

KOPPLIN & KUEBLER

"The Most Trusted Names in Private Club Executive Placement"

MOMENTS OF TRUTH

By Richard Kopplin

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My "moments of truth" epiphany came to me on a Tuesday afternoon in the men's locker room as I was changing into my golf shoes for a nine-hole round of golf. Since my locker was one row away from the locker room attendants station I could overhear the conversation Jack, our locker room manager, was having with a couple of members.

"Jack, do you think the club party this Saturday night is going to be worth attending?" one of the members asked. Jack responded, "Well you know the club parties in the past were always sold out but in the last year or so it seems people don't care to come to the club functions anymore." When I heard that comment I almost hit my head on my locker door. I proceeded to take my golf shoes off and went back upstairs to my office.

When I walked into my office I asked Renee to distribute a memo to all of our department managers requesting their attendance at an "Emergency staff meeting" Friday morning at 9:00 a.m. and that there would be only one item on the agenda, "Moments of Truth." During that department head meeting I apologized for having failed to demonstrate leadership when it came to communicating with our employees how they should interact on a daily basis with our members. I explained that we had an opportunity **every day, in every interaction** with our members to shape opinions and attitudes in our club.

One reputable study found that the member of a private club will have 32 interactions with club employees in a typical visit to the club. If you multiply that number of interactions times the annual rounds of golf or the number of lunch and dinner covers you begin to see the exponential effect "moments of truth" can have. I often hear club managers and even club board presidents lament "we can't seem to change how members think and act in this club." The club employees have hundreds of opportunities every day to impact club member attitudes, depending on how they interact with them.

A "moment of truth" is defined as **"anytime an employee interacts with a member."** That interaction will either be **positive, negative or neutral**. It may only be a brief hello or good-by, a short conversation, or even a smile and a wave, but it is still an interaction. And like it or not the impact will be positive, negative or neutral. Every club general manager and every club president has an opportunity to influence how these "moments of truth" are being perceived in their club.

Following our department head meeting our team decided to insure that all of our interactions with our members were **"positive moments of truth."** In preparation for our next club party every employee, including the pro shop staff and golf course maintenance crew, donned a button, which advertised the party theme. Additionally, every employee was briefed on the particulars of this club function and were encouraged to

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enthusiastically respond to club members when they noticed the party button next to the employee nametag.

The club party was an enormous success with maximum attendance and every club special event was sold out for the balance of the year. We were successful in changing the attitude of our members from “the parties here used to be very good” to “you should see what they are doing at the next club party!!!” All because we recognized the importance of promoting positive “moments of truth.”

If the majority of interactions the members of your club have with your employees are positive the culture of the club can change from within. Once the “moments of truth” take a consistently positive turn there are hundreds of opportunities daily to impact the member attitudes in a private club. It starts with leadership and a commitment to encourage every employee to engage in positive moments, whether it is a nod, a conversation or even a friendly wave. You will see dramatic changes in the climate and culture of your club when you begin engaging “**positive moments of truth**” on a daily basis.