to date both Golf Australia and clubs have not embraced this fact sufficiently to market the game. These personalities have a significant influence on the actions of Generation Y in particular.

Again the issue of time to play a game of golf was apparent, and any initial interest was akin to using a driving range initially to invoke an interest. The industry needs to look at some form of shorter game eg: night golf , 5-6 holes etc as a lead generator. It was also seen that clubs need to reconsider some of the traditions to encourage the younger generations initially eg: dress codes, and once we have hooked them then we can start to encourage the heritage aspect. It is also imperative that we keep the game affordable and accessible.

“Demographics, Social & Generation Trends”

Speaker : Mark McCrindle, Director of McCrindle Research

From an uncertain economy to rapid advancements in technology, and national shifts in our demography, society in Australia is very different today from just a decade ago. To engage with new members and customers we have to first understand them and then effectively communicate with them. Mark provided a snapshot of the changes, insights into connecting with members and a glimpse of what to expect next.

It is important to not just look at the surface but to read into your data when performing any analyses.

Today population is more likely to move at more frequent intervals than at any time in history and this causes retention problems for many clubs. Generation Z will have a significant impact on any such figures within the next generation. Today’s market is very graphically influenced, again having major impacts for clubs.

Indicators are:

- A decreasing commitment to annual and long term membership
- Social time constraints and a changing family environment
- A lack of television involvement and sponsorship to further fund growth
- A lack of industry cohesion
- The need to indentify and promote increased partnerships with golf (eg: State Governments, etc)
- A requirement to spread more goodwill and good news stories.

Brian Thorburn, (CEO PGA Australia)

- There is fragmentation within the industry
- A need to grow the game through better marketing campaigns
- More time efficient offers
- An improved club membership model
- Selling golf to government and corporate.

Alan Devlin, (Australian Golf Superintendents Association)

- An increased awareness of water quality and usage
- The management of environmental issues
- Occupational Health and Safety issues and compliance with relevant Acts etc.
- Retention of Course staff (one of the lowest paid awards)
- A lack of industry collaboration
- A distinct lack of expertise and awareness on Boards and Committees, particularly in relation to course issues. .

Mark Hayes, (Herald Sun, Sports Projects.)

- There is a lack of mainstream media coverage
- A distinct inflexibility in relation to the timing of tournaments and competitions
- A lack of internet and social media coverage
- Golf lacks general appeal, particularly to kids.

“Peak Personal Performance”

Speaker : Lisa McInnes-Smith, Public Speaker

With a tertiary background in Sports Psychology and Human Performance, Lisa McInnes-Smith is one of Australia's most highly regarded conference keynote speakers.

The author of seven best-selling books, Lisa s focus is on Peak Performance how to move from where you are, to where you want to be and to be the best you can. Her expertise lies in propelling groups, teams and leaders to new levels of achievement and strategic competence. Lisa speaks to a wide range of audiences, including Company Directors, Sales Teams, Executives, Service Providers, Entrepreneurs and Young Achievers.

In 2001, the National Speakers Association (NSA) awarded Lisa the Council of Peers Award for Excellence (CPEA) Speaker Hall of Fame.

Her dynamic and audience-involving presentations inspire and motivate audiences to be the best they can be.

Lisa McInnes-Smith talks about;

- We’ve All Got What it Takes, But Where is it?
- How to Perform At Your Peak, Even When Chaos Reigns
- Service = Success
- The Customer is Always Right ... Or Are They?
- It’s all in the Balance

- Together, Everyone Accomplishes More

The three hardest words for most people are “**I need help**” and that is also true for many businesses. Also the realization of Pain is also seen as a warning ... indicating a need to explore change.

Some of the best leaders are self aware, clear in purpose, courageous and decisive – all attributes of an individual’s spirit, and all learnable. Leadership is a lifestyle a way of living, a way of bringing out the best in those around you. “*Anyone can steer the ship but it takes a leader to chart the course*”

Long term significant achievement cannot happen until a team of people unite to take on a challenge. Individuals become better team players (and potential leaders) by discarding negative habits and building on their strengths.

People can multiply their own effectiveness by helping to release the talents of those around them. Growth and development in business often comes with challenge. This includes pressure to improve productivity, empower key teams and encourage every individual to become more effective with less direct management. What does that take? It takes individuals that are self-motivated, have a huge desire to perform and a strong belief in their own capability.

“Leading the Charge against Global Norming”

Speaker : Allan Bolton,

Allan Bolton – The People's Renewable Energy Man is recognised internationally as an expert in the areas of health, lifestyle, motivation and human performance. He is a presenter who powers up lives and performance.

His presentations embrace his belief that the key to achieving and maintaining peak personal and business performance is sustaining and capitalising on good health.

As a scientist he knows what works, but perhaps even more importantly, he can translate the latest research into terms everyone can understand. And crucially, he's a really funny guy – perhaps the key asset in inspiring and re-energizing his audiences.

Clever Golf Club Managers know that the key to growing and sustaining a high performance business is to look after its power source – its people

Keys to achieving a result is to:

- Have a clear vision of the finish long before we start,
- Ensuring that we have the desire to do something
- Ensuring we have the ability to do it, and
- Having the commitment to do it.

During his presentation Allan strongly promoted the message that we need to eat well to move well to think well. He is also a strong believer that many small successes lead to greater things.

To achieve success he has one message **GOYA** (get off your arse).

“Leadership & Networks - Plugging into the Network”

Speaker : Greg Patterson, General Manager of The Beach Club, Santa Monica, USA

Gregg Patterson became the General Manager of The Beach Club in 1982. Prior to becoming the General Manager of the Beach Club, he was the Assistant Manager of the Bel-Air Country Club in Los Angeles and also worked as a Systems Analyst for the U.S. Army Club System.

In addition to his ongoing responsibilities at The Beach Club, Gregg is a Senior Associate with Kapoor and Kapoor Hospitality Consultants, where he teaches certification courses in leadership and marketing for the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA).

Of interest is the fact that the Beach Club has a waiting list in excess of 10 years despite having an entry fee of US\$80,000. Members never leave once accepted, they stay for the rest of their life.

In the two presentations delivered at this conference Gregg spoke on many subjects including:

- Leadership – How does a successful Manager work at the coal face?
- Management style, office arrangements (open plan etc), level of interaction
- Creating an effective service culture
- Work / life balance and family focus
- Emotional intelligence

This first presentation dealt with leadership and developing a culture within all aspects of the club.

Trust is a fragile commodity, and never more so than during times of economic stress and hardship. Boards need to trust the manager. Managers need to trust their boards. Members need to trust both. Creating trust is a slow process, losing it is quick and gaining back trust, once lost, takes a very, very long time. We need to ensure we create and maintain a trust culture.

Managers are in the “problem solving” business and that requires an endless stream of new ideas to do what they have to do. By having a large network, of people, places and practices, you enhance your chances of succeeding. Managers need to find ideas that work and need not be afraid of using, copying or stealing successful ideas from others – just don’t tell them. Also ideas come from outside our work so do not be afraid to look and search outside the box.

Throughout this session there was a strong emphasis on developing a “tribal culture” amongst the Board, staff and members. Greg’s basics for successful management are:

- Create a tribal culture
- Ensure the club has a clear mission and values
- A manager requires a leadership mission
- Club management also requires a clear mission
- The ability to create a “meeting” environment
- The manager needs to be an activist – required to nudge the business in the right direction
- You will be judged by the networks you develop and keep.

You can take a small detail or thought and turn it into a large idea. Also never forget to network, network, network – even within your club. You will never be surprised as what you can come up with.

A networks can best be defined as the people, places and ideas that you know or have known.

Once we have developed a trust and members can trust you then you will find that this appreciation will mean people will stay people go where they are appreciated.

Greg’s thought for the day - ***“Vision without action is a daydream”***

Also of note is Greg’s belief that a Club should not under value itself. “Fees should be priced till they squeal and then back off a little”

Note: This presenter, whilst exceptionally entertaining and thought provoking, was quite over the top with many examples of what takes place at The Beach Club ... some of which I don’t think would be appropriate here in Australia.

“Communicating Loyalty”

Speaker : James Kane, Consultant (2nd Presentation)

Understanding the secrets to building a loyal relationship is one thing, doing it is another thing. Communication plays a crucial role in the building and maintaining a loyal relationship. From advertising, newsletters to emails, everything we say or do impacts on the perceptions of others and tells them whether they can and should be loyal to us.

This session focused on some of the communication traps that most individuals and organizations fall into without even knowing it. James firmly believes in his work that is helping reveal the science behind the real human emotion called loyalty, and what anyone can do to receive its benefits.

Many of our beliefs about what makes someone loyal are often wrong - a premise supported by intriguing research into the human brain and the emotions that control all of our behaviours.

A definition of LOYALTY can be considered as Trust + Belonging + Purpose where Trust is an expectation of something, Belonging is having an inclusion or identity and Purpose is the vision.

The stages of LOYALTY are attraction (marketing), passion and then pair bonding which leads to the development of a community.

We need to be proactive and develop ideas to strengthen loyalty, and these can include:

- Looking at alternatives eg: yoga, pilates etc to attract others not just golfers
- Name things after members – this creates an identity and a sense of belonging
- Profile your members – eg place stories about them on your web site.

One important factor that must be done is that we need to spend the most time and effort with new member. We need to engage with them and make them welcome and want to become an integral part of the club. His needs to be conveyed to all levels ie: from the Board, to staff and to existing members. Everyone needs to work together and to work to the same goals and mission.

“Golf Operations – A guide for General Managers”

Speaker: Michael Leemhuis, GM of Congressional Country Club (USA) (2nd Presentation)

In this session espouses that the majority of golf club members join a club for the course and golf related facilities NOT for the food and beverage and additional facilities that may be offered.

In the USA the fastest growing segment within the golf industry is women and it is paramount that Australia ensures that its focus is clearly on this segment that sufficient funding and development resources are allocated.

Junior programs at clubs are also on the increase and again clubs need to ensure sufficient funds and resources are available to accommodate this growth area. It is also essential that dedicated people, such as teaching staff, are available.

One of the major obstacles most Managers have to contend with are restrictive budgets. Boards are expecting more to be done with less dollars. It is essential that realistic budgets are allocated to undertake all necessary and required work.

Within the US there is a realization that independent Golf Professionals running the golf shop is not necessarily a good thing and many clubs are now taking over the running of the Pro Shop operations and associated profits whilst employing Professionals and teaching staff. In 2001 within the USA some 42% of pro shops were owned and run by independent golf pros. By 2009 this figure had reduced to 28% and is still dropping.

It is essential that the best quality staff be employed as they are the face of the club. Of course factors to be considered when recruiting these staff are proper and commensurate remuneration, quality training and also the availability of prospective employees. (Note here in WA there is a limited pool of availability for some of the roles).

Clubs need to value their logo and branding and ensure they aggressively market this fact.

We also need to think outside the norm and break from traditions in developing golf programs and competitions eg: 9 hole, 5- 6 hole comps etc

First impression can also make or break the image of the club. Some of the essential areas to consider include:

Outside:

The condition of the car park

Bag drop area

Bag and Cart Storage area

Practice facilities

Inside:

Pro Shop (usually the 1st place visited)

Merchandise available

Member recognition by Pro shop staff

Managers also need to be “golf savvy” therefore it is important they have the knowhow to maximize their “golf savvy” without having to become a golf professional.

Note: Congressional Country Club currently has a joining fee of US\$110,000 in addition to substantial annual subscriptions. Its membership base is approximately 60% male and 40% female. The po-shop currently has an annual turnover in excess of US\$1.8 million pa excluding tournament event sales.

Congressional Club also has an annual Food and Beverage turnover of in excess of US \$9 million pa.

“Social Media – Communications and Marketing for Golf”

Speaker: Phil Laurie Communications & Golf Development Manager, Golf SA

Phil Laurie is a communications specialist with broad experience in journalism, editing & publishing. He has extensive experience in website development, project management and related communications strategies including Social Media optimisation. His current role is that of Communications & Golf Development Manager for Golf SA having previously worked for Queensland Golf.

Social Media is the 21st century’s “word of mouth” for communications and marketing. A successful social media strategy provides a Club with the reason and the platform to talk about its’ product and to provide a vehicle to engage in that discussion.

This new form of media provides clubs with a cost-effective way of addressing many areas including public relations, customer service, loyalty building, networking, leadership and customer acquisition. During this session Phil provided an introduction to objectives and strategies a club should be considering and how to best use the various platforms available ie: web sites, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Blogs etc. Of note is the fact that Social Media is only a complement to a club website but should never replace the need to have a website.

One thing that cannot be overlooked is that Social Media must be properly resourced – a fact that cannot be overlooked. It is important to remember that today’s generation is thirsty for NEW information and this takes time to be properly prepared for release. One of the prime reasons to use social media is that there is an instant response and feedback available.

Since 2009 the growth in use of the web is estimated at 14% and some 175 million Facebook users log in every 24 hours. Some 63% of Australians access the world wide web every day. Today YouTube is arguably the cheapest form of advertising available and is relatively easy to upload information etc.

A business needs to understand that the more the public face it has, the more the need to have a social media presence. But in saying this you need to ensure that information is articulate.

The process to utilise Social Media should follow the following path:

- Define the objective and strategy
- Allocate resources and a budget
- Create the content
- Create the platform
- Promote your content
- Measure your results

Forms of Social Media and target markets:

<i>YouTube</i>	Promotional videos, showcasing activities	<i>Linked In</i>	Ideal for job searching, promotion of sponsorship opportunities, cross referencing suppliers
<i>Facebook</i>	Low cost advertising. See GolfSA as an example	<i>Blogs</i>	Engaging the audience, promoting tips and hints
<i>Twitter</i>	Developing personal relationships, potential public relations placements.		

“Operations - Front of House”

Speaker: Ken Burgin, Owner and CEO of ProfitableHospitality.com

Ken has been actively involved in restaurants and cafes for more than 25 years, as owner of Caffe Troppo and partner in Paganini Restaurant in Sydney. After managing hundreds of thousands of customers and more than a thousand staff he sold his restaurants and developed the Profitable Hospitality range of management systems and associated products. For the past 12 years Ken has been working with restaurants, hotels and cafes in an advisory role. He travels frequently to the USA and Europe to keep track of the latest industry trends and directions.

The front of house customer experience is one of the most powerful influences on a Club’s brand and reputation. We need to control and manage the customer experience. Today most clients want a good, cheap and fast experience.

One really common and worthwhile form of selling is to use and offer discount vouchers. This is a huge and growing market however you need to consider the effect on your bottom line and don’t undervalue your product or brand by doing this. Another option is to use and provide gift vouchers as a way of attracting new clients.

Issues related to Front of House include:

- A higher expectation from customers who are more knowledgeable, travelled, food and beverage savvy and increasingly more impatient,
- An increased competition for functions and events,
- More demanding corporate clients
- Occupational health and Safety issues and compliance demands,
- Creating the new “casual” within a traditional setting – keeping the standards without the stuffiness,

- Growing pressure from critics,
- A nationwide shortage of experienced and skilled staff, including the need to upskill and retrain existing staff,
- Growing competition especially in regard to remuneration expectations.

People today expect a pleasurable experience when dining, the food is no longer the main priority. It is important to ensure that front of house staff are correctly trained and have a good knowledge of the product they are expected to sell to members and customers.

Food and beverage operations in most clubs that are dependent on member support is NOT viable. F&B should not be directed towards the golfing member but towards the non golfer – use F&B to attract a new type of member to your club.

“Operations - Catering Back of House, Motivating your kitchen team”

Speaker: Mark Normoyle, Executive Chef, RACV City Club

In 2002 with the opening of RACV centre planning under way Mark enthusiastically accepted the position for Executive Sous Chef at the RACV Club. Mark was brought on board to lead the kitchen team and be at the forefront of the opening.

Mark’s major achievements through his career has been the International training he received by his current employer RACV under Executive Chef Massimo Di Luca, travelling to Dubai where he worked in the kitchens at the Burj Alarab voted the worlds’ only 7 star hotel and listed in the ten top restaurants in the World, also travelling to Bangkok Intercontinental, Malaysia Sunway Lagoon Resort and Singapore Raffles Hotel.

A highlight of his career has been training the apprentice chefs at RACV and giving the opportunity to educate and prepare them for the many competitions. It gave him great pride in developing apprentices, watching them grow, learn and begin to take on leadership roles within the kitchen team. Motivating young talented and driven chefs is Mark’s passion.

Being trained and working alongside some of the world s finest international chefs has given him a great sense of pride, dedication and a desire to succeed in his chosen career by bringing his passion and enthusiasm to offer RACV members a dining experience to remember.

The secrets to having a strong tie between yourself and your team include:

- The secret is first of all to select the right staff.
- Skill level is not important but attitude is very important, ie: have they got the spark and do they want to learn.
- Have a good training program in place, this is a good investment.
- And it’s also important to balance between making them busy and not so busy. They require a challenge but at the same time don’t stress them.
- It’s also important to have fun.
- Everyone is equal and everyone needs to be treated with respect and vice versa.
- Work is a big part of your life so you should enjoy work like you enjoy life.

Mark’s main piece of advice: ***“Your attitude is your greatest asset”***.

“Creating a Powerfully Effective Service Culture”

Speaker: Greg Patterson, General Manager of The Beach Club, Santa Monica, USA. (2nd Presentation)

Building a club culture is “what management does.” Service, providing needed goods, services and programs professionally and with personality, is at the core of any great club culture. This presentation examined “cultures” and “service” and addressed tactics that can be used to establish an effective service culture in the private club community.

First and foremost to establishing a culture is the need to:

- Know a member’s face
- Know a member’s name
- Know their facts

Initially a club needs to attract members, then retain them and have them utilize the facility. And how can this be achieved? By putting people before stuff and remembering that “If you see it – do it”.

Be consistent with how you do things and how you act as people – members – look for anomalies.

Deliver things – find out what people want and then give it to them - devise ways to deliver.

Always remember that staff need, and should be, rewarded for good performance.

Both members and staff deserve to be treated with respect and dignity, get to know their name and something about them. Make them feel wanted.

Principles of good service:

- Give and exude happiness
- Give and receive dignity
- Anticipate the needs of members
- Deliver “clean”
- Know the details
- Have a presence
- See it – do it attitude

Greg’s thought: ***“Remember that in tough times the Club beats the Course”***.

“Bounce”

Speaker: Sam Cawthorn, CEO Empowering Enterprises.

Sam is a thought leader and expert in not only bouncing back, but bouncing forward. He is the CEO for Empowering Enterprises and has been featured in USA Today and the New York Times. He is also a State Winner for the 2009 Young Australian of the Year, Australian motivational speaker, success coach, self-help author and entrepreneur.

Life after death is a subject most of us will never live to tell, except in the case of this remarkable young man.

In October 2006 Sam’s life changed forever when he was involved in a major car accident, where he was pronounced DEAD. He was thankfully resuscitated, but left with an amputated right arm, a permanent disability in his right leg along with other severe injuries.

Sam was hospitalised for over 5 months and was told that he may not survive and best case was that if he was to survive he would never walk again. A year later he defied all odds taking his first steps into a new life, where his story would continue to INSPIRE and change the lives of Australians and people all over the world.

It was Sam's difficult journey that enabled him to develop a mental resilience and strength that gave him the tools to miraculously recover from an accident that could have taken his life.

His story is simple, yet his message demonstrates the awesome power and strength found within the human spirit when faced with the choice to continue living as a victim of a tragic accident, or to make a choice to seize the opportunity of 'life'. Forever the opportunist Sam chose LIFE, and is now a hugely successful keynote speaker, reaching thousands of people in Australia and the world.

It is your decision and not your condition that determines your life. Problems define our character and our way of life.

One really strong message came from this speaker and that is ***“Do not bounce back – bounce forward”*** and with that dare to be different. From adversity comes opportunity and you need to grasp opportunity with both hands. Always focus on the positives and good things and leave the negative bad stuff alone.

We all have problems, issues and frustrations that can sometimes lead us into a crisis. We need to embrace those crises and turn them into opportunities. Studies show that some of our greatest opportunities have come from those times of crisis as we tend to think differently and create and innovate to get us out of that crisis.

The message is simple, challenge people to be themselves and to believe in themselves, find purpose and focus, nurture their creativity, develop resilient and protective behaviours, conquer obstacles such as fear, set and attain personal goals.

Adversarial growth can be defined as;

- Crisis creates opportunity
- Holding hands in traffic – ie collaborate with others
- Leveraging happiness that fuels success.

If you allow yourself to get frustrated with problems and issues you will turn them into a crisis. You will then be forced into 2 things,

- Do something and about it and change it through innovation and creativity and finding the opportunities or,
- Change the way you think about it.

Sam's thought: ***“Do not follow the path. Go where there is no path and begin the trail.”***

Course Tours

Kingston Heath Golf Club

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Heatherton Victoria

Yarra Yarra Golf Club

Warrigal Road
Bentleigh East, Victoria

Royal Melbourne Golf Club

Cheltenham Road
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