NGCOA FOOD AND BEVERAGE (101) MANUAL

The food and beverage (f/b) operation at the golf course is rarely given the respect it deserves from management. It has the potential to be a significant contributor to the bottom line, yet often is viewed as a “necessary evil.” Until the approach is taken to run f/b as a business within the business, the department will remain difficult and awkward to tame, not to mention a continual source of frustration.

This section of the NGCOA training manual will mainly discuss the mechanics of f/b analysis and the systems and procedures that need to be in effect to protect and maximize profits while still maintaining desired standards of quality and service. In other words, this is about the numbers and how to monitor them closer and smarter. The days of chefs and f/b managers falling back on the ages-old standard, “Everyone is losing money,” have come to a close with the courses and clubs that understand from a more informed perspective.

Deliveries & Suppliers

Savings are to be had even before food arrives at the back door. Establish deliveries with reputable suppliers. To insure the most competitive prices, get more than one bid. Accounts that have been based on friendships do not guarantee the best prices. Determine how prices are set by the supplier, whether guarantees exist, and how wholesale prices are affected by market changes; does the supplier notify, do prices stay static for weeks or months at a time, etc? Other issues that should be discussed with a prospective supplier:

- What volume level qualifies for national pricing?
- Are discounts available for early payment (less than 30 days)?
- A vendor that has to come to the back door often is spending more on labor and gas. A client that knows how to order and in turn limit the suppliers’ costs is often eligible for a drop-size discount.
- Do rebates exist with certain product manufacturers? Will the supplier track this for you or it may be to your advantage to go straight to the product source and negotiate a discount for volume (called deviated pricing.)

Many clubs/courses make the mistake of spreading the spending power to several different suppliers instead of leveraging the volume by getting most goods from one source. Fewer deliveries at the back door decrease opportunities for other types of losses, cut down on paperwork and minimize interruptions to the daily routine.

Rarely do low prices guarantee a low cost of goods (COG). The real money is to be made from following strict manager routines discussed below. Low prices are more like icing on a cake or a reward for paying attention to details.

Deliveries should be arranged to the business’ convenience, including what days, how many times per week, at what hour and whether or not your staff is expected to help unload. Only authorized personnel—people that have been schooled in what to check for—should be allowed to check off and sign for a delivery. Management should handle this responsibility until someone else is trained and qualified. Most suppliers are reliable, but it should be noted that the biggest and the best in the industry make mistakes.

The time of delivery is when it is best to check several different aspects of the product:

- Correct product description and quantity.
• Correct temperatures and weights that concur with the paperwork. Checking frozen and chilled goods reduces the possibility that they have been delivered in substandard shape.
• Manually written weights should be legible and spot-checked with a scale.

At no time during actual delivery of anything should the continual ingress and egress of the delivery person be unattended. Deliveries rarely include product leaving the store, but it can happen if the back door is left open and no one is paying attention. Some method of noting that each item on an invoice was delivered is a must. With deliveries of several hundred pieces it is impossible to keep track of what has come in without “checking off” on the paper. Beware of receipts or invoices that have been signed for but with no visible signs of each line being marked.

After delivery, doors should be secured. Product should be rotated and stored in designated places immediately. Leaving any fresh produce, frozen or chilled items out at room temperature for even the shortest amounts of time will lead to quality issues and possible health hazards. A system of dating or using stickers helps insure rotation and freshness.

Menu Development & Pricing

The beauty of the science of f/b is that an owner/operator has the ability to pre-determine exactly what the COG will be for a menu. More often than not a chef or owner has plucked the price of an item out of thin air, just because it sounds good. This is hardly the way to do business.

Each item on the menu needs to be broken down into separate components (including garnish and sauces, etc.,) to understand exactly what it is costing to put a dish together. For a target of 33% food cost, the majority of menu items (or core top-sellers) will need to be in that range. For example, if a chicken dish costs $4.00 to put together, a price of about $12 needs to be the starting point to examine. If that price is deemed too high for what the client may want to pay, then the ingredients need to be reviewed (perhaps portion size and accompaniments) to see if there is a way to get closer to a friendlier price.

Not every item needs to be priced to hit the budget target. Getting familiar with the sales mix (how much of each item is sold, both in numbers and as a percentage of sales) will help to decide which items can run higher costs and which will come in lower, the end result hopefully being close to the original target.

This is an important first step in helping to determine “why” a COG is a particular number. No new menu item, daily special, banquet or catering dish should be priced until everything on the plate has been assigned a cost. Menu prices/costs should be re-calculated at least twice yearly.

Portions, Recipes & Yields

To fully understand all the variables means knowing the price of the product coming in the back door, portions sizes, yields from raw product and recipe yields. When standardizing recipes that are to be used often and put together by different people, follow these steps:

1. Determine quantities of each ingredient and list in order of use.
2. Reference equipment to use, including cooking times, temperatures, mixer speeds, slicer settings, etc.
3. List container style and size for storage.
4. Include yield and portion spec for menu items.
5. Specify garnish, including any paper products (toothpick frill, soufflé cup, etc.)
6. Include a photo of final plate presentation.
7. All the above is ideally in a notebook with a table of contents and indexes.

Not only do recipes insure the control of costs, but also provide consistency with the customer’s expectations in terms of taste, quantity, quality and the initial plate presentation. It makes sense that menu items that have a usage can be portioned in advance. This practice prevents hurried staff from “grabbing and guessing” how much they need to use. People cannot be expected to do the right job if not given the tools they need, including scales, cups, scoops, ladles and rubber spatulas.

**Product Inventory**

To take a monthly inventory of f/b products is perhaps the biggest tactical error on the part of management. F/b stock is inventoried at least weekly and sometimes daily in the most successful operations. Any f/b manager/chef that explains the weekly count as “excessive” or “too much work” is out of touch. The advantages of a weekly inventory are many:

- The perception by the staff that things are closely watched.
- Increased awareness on management’s part of how much product is sitting on the shelves, which leads to better ordering habits and less waste because of better rotation.
- The realization that excess product means more time expended on the task. In these times of 2-3 deliveries per week from the main supplier, the f/b levels need to be only a fraction of the weekly sales. An operation averaging $15K per week in sales and a 33% COG means they are using about $5K per week in product. If inventory on the shelves is totaling $15K (not an unusual occurrence,) then theoretically there are three weeks of supplies that have to be counted.

It is impossible to determine food cost based on sales and purchases alone. Knowing how much product is on hand allows one to calculate the true cost of doing business. The basic formula for getting the COG is the following:

\[
\text{(Beginning inv value + purchases) – ending inv value = usage \$ (or COG)}
\]

The % is derived by taking the usage \$ and dividing by net sales

For example, a golf course restaurant manager takes an inventory of all product on a Monday morning (before opening) of $7500. Between that Monday and the rest of the week, another $3000 of product is purchased. That same week the facility has f/b net sales totaling $9000. On the following Monday morning the inventory level is at $7200. Using the above formula:

\[
\text{(Begin inv \$7500 + $3000 purchases) = ($10500) – $7200 ending inv = $3300 usage.}
\]

\[
\text{Product usage of $3300 divided by net sales of $9000 = 36.7\% COG}
\]

The COG means little by itself unless it is compared to a “theoretical” food cost. A theoretical COG is based on the premise that everything is ideal, i.e., prices do not change, waste is zero, there is no pilferage, portions are consistent and perfect, yields and recipes are being followed, etc. Of course, this is not going to be the case, yet a theoretical food cost is a benchmark by which to compare how the systems within the facility are operating.

Theoretical COG is gathered by multiplying the totals of every item sold by its cost. The percentage is again the total cost divided by actual net sales. It is misleading to assume that a general COG is going to be the result of taking one of each menu item and examining its individual cost. The theoretical cost of goods is essentially an average of everything sold, but not...
in a "one each" ratio. The top selling items weight or drive the direction of f/b costs. For example, if equal amounts of a soda, burger, and fries were sold, the total f/b costs might look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>#Sold</th>
<th>Sales</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Cost %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burger</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fries</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$1.50</td>
<td>$0.45</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soda</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$1.50</td>
<td>$0.25</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals          $6.00  $1.70  28%

But in the real world, sales mix might result in this theoretical:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>#Sold</th>
<th>Sales</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Cost %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burger</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>$300.00</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fries</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>$300.00</td>
<td>$  90.00</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soda</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>$450.00</td>
<td>$  75.00</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals          $1050.00  $265.00  25%

The point to be hammered home here is that clubs have discovered that despite what they thought was a good cost of goods (compared to the so-called industry average,) they were actually leaving several dollars on the table!

**Beverages**

Beverages are a part of the overall COG, but the wise f/b manager will separate and analyze beverages from food for a number of reasons. For example, alcoholic drinks are typically broken down into beer, wine and spirits/liquor. Soft drinks may or may not be included as another category. Whether non-alcoholic drinks are monitored as a food item or beverage item is unimportant as long as they are understood for how they influence the overall picture (more later.) Typical COG or beverage cost (also called pour cost) for the industry is 25% for beer, 35% for wine and 18% for liquor.

Those three figures average a fourth, which is dictated by the sales mix. For a club selling a ton of beer and little wine, it is a safe bet that the beverage cost had better be close to 25%, likely favoring below that number if more alcohol is sold than wine. How often these numbers should be gathered depends on the perceived depth of a problem, but any club that allows the f/b manager to take only a monthly inventory is asking for trouble.

Calculating a COG for beverage is one thing, but how does one know if that number is what it is supposed to be? Comparing the actual COG with a theoretical COG is one way to know. Theoretical is the perfect world: No pilferage, no spillage, every pour the same, etc. Most POS systems are capable of producing a spreadsheet that multiplies every item sold by how much each item costs the club. Typically the club spends thousands on this software only to have the f/b programs ignored, thus making for the argument that what the club ends up with is a very expensive cash register.
If the COG for beverages is 28%, but the theoretical is 23%, the goal is to determine why there is a five-point spread. Consider the following tools to use when exploring the unknown:

- Compare usage to sales. Beer bottles and cans are the easiest. If the POS says 100 cans were sold and the weekly inventory reveals that 120 were used, this is worth looking into.
- Draft beer is trickier, but not impossible. If the standard keg is 15.5 gallons, then there are 1984 ounces of brew in a barrel. If the club serves a 16 oz. glass, then there are 124 glasses to a keg. Of course, even the most efficient bartender is going to spill some, but if a bar is only getting 90 glasses per keg, training or something else needs attention. Measuring a partial keg is darn near impossible, so begin the experiment with a fresh keg and track the sales until it blows.
- How many f/b managers can recite how many ounces are in a bottle of spirits? Places with poor pour costs like to blame it on, “Our members like a strong drink.” As long as everyone knows how much that means, then the rest is easy. Alcohol bottles generally fall into one of four sizes: Liter (33.8 oz.), quart (32), fifth (25.6) and 750 ml (25.4). If the club has a policy of pouring a 2½ oz. drink, then a specific brand of vodka that comes in a quart bottle should be yielding at least 12 drinks.
- There are a variety of systems to control pouring, including special nozzles/spouts, metered sensors, and of course, the jigger or shot glass. Bartenders, proud of their trade and the perception of coolness that comes with it, want to “free-pour”—it shows they have been allowed to ride a bike without training wheels. The f/b manager that is in control has no problem with this; he/she tests his staff every day by having them pour into a glass and then measuring the volume. It’s win-win. The customer perceives that a fair drink is being poured, the bartender’s ego is intact and management knows just how much is going into the glass.

Unfortunately alcohol and even sodas are an area of great temptation and abuse with employees. Any manager at any level is either naïve or worse if they think that the staff can do no wrong. Putting procedures in place and enforcing them will help to keep “honest people honest.” But the following incidents and practices are not uncommon and lead to the worst:

- Allowing personnel (including management) a complimentary “dipping of the beak” for a job well done at the end of a shift hardly makes sense, for too many reasons to list here. But when employees are allowed “just one,” be prepared to encounter a nasty incident sometime in the future.
- “Complimentary” drinks given to loyal customers in the interest of sales promotion or whatever, but done mainly for the purpose of increasing tip revenue for the staff.
- Bar personnel bringing in their own bottles of booze to work from and then pocketing the sales with no decrease in the house inventory.
- Overpouring of liquor for special patrons that are known for tipping.
- Failure to empty bottles or kegs completely before discarding or changing.

The inventory process includes the need for requisition sheets (tracking where a bottle goes after it comes in the back door.) Some clubs tag every bottle that is delivered, not to mention keeping a log for tracking drink mistakes, comps and unexpected waste.

Remote venues (like golf carts, snack bars and temporary stands) that do not have the luxury of a cash register can still compare sales to beverage usage by doing what even the country’s biggest sports arenas and stadia rely on: The cup count. Employees are given a specific inventory of cups and/or bottles, etc. They are accountable for any sales based on what is left over from the count. It is the simplest of systems and is proven. Soft drinks are just as critical to monitor as alcohol. The general profit margin on fountain soda is sharply different from bottled, non-alcoholic drinks. If at all possible, any f/b business should
focus on the potential of the fountain soda and consider bottled drinks a secondary option, but only when there are no alternatives. It’s no different than the advantages that draft beer has over cans and bottles.

Example: The five-gallon bag-in-the-box (BIB) of fountain syrup is designed to yield about 3800 fluid ounces of finished soda. Depending on what a club pays for a BIB, it averages out to a bit over a penny per ounce. If a 20 oz. cup half-filled with ice is the standard, that cup will fill to about 15 oz. of soda. Throw in the cup, straw and lid and maybe the total cost is 25 cents. Sold for $1.50, the pour cost is less than 17%, or $1.25 in gross profit.

Compare that to the 20 oz. bottled soda the beverage distributors cheerfully sell to the club for as much as 50 cents, and the COG jumps to 33% with only a $1.00 in gross profits. Specialty drinks that are sold as ades or energy enhancers are even less friendly to the club when it comes to making money. Costing as much as 70 cents to $2.00 each, finding the menu price point to keep customers happy and have something left over for the hard work can be hit and miss.

Another advantage that the BIB system has over bottled drinks is storage. Good inventory practice includes keeping stock on the shelves at manageable levels. The people that deliver drinks are hardly sensitive to the issue. Rarely told how much is needed for this shipment, drivers often unload far more stuff than is necessary. Add to this the stacks of empty crates that hold the bottles and litter the loading area and one begins to understand the need for a sense of moderation. (Note: Empty beer kegs and CO2 tanks are worth big money—it’s shocking how many clubs allow them to sit in an unsecured area behind a building, just waiting for someone to come along and steal.)

Security & Staff Issues

Management should routinely inspect the trash receptacles for waste. This can include checking for containers that are not properly scraped out for maximum yields and product that may have been hidden away for future wrongful use. All cardboard boxes are to broken down before going out to the trash.

Cash registers and point-of-sale systems should be updated at least weekly so that there is confirmation that all items are correctly rung into the sales mix. When the manager is able to see a breakdown of all the menu items sold, there is a starting-off point by which COG can be categorically researched. Food groups like meats, seafood, beverages, produce or dairy can be separated into parts of the whole, or total food cost.

Analysis of sales mix can also make aware changes in key item usage and possibly the discovery of unrecorded sales. Par of the COG process is the need to know the money is getting into the cash register and not elsewhere. Auditing sales checks vs. receipts and unannounced till checks are the most obvious controls. A cashier in a hurry can easily hit the wrong key or overlook an item on the check, resulting in lost sales. A system for documenting errors, refunds, etc., must be in use in order to account for everything rung into the system.

Cash shortages surprisingly still exist, despite most cash registers taking the guesswork as to how much change is due a customer. Anything exceeding $1 per $1000 of sales is pushing the credibility of the cashier. Cash overages should be treated with the same concern as a shortage. Money should not be allowed to build up in the till—periodic drops confirmed by both cashier and management limits liability and temptation.
Server and/or cashier training is an ongoing process, even after one has “mastered” the position. An outstanding group of employees can be influential in the rhythm of the COG in many ways:

- Minimal mistakes in ringing up orders, which also keeps extra paperwork minimized.
- Suggestive selling of daily specials (the art of moving the menu) or add-ons such as appetizers and desserts, resulting in higher average checks.
- A thorough knowledge of the menu, which not only lends to the enthusiasm of selling food, but minimizes returns to the kitchen due to misinformation.

**Labor Costs in F/B**

There are many hazards to watch for when staffing an f/b operation. Scheduling and reacting to volume trends requires daily, even hourly attention. Not adjusting for slower volume means spending dollars that can never be recovered. Not adjusting to higher sales can mean a less than satisfactory experience for the potential repeat customers because of understaffing.

One of the biggest mistakes in building a schedule is for management to accommodate the needs of the staff rather than the needs of the business. Giving an employee “x” hours because that is what they want or need regardless of volume levels is asking for trouble. It is important that during the interview process, prospective applicants are explained the nature of the business and many factors will determine how many hours are assigned to each worker.

Schedules work best in short-term situation, usually weekly. Permanent schedules are rarely compatible with the ever-changing trends in an f/b operation. A schedule should be posted far enough in advance that an employee can make reasonable plans. As a courtesy to staff and to insure the smoothest operations, any changes made to a schedule after it has been posted should not be done without management first consulting with the employee and both sides agreeing to the change.

Putting names and shift times is only the beginning of managing the schedule. The next step is for the schedule to be extended or cost out (sort of like the menu.) This is done by adding the hours of each employee and then multiplying the hours by the rate of pay to determine how much is spent each day in proportion to the projected sales. The dollars spent are divided by the projected net sales to yield a labor percentage.

Another exercise for management is to compare the actual weekly payroll dollars and/or hours to the schedules made for the same period. It is not unusual to discover that numbers do not match! The question is, why not? When everyone is working an extra quarter-hour here or an hour there, it is surprising how quickly the numbers can affect the final results.

Successful f/b managers schedule in a ¼ hour format, e.g., an employee might come in at 10:15 am rather than 10:00, or be off at 1:45 pm rather than 2:00, depending on the real needs of the business. Forecasting sales, which in turn dictate hours needed, is nothing more than making an educated guess based on using the following information:

- Previous 2-3 weeks’ sales trends.
- Last year’s same time period sales for comparable week.
- Weather forecasts.
- Knowledge of special circumstances, including holidays, school schedules and special events.
- Tee sheets.
The number of hours used per day should be in proportion to the amount of business expected. The slowest days must use the minimum amount of hours. An example:

$9000: The forecasted f/b sales for the week.
30%: The desired hourly labor cost/percentage.

30% of $9000 equals a budget of $2700 to spend on labor for the week. If the average hourly rate for the f/b staff is $7 per hour, then there are approximately 385 hours available for the week.

<table>
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<th>Tue</th>
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<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
<th>Sun</th>
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<td>54</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
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</table>

= Projected daily sales

= $2700 or 30% for week

= 385 hours spread over week

**Marketing**

Most golf course or club marketing is focused on the course itself: The dynamic layout, the signature hole, the vacation destination, the home or lot for sale on a fairway. As courses up the ante for the overall experience of a day on the links, the distinctions begin to blur.

Food and beverage is an opportunity to break away from the pack. Although it may not be the overriding reason for choosing a course for play or entertainment, it certainly can affect the perspective on the total event. Golf course food doesn’t have to be five-star, but it hardly needs to be predictable and non-noteworthy, either.

When prioritizing the targets for increased f/b business, the niches can be ranked as four categories: The golfers, the catering/banquets, the lunch trade and the dinner trade.

**Number One: The Golfers**

That is why the course exists. To lure them to play and then take a passive stance on feeding them is to miss a terrific opportunity. Employees in f/b probably have more interaction with the player (after checking in) during the day than any other department. Consequently it makes sense to give them the necessary social and hospitality skills to engage a guest or member.

- Food carts on the course are more important than ever. The person driving the cart not only needs the social graces, but a sound understanding of golf etiquette. The training deserves to include total course knowledge and logistics.
- “The Turn” needs an extra appraisal for its potential. It often is located at the crossroads of the 1st and 10th tees, making it a great spot to do some merchandising in the form of outdoor grilling and a place to take a break.
- Golf outings, including shotguns, never fall into the time frame of a 4½-hour round. More likely an event will take up to six hours. At the time of selling the event the goal should be to sell two meals, breakfast and lunch, or lunch and dinner.
- The selling of an outing should be a one-stop shop for a potential client—let’s not make them talk with multiple contacts in order to pull off the event. The Sales Manager should be totally familiar with the menus and packages available, as well as understanding the financials associated with options. There is nothing wrong with knowing what is easiest for the kitchen to prepare and what the profit margins are for each choice.

**Number Two: Banquets & Catering**
Functions and/or group sales are a treasure trove for sales and profits. Not unlike with hotels, potential clients of weddings, anniversaries, company parties and proms expect menu prices to be a tad higher than a normal menu. The result is profit margins that are normally 10% higher for the golf course that has done its homework.

- If designing or planning for banquet facilities, the magic number for seating appears to be about 250. Anything less is sure to turn away a lot of business.
- Kitchens that have been designed with catering needs in the forefront are less likely to have production problems, frustrated staff and unhappy guests.
- Many tools are recommended for creating the successful Sales Manager: Having an office adorned with photos of previous events as well as a scrapbook for more pictures and thank-you letters for a wonderful experience, etc. This can creep into the clubhouse by reserving a well-traveled hallway for more photos of what is possible. Many clubs/courses are taking a more aggressive posture with how the Sales Manager is compensated. The trend is to include an incentive program that rewards for increased sales and satisfaction.

Number Three: Lunch

No course is going to “make it” on the strength of lunch volume. Those courses fortunate enough to be located near business districts or light-manufacturing zones can attest to the advantage of having some lunch traffic. It’s a non-traditional setting for a lunch break and arguably a more soothing experience if done right.

If the banquet facilities have been designed to be compartmentalized when necessary, this is a great chance to sell local companies a different way to put on a one-day or multiple-day seminars, including breakfast, lunch and breaks for snacks. Throwing in a bucket of balls on the range or nine holes just might be the perfect stress reliever and way to finish the day.

Number Four: Dinner

The golf course world is littered with clubhouses that were designed to be the next and ultimate fine-dining experience. Alas, these rooms are empty in the evening, a wake-up call that people do not think of a golf course as a dining destination at the end of the day. Casual dining has swept the nation and the competition is as tough as ever. The country club dining room is perceived as stuffy and stale (industry experts will use the term “mature”) compared to the upscale restaurant that has opened not far away.

Part of the problem is the scale and style of these dining rooms. They are often huge and dark. They are difficult to fill and that equates to a lack of energy, which creates a further perception that the place is not successful. It’s a vicious circle. For the club or course considering this space a must, building a smaller, more intimate room might be the better bet. In summary, chasing after the golfer and the group sales is the way to go for the future. Put the dinner business on hold.

It is darn near impossible, if not impractical, to try and be everything to everyone. Keep this in mind when creating a menu. Keep it tight. The goal is to do a limited number of things spectacularly rather than a zillion things only so-so. This is why the “Special of the Day” menu was invented. It performs several strategic functions: It allows a chef to flex the creative muscles, thus in turn stimulating curiosity and (hopefully) rewarded risk-taking that was made possible by those well-trained servers discussed earlier. It is also an underrated tool for moving product that may get less attention from the diners.
The Personnel

The definitive tools for marketing are the employees. It is fatal to underestimate the value that the staff supplies to the f/b experience at any golf course. They deserve the thorough training and management nurturing to help make the dining experience (whether from a cart or in the Dining Room) special.

Part of the f/b management of the financials is to share information with the employees about how the business is doing. People by nature want to know how they are doing and how it can contribute to the business. There are countless bits of data that can be downloaded to them without getting into “top secret” information, like sales and net profit, but the most progressive clubs are willing to share even that to get better results.

There are few f/b operations that can survive without repeat business. The cornerstones of a thriving facility are generally quality, service and cleanliness, but there is another secret weapon that is proving to be even more potent: Name recognition, or better explained as the “Cheers” mentality. People feel valued and important when they are recognized for their patronage.

The Chef should be visiting the dining room as well as the Manager. Learning member or guest names should be part of the culture and instilled with the staff at any orientation or training session. The software that comes with the sophisticated Club and POS systems today allows management the discreet opportunity to know the member or guest as well as they know themselves in a complimentary way. Knowing birthdays, anniversary dates, dining habits and preferences, etc., can be used to everyone’s advantage.

This plan of friendly attack on the customer doesn’t have to be limited to inside diners. GPS systems, tee sheets and cart numbers are the perfect triangulation method for addressing the golfers by name on the course. Imagine the feeling of importance and stunned look on the golfer if the cart person were to drive up to a cart and ask them by name (Mr. or Ms., of course) what they would prefer to drink! This is powerful stuff.

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