

**BRUCE BARILLA**

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State of the Locker Room

Before venturing out to provide on-site locker room evaluations with staff training, I worked at Edgewood Valley Country Club (La Grange, IL) and Butler National Golf Club (Oak Brook, IL).

Both have fine locker rooms, with features and amenities that members and guests would expect and deserve at a private club. It wasn't until I began to see other locker rooms that I realized what I thought was the norm was actually the exception. Here are trends based on 52 on-site consultations and visits to 65 more locker rooms over a 10-year period.

TRENDS

1. Newer locker rooms are not as big as older ones.
2. The locker room staff is not always allowed to accept tips.
3. Many clubs are not staffed from before the first golfer arrives to after the last golfer is off the course.
4. Very few clubs have a steam, sauna, whirlpool, massage room and business center.
5. Large fitness centers open to both men and women are very popular.
6. Not all clubs provide single-use bars of soap.
7. Locker room staff need accountability.
8. It is uncommon to see the locker room manager's picture included on the club's website.
9. Clubs do not realize just how much better the locker rooms can be.
10. Robes are not provided or sold at most clubs.
11. Men's locker rooms have more features and amenities than women's, except for Liberty National Golf Club (Jersey City, NJ).
12. Most shoeshine rooms would not pass a neatness test.
13. Inexpensive dollar store brands cheapen the experience.
14. Water volume and pressure in the showers is not always that good.
15. New showerheads with the water limiters removed are often overlooked.
16. No men-only grill in the locker room at every club.
17. A good choice of sink and shower amenities is lacking and quite often not neatly arranged.
18. Better-quality colognes are not featured because of theft by members and guests.
19. Grooming stations, if any, are inadequately supplied.
20. Full-size tall wood or metal lockers and shorter metal type with two doors are preferred over double stack.
21. A barbershop is impressive but only a handful of clubs have one.
22. Some clubs do not provide washcloths yet only offer shower gel.
23. Locker room managers provide their personal cellphone numbers for better service.
24. On course food and drink deliveries are part of the service.
25. Manager and board meetings do not necessarily include the locker room manager.
26. Shower towels with soiled-towel drops are not always conveniently located by each locker cove.
27. I have never seen a tall glass door refrigerator for dry-chilled bath towels by a steam, sauna or whirlpool.
28. No club I have been to offers heated towels or heated robes by the showers.
29. Annual locker fees range from under \$100 to over \$300.
30. Employee suggestions are not always implemented when major renovations are done, causing low morale.
31. Clubs say they want to be the best but will not spend the money to be such.
32. There is a shortage of guest lockers and at times lockers for members.
33. Few have separate sinks for the showers and separate sinks for the bathrooms.
34. Other than The Greenbrier (White Sulphur Springs, WV), no club has a walk-in shoe drying room.
35. Placing shoes on locker tops is not always allowed or possible.
36. Scented damp-chilled washcloths are rarely seen.
37. Some clubs provide a dry cleaning and laundry service, but this is not the standard.

The locker room should be as important as any other department. It can bring significant revenue to the club in annual locker fees, guest play income and new members joining.

Not having full-time locker room staff diminishes the overall club experience, worth and reputation. However, at fully staffed clubs, the locker room manager/attendant is still a confidant and friend who makes members and guests feel special. This has been a trend for years which, thankfully, will never go out of style. **BR**