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THE POWER OF AI

Are you using AI yet? While Artificial Intelligence may be intimidating for many, it can be a big time saver for club professionals. Laura Leszczynski of Strategic Club Solutions says we've already been using forms of AI for years. If you have used speech to text translation, Netflix, chat bots or Google Maps, those are forms of artificial intelligence. Leszczynski says AI can be a game changer for club professionals.

Chat GPT is the fastest growing technology in our lifetime and if you aren't using it, you aren't being as effective and efficient as you could be. "You are at a competitive disadvantage both personally and professionally," Leszczynski said. She encourages managers to set up a free account and play around with it to see how it could be used as a resource.

"Chat GPT can save time, produce better quality items, improve decision making and allow for more creativity. It is easy to use and you can do more with less," she explained. "Gaining strategic advantages can make for a happier club experience for both members and staff."

Busy club professionals can use Chat GPT to produce documents such as a department head letter for the newsletter, an email response to a disgruntled member, agendas for a leadership meeting, menus for themed events, announcements to members and more. "Be warned, Chat GPT does 90 percent of the work for you, not 100 percent. You still have to read it and tweak what it produces, but you can save a tremendous amount of time and effort with the feature," she explained.

Simply typing in "write an email to a disgruntled member about not meeting their expectations with service showing active listening and empathy," can provide a solid foundation to build upon. You can also type things like "make it more formal or make it shorter" to alter what it generated.

Go to *Chat.Openai.Com* and create a free account to begin. This is a working smarter tool for club profession-

als that can produce higher quality work, as long as you put thought and structure into it. It follows the garbage in, garbage out model, but with effort, you can produce higher quality work in less time.

HEALTHIER CHOICES

As the world becomes more focused on wellness and worker well-being, there is growing concern about the sustainability of the culinary work force. It's no secret that the profession demands a healthy and flexible body, endurance and a creative mind. While implementation of technology in cooking equipment and software programs have driven advancements in the industry, Certified Master Chef Lawrence McFadden believes that embracing a healthy lifestyle and demonstrating a commitment to well-being will strengthen the profession and inspire positive change in the broader culinary landscape.

McFadden urges culinary professionals to prioritize their own well-being and the well-being of their work force. This includes consuming healthier meals, seeking raw and fresh ingredients and paying attention to nutritional value. "As chefs, we have a unique responsibility to lead by example in matters of food ingestion. The public relies on us to understand how different ingredients and cooking methods affect the nutritional value of their meals. By advocating for healthier options and transparent menu labeling, we can empower our customers to make informed choices."

Chefs should continue to innovate and improve their craft while also encouraging their work forces to prioritize a healthy diet and lifestyle.

ONE CLICK AWAY

Did you know a recent study found that 67 percent of data breaches start from just one click? Recent research has shown that today two-thirds of all breaches start

with someone clicking on a seemingly safe link, which is why the majority of attacks start with a phish.

As technology is accelerating faster than ever to deploy more tools to deter malicious cyber-attacks, cybercriminals are growing more sophisticated by the day as well.

According to an article on *helpnetsecurity.com*, attackers do their homework to uncover vulnerabilities, like open ports and misconfigured systems. While no organization has perfect security, understanding cybersecurity risks and having a plan to address the threats is recommended.

INCORPORATING DAYLIGHT

A recent article in *Club and Resort Business* magazine reported an emerging trend in clubhouses today is daylighting—the harvesting and distribution of natural light. “As clubs continue to recognize the many health, energy and environmental benefits that daylighting offers, designers and engineers are looking for new ways to let the light in,” the article stated.

Natural light is directly linked to improved mood, enhanced morale, less fatigue and reduced eyestrain. In addition, it provides significant cost savings, as much as one-third in some buildings, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Reducing the use of electrical energy also reduces the amount of greenhouse gases released into the environment.

Windows and skylights are the most obvious and common forms of daylighting but incorporating other architectural elements can enhance the impact of daylighting and contribute to the benefits. Clubs would be wise to increase natural light in clubhouses during remodels or renovations to save energy, improve employee satisfaction and productivity and enhance the mood/feel of the clubhouse overall.

DO YOU HAVE TIME TO DO NOTHING?

According to one of the most successful business consultants, authors and speakers, Ken Blanchard says sometimes leaders go overboard on being “driven.” Not taking the time to rest and practice self-care can lead to

increased stress levels, lack of sleep, weakened immune systems and decreased creativity.

“Smart leaders know that sometimes one of the best ways to get things done is to do nothing at all,” Blanchard wrote in a recent company blog. “Too much focus can narrow your thinking so your thoughts don’t extend beyond the obvious or unoriginal.”

Taking time to relax and think (not just react) is important for leadership. Stepping away from the relentless pursuit of tasks allows leaders to see more clearly and feel inspired. Breaking away from a routine of constant activity reboots your mental and physical health. If you want to grow as a leader, you must prioritize down time so you can pause and reflect on what you’re doing.

Blanchard suggests starting the morning slowly and taking the time to pray, meditate and reflect, rather than just jump into tasks, even though that can feel more natural. He also urges leaders to take their vacation time and to encourage employees to take their vacation time. While it can seem like you’ll fall behind if you are away, research shows that taking time off leads to more productivity, not less.

Lastly, Blanchard suggests leaders find a place to rest, reflect and recharge. It may be a vacation home, a spot near water, a quiet park bench or elsewhere but prioritize spending time there. Not only will it make you more productive, it will also make you a better leader. And you deserve the quiet joy of being in nature or spending time with the people you love.

TAKE TEN MINUTES

Finding time to take care of yourself can be one of the biggest challenges for club professionals. There’s always so much to do and it seems like not enough time to get it all done. Sitting for extensive periods can be harmful to your health and after spending a busy day at work, relaxing in the evenings is often easier than forcing in a workout.

According to Jeff Ford the Director of Fitness and Wellness at Palmetto Bluff Club in Bluffton, SC, moving throughout the day can help even more than designated exercise sessions. It also reduces problems associated with extensive sitting such as lower back pain, increased blood pressure, high blood sugar and unhealthy cholesterol levels.

A new study found ten minutes of brisk walking every day can add years to your life! Researchers conducting the study concluded the addition of walking ten minutes every day significantly reduced the number of deaths among participants.

“You can probably find ten minutes almost every day to sneak in a quick walk. The walk is not only good for your body, but it is energizing, can reduce stress and clear your mind. There are 1,440 minutes in a day; you can take ten of them to invest in yourself, your health and your future,” Ford concluded.

HOW MUCH WILL THEY PAY?

During a recent webinar hosted by Lynne LaFond DeLuca, the executive director of the Association of Club Catering Professionals, attendees confirmed the struggle to appropriately price events for members.

DeLuca offers two considerations for club professionals when determining price. First, aim to not just meet member expectations, but exceed them. Small changes can have a big impact and you should never have the exact same event twice. Rather than discredit out-of-the-box ideas by dreaming up the worst possible scenario, DeLuca says to consider the best possible scenario. “What if it does work?” she asks. Finding ways to create magic through delighting and surprising members should always be the goal of the event.

When it comes to determining pricing, stop trying to appeal to all member types for every event. Identify the number of attendees that will make the event successful. You can have higher priced events with lower attendance, as long as you plan for the lower attendance. “Appealing to different age groups in our clubs can be one of the best things we do, but every event and age group will have a different success marker,” she explains.

Whatever the event, be sure to sprinkle in magical moments and memorable experiences because that is what members will pay for and remember!

Have a great fall!



Jackie Carpenter, CCM
Editor

• TIDBITS OF INFO •

A NEW RESOURCE...

The National Club Association (NCA) and the Club Management Association of America (CMAA) have released a joint publication called *Private Club Governance: A Handbook of Principles and Best Practices*. The document is a definitive guide to governance for private clubs and includes standards of effective governance and best practices for boards, committees and GMs/CEOs. The handbook covers everything from bylaws and articles of incorporation to board policies, committee structure, committee roles and evaluation. The handbook is available to NCA and CMAA members.

• RESOURCES •

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● IDEA BANK ●

GROUP ME. Have you heard of the GroupMe App? Many clubs are using the app as a way to send out text messages to the entire staff. Within the app, groups can be made allowing for easier communication to the entire staff or specific departments. One manager said, “You can cringe at the idea of employees looking at their phones when at work or you can embrace it. They are doing it anyway; you might as well use it to your advantage.” This particular manager uses the GroupMe app to send texts to service staff about 86’d items and other pertinent and timely information.

THE RED FOLDER. One membership marketing professional shared a helpful hint she learned while working at the Four Seasons. Whenever you tour a potential member or a VIP client, carry a red folder. This is a notification to employees to “turn it on.” This means the employee may introduce themselves, welcome the person, offer a beverage or show other signs of high-level service.

JAM PACKED. During Christmas break this year, consider taking kids’ programming to a whole new level. A club in Cape Town, South Africa, hosted a jam-packed holiday program for kids last year. The club focused on creating a fun environment where children could be entertained through play, physical activity, new experiences and making new friends. The program included a range of indoor, outdoor, creative, active and educational activities and included mindful movement, golf activities, science experiments, a reptile show, sports activities, arts and crafts and cooking classes. It was so popular, they have extended the programming to other holiday breaks throughout the year!

ASK ALEXANDER. The Detroit Athletic Club, Detroit, MI, introduced a messaging platform back in 2021 to give members a convenient way to contact the club through text message. Named after the club’s first GM, the Ask Alexander program was launched. Bobbleheads with likeness to Alexander were placed in popular and highly visible locations around the club and included the details of the program. In the first year, more than 1,000 conversations with members and guests occurred on the platform!

FLOWER COMMITTEE. Bay Head Yacht Club, Bay Head, NJ, introduced a flower committee in an effort to bring members together with a common interest in horticulture, crafts and floral design. Each month the group holds flower arrangement workshops and they decorate the club foyer weekly. Every week a member of the committee puts their best efforts into decorating the club foyer with festive and intricate design. This saves the club the cost of decorating the foyer and all critiques of the foyer flowers can be directed to the committee!

HOLIDAY FEUD? If you host a holiday party for employees, consider playing the game Family Feud during the celebration. Maroon Creek Club, Aspen, CO, downloaded an online software program that replicates the game for their employee party. Then you can customize survey questions and answers. They asked questions like: name an item commonly found in the members’ lost and found. The staff found it hilarious and engaging. According to the employees, it was the best employee party ever!

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