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## The 5-Star Question

### *Will You or Won't You Ask It of Your Staff?*

Some years ago, when I was employed as a golf locker room attendant, I began to do my own secret survey of my coworkers from different departments. The question was simple enough: "Does management ever ask for your input?" Unfortunately, the answer was mostly the same: "No."

The people I asked were dedicated, caring professionals in their line of work. They did a good job because they wanted to, not because they were supposed to. I found it disheartening and at the same time the reason for low employee morale, failing to be the best in the business (or at least second to none) and a decline in reputation.

#### ***What is so hard about asking for input from staff?***

It is not a sign of weakness but of self-confidence and strong character when you as a board member or general manager admit you do not always have the answers or know exactly what to do when making decisions. No one does. We can learn and should learn from each other.

Seems simple enough, if, for example, the locker room is to be remodeled, you ask staff with years of service what they need to make their department the best it can be for members and guests and more satisfying and efficient for them. It makes no sense to depend solely upon architects and interior designers who have no locker room attendant training or experience in this profession.

#### ***Now that you've asked, implement their ideas***

Implementing the ideas of staff is as important as asking for ideas. Otherwise, they think they have been ignored and ultimately disrespected. However, I admit that at times certain suggestions might not be possible, feasible or affordable.

Not every shoeshine room has enough space for a walk-in shoe drying closet like the men's golf locker room at The Greenbrier, but the QuikDry4P shoe drying cabinet by Cres Cor Sport and sold by Duffy's and Fore Supply is an option. Although a better shower experience is desired, not every club has the required water pressure and volume. Nor can every member have their own private Locker Suite™, with

a private shower, whirlpool tub, bathroom and work desk, if there is a lack of space and budget.

#### ***Personal experiences of mine and others***

Matt Morgan, former general manager at Butler National Golf Club, used to do a daily walk-through of the locker room and ask me, "Do you need anything?" He meant it. This is in contrast to a friend of mine, having years of practical experience and service, becoming the locker room manager but not being allowed to attend management meetings and having a "supervisor" who never worked as a golf locker room attendant making final decisions on types and display of amenities, purchasing and scheduling.

#### ***Understanding the locker room manager and staff***

If you as a board member or general manager have employees who truly care, work hard, have the expertise, are knowledgeable and provide an outstanding "product" that other clubs wish they had, consider yourself blessed and do all you can to keep these individuals by showing your appreciation. It is more than salary, benefits and perks. The appreciation comes in the form of trust, respect and confidence. It means providing employees the tools they need and delegating them the authority to make decisions without having to constantly get approval. Otherwise, are they really managers?

I have met many locker room managers and staff who want to be the best but are frustrated by not having things as simple as an amenity shelf over the sinks and a soiled-towel cart on wheels inside a towel cabinet. Show an interest in their well-being and the well-being of the club will improve. If you sincerely ask for their input and try together to implement it, you are a wise man or woman. Five-star!