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If I Was a Member of the Board Responsible for the Locker Rooms, I Would ...

Meet with the locker room manager and staff out of respect for their service to the club and ask them their concerns, ideas, suggestions and needs.

I'd be available to discuss the locker room operation, as Tom Goodman did when he was house committee chairman at Butler National Golf Club in Oak Brook, IL.

He understood employee concerns, having had general manager experience at local hotels such as Hyatt, The Drake and Hilton. House committee directors who show this type of interest will gain admiration, increase employee morale and improve the locker room.

Encourage and arrange for the staff to visit locker rooms at other clubs because seeing what other area clubs offer is educational, and they can compare and contrast amenities, layout and service standards and "take notes."

Afterward, I would follow up with them to discuss any positive changes we as a team can incorporate at our club. Locker room employees share a common bond. They understand the pros and cons of the profession. Overwork fatigue is common during a busy season when working many hours with few days off.

Therefore, visits can be an uplifting time. Talking with someone who goes through the same daily experiences makes for good medicine and a time of refreshment and renewal.

Let them make simple decisions without being micromanaged, such as ordering supplies and doing amenity setups without having to get approval. I know of clubs where the director of golf and the clubhouse manager had final authority regarding what supplies to order after the locker room manager or attendant gave them a list of items needed.

This shows distrust and lack of confidence in the locker room staff, whether realized or not by the overseer. It is discouraging and, in ways, insulting, too, especially if the locker room manager has substantially more years of know-how compared to a DG or CM who is relatively new at the club and without any locker room experience.

Provide ways for the locker room staff to increase their knowledge by having them attend the local CMAA chapter education meetings and the local CMAA-sponsored vendor expo

if you have one. If not, I suggest that our club host a vendor expo covering all departments and invite locker room-related companies.

Another important aspect of locker room management is having the staff compare products, cost and services from Body One Products, Duffy's Tri-C Club Supply, Fore Supply, Ready Care and Textile Management Service.

They would call the owners of companies they are not doing business with to ask what they offer and why they should purchase from them. They would report their findings to me, how they were treated and which company they prefer to do business with. They would be sure to have a catalog from each supplier.

I would give them a laptop to research all aspects of the locker room operation and encourage them to visit the Locker Room Consulting website (www.lrcgolf.com) and the Locker Room Managers Association website (www.yourlrma.com).

The club would also host an annual locker room seminar and invite locker room managers and staff from around the country via a coordinated effort. It would include educational session speakers, Q&A, vendors, free giveaways, a display table of products, prizes, awards, lunch, golf and use of the locker room with each attendee's name on a locker for the day with a welcome gift inside.

Show appreciation with perks, including comp meals, comp golf on certain days, employee golf outings, free uniforms, good compensation, years of service pins, photos of the staff by the locker room welcome counter and on the club's website, business cards, flat screen TV in the shoe shine room along with a laptop and radio, yearly outings to professional sports events, occasional gift cards to local restaurants, reciprocity golf with other area clubs, permission to have guests and an invitation to attend board meetings.

This is what I would do. However, the main question is: "What would you do?" **BR**