



BRUCE BARILLA

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# Locker Room Renovations

## Who Knows Best?

**Golf and country clubs make a big mistake by not including knowledgeable input and approval from the locker room staff when doing a renovation.**

### *Common sense concerns*

I sincerely admire architects' and interior designers' work, as I have seen some beautiful-looking completions. However, my concern is whether or not they have ever worked as a golf locker room attendant. I say this respectfully because common sense begs this question: How are they supposed to know what detailed design features are needed if they have no locker room attendant experience to realize what is needed.

Form should indeed follow function. Just because the form is impressive doesn't always mean it's functional. After all, you don't hire a plumber to rewire your house or take golf lessons from the tennis pro.

I've been to clubs where there is no amenity shelf over the sinks. All the cans, bottles and containers are placed on the countertop, where they can get wet, and the countertop becomes cluttered. It's a relatively easy fix to install a shelf, but sometimes budgets or higher authorities won't allow it.

The location of the greeting counter/shoeshine room is essential for better and more efficient service. Depending upon the locker room's size, it can be at the main entrance or centrally located. The Kirtland Country Club (Willoughby, OH) and The Country Club of Hudson (Hudson, OH) are examples of clubs with greeting counters in good locations.

Placing it out of the way in a corner makes for extra steps and slow service. Also, having to open a door each time the attendant enters the shoeshine room is inefficient and aggravating. One feature that should never be missing is a sink with hot and cold water to clean shoes. Second on my list is either a heated walk-in shoe drying closet like at The Greenbrier or the QuickDry4P1 shoe drying cabinet from Duffy's Tri-C Club Supply.

Asked by a private club to review their renovation blueprints, I noticed that the commodes were located directly across from each shower rather than across from the urinals, which were in a different area not near the showers. Had this been redesigned, it would have prevented any unpleasant odors in the shower area.

Not every club has separate sinks for the shower area and separate sinks for the bathroom. I highly recommend this and have seen it at some clubs, such as Keene Trace Golf Club (Nicholasville, KY) and Belfair (Bluffton, SC).

Another concern is the long-term effect on morale when not including the staff members' input. Staff members can feel insulted or have their feelings hurt when an outsider is brought in and then doesn't even ask about staff members' needs and/or what they would like to see differently. This is something management should make sure doesn't happen.

### *Attention to details*

When I worked at Butler National, I remember asking "Red" Harbour (whose company built the Illinois Tollway (I294) and Butler National Golf Club (Oak Brook, IL), "What is the secret to your success?" He immediately answered, "Paying attention to the details."

New does not always mean better. For example, while I was consulting at a club in Ohio, the locker room manager warned the GM that even though the proposed new wood lockers will be more attractive than the current old, bent and paint-chipped metal ones, they are not as wide and will not hold as much. He was concerned the members would complain. And complain they did.

In another state, a new clubhouse is still in the blueprint stage. Experienced golf locker room attendants encourage the manager to feature only full size lockers. He says there is not enough space. After the clubhouse opens to the members, many of the double stack and triple stack lockers are not rented.

I don't claim to have all the answers. I learn something new every time I visit another club. I can make mistakes. However, working together harmoniously accomplishes a lot. Give it a try. **BR**