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Do You Know My Name And Where I'm Going?

Member recognition seems to be a hot topic throughout the club industry and for good reason. A lot of their hard-earned money is spent by members to join and participate at their clubs and recognizing a member by name elevates service levels.

Which example describes the conversation happening in your club between a member and your waitstaff:

Good afternoon Mrs. Smith, will you be having iced tea and a club sandwich today?

or Good afternoon Ma'am, what is your member number and what would you like for lunch today?

Even if the member has no intention of having iced tea and a club sandwich they will appreciate the greeting and service since it gives your club the personal feel that we are all striving to deliver. When being greeted with second example, members might as well be patronizing a public restaurant as they are not receiving the service level commensurate with their initiation fee and annual dues billing.

Whenever this conversation comes up with board members and managers the question is always, "How do we implement something of this magnitude?" The answer is to start slowly.

There are very simple places to start: Every club management system on the market comes with the ability to add member photos, family members and personal preferences. At the very least you can build this database and create your own tools and programs to educate managers and staff.

Contests and incentive programs can work well to encourage staff to participate and thrive, in your member recognition program. We have seen clubs do very well creating their own programs and requiring all staff to participate.

Additionally, there are existing software products that use educational techniques to create games and contests to be played online. These software programs train and quiz the staff on membership information allowing them to earn points and rewards based on performance on these quizzes. When implemented efficiently and across all departments clubs can have a great deal of success and increase member recognition and thus member satisfaction.

Another option is to use available technology and have a product alert your staff of members' name and preferences as they approach a service area. Imagine a brand-

new host in your restaurant is able to greet your members as, "Good Afternoon Mrs. Smith, let me show you to your table by the fireplace."

These types of recognition programs are based on the member's ID card, key fob, beacons, cell phone, or facial recognition and can be used to display member name and preferences on a screen as they approach areas of the club. These sophisticated technologies not only enhance member recognition and satisfaction but naturally lead to the details that every club wants: *Utilization statistics*.

Now we are accomplishing two tasks at the same time: making the members feel welcome by providing excellent service and preparing ourselves with data for these conversations in a future board meeting:

1. Should we expand the Grille Room?
2. What are the busiest dates and times at the pool?
3. Are the card rooms big enough to handle the demand at peak times?
4. Are enough members using the fitness center to justify a renovation?
5. Can we justify the expense of adding new tennis courts?

Clubs all across the world are having these conversations and relying on staff to gather data to help justify these decisions. These decisions are normally based upon financial records as well as usage data gathered from all sorts of systems: Point of sale, tee times, dining reservations, tennis reservations, spa reservations, website traffic and even manual tally sheets that can be entered into a spreadsheet for tracking.

We have tools available today for member recognition. We have tools available today for tracking utilization of our outlets. The future will be combining both technologies allowing clubs to predict:

1. When will our members be visiting?
2. What will our members do when they arrive?
3. Will members play golf and go home, or will they stay for lunch?
4. The possibilities are endless.

These predictive technologies will help us provide stellar service, better manage our clubs and provide the answers and knowledge to take our clubs into the next generation. **BR**