

# **KOPPLIN & KUEBLER**

*“The Most Trusted Names in Private Club Executive Placement”*

## **ELEVATE THE QUALITY OF GOVERNANCE AND ENJOY THE RESULTS**

**By Richard Kopplin**

**In any private club the quality of governance will determine how effectively the membership is served. That isn't a supposition; it's a principle as true as the sun rising in the East.**

One clear trend, that is elevating the quality of governance, is the nomination and election of the same number of board members for the same number of open seats. If there are three positions open this year for three year terms the nominating committee will propose only three names for those positions.

While facilitating a recent private club board retreat, one of the board members said he was opposed to that idea and thought their club should continue to nominate at least double the number of candidates for the three open seats. I asked him if he thought this process was so good why not adopt it for his own company? His response was that he would never do this in his own business and I asked again, why not? If you think it is such a great model for your private club why don't you see how well it would work in your own company?

I was not attempting to be coy or flippant. The challenges of running a private club have become more complex, especially in recent years. The risk of having an election which allows for the possibility of the “barking dog” members who often have single agenda motivations to distract management and governance from focusing on the real club issues is too great to leave to chance. Why would clubs want to play this form of “Russian Roulette” with their future?

The days of the “popularity contests” should be over with in private clubs. The nominating committee should select the very best talent available to assist the General Manager/CE in providing governance assistance in this challenging business environment. I believe this process is so critical to the future success of the club that it is time to look at creating a “standing” nominating committee rather than an “ad hoc” group.

My perfect club would have a Board Development and Resource Committee, which would meet on a regular basis and would be chaired by either the past president or a current board member. The focus of this committee would be to develop the slate of candidates for future boards just as the old nominating committee did but it would have the luxury of reviewing candidates during the entire year and not over the course of a few days.

Additionally, this committee could assist in finding committee members for various club committees by working with the General Manager/CE and department managers to identify prospective volunteers. This committee would be in a position to observe and monitor committee members who might be proposed as future board members. The Board Development and Resource Committee might even develop a list of guidelines or standards which would be helpful for any club member who desired to serve on the board.

Some board members have expressed concerns about their General Manager/CE “manipulating” the political process of the club by suggesting candidates to the nominating committee or the new Board Development and Resource Committee. Baloney! The General Manager/CE of a private club works in

a very political environment and should have an opportunity to participate in the direction of the club and that direction is often determined by the quality of candidates elected to the board.

At end of day, the satisfaction levels of the membership and their belief in how effectively their club is serving their needs will truly be determined by the quality of governance. Now, more than ever, private club boards need to review the nominating process to insure the future success of their clubs.