

## **MASTER PLANNING: Documenting assets and keeping clubhouse interiors on schedule for renewal.....**

Are you familiar with the phrase, "Design-by-Committee?" This is usually a euphemism for compromise. When dealing with a member design committee, it is the norm to have a variety of opinions. In trying your best to strike that delicate balance between doing what is right for the club and satisfying the needs of your various constituencies, your project can quickly spiral out of control. We have all heard about the club down the street that started with a \$5 million budget that turned into a \$10 million project.

### **To gain control of this overwhelming task, Master Planning is the answer.**

The Master Plan insures that club assets are cataloged and properly used, the overall club environment is unified and purposeful in design, and the dollars are spent with great care and forethought. Furthermore, the plan should map a future vision for the club and make sure that this map is protected and maintained.

**Before you begin**, you must ask yourself (5) important questions:

- Where do we fall in our market segment in terms of quality level?
- What are the current demographics of our club?
- What are the lifestyle trends in our market?
- What are our future opportunities?
- How can we realistically compete with the local market?

**Defining who you are and what you want to be is the basis for every decision from this point forward.**

**Step one involves the assembly of information.**

- Architectural and engineering drawings
- Past records of purchases to identify manufacturers, original purchase date, and original purchase price
- Maintenance and repair records – especially those involving equipment
- Any other documents that could provide historical reference (and costs) regarding improvements, expansions, past underlying problems, etc.

**Next, you will assemble your team.** The purpose of this team will be to first examine what you have today and then help you plan for tomorrow.

Along with key club representatives (such as the facility engineer, the executive chef and the golf superintendent) to identify issues and needs, your team of club experts should include:

- Architects and interior designers
- Engineers: structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing
- Kitchen consultants
- Code and ADA specialists
- Construction estimators

Obtaining the expertise and objectivity of third party professionals is of utmost importance. The accuracy and effectiveness of the information you receive depends upon real world experience that can only be accessed through these experts. Cost estimate accuracy is very important and the right professionals will be able to provide this information.

Please remember that it is crucial that the format of the information from these consultants be standardized. This will facilitate understanding and ease of use within the final report.

### **The process begins as follows:**

Each consultant will document the club and it's components by following the outline below:

- Photograph
  - overall spaces
  - individual assets within each space (example: furnishings, lighting, art, and equipment)
  - details showing areas of concern
    - safety issues and dangerous disrepair should be noted for immediate attention
- Assign
  - a category or group for sorting purposes (flooring, chairs, HVAC equipment, etc.)
  - an item number per individual item
- Identify
  - manufacturers and model numbers when possible
    - this enables finding an equivalent specification - making pricing much easier
  - size of overall rooms and dimensions of the individual furnishings and equipment – including width, depth, and height

- Quantify
  - indicate quantity of each item
    - be aware of hidden assets in storage areas and maintenance facilities

Each consultant will then analyze, and assess as follows:

- Determine
  - existing condition of each asset
  - remaining useful life of each asset
    - be sure to note any opportunities to lengthen the lifespan of your furnishings and equipment by improved maintenance practices
- Provide
  - replacement costs for each asset in today's dollar value
  - a formula to account for inflation per year (3% to 4% is typical)
- Recommend
  - priorities based on professional experience

**You are now ready to assemble your plan.** Your final report will combine all documents provided by your professional team – summarizing the needs, analyzing the data, and providing the framework to develop your priorities.

Database software is the recommended tool for this plan – as it allows you to examine your information based upon group, room, item, or year of replacement. Your plan will need to remain flexible to address changing needs and market trends.

**Redevelop one document to establish priorities and budgets for future use.**

**Once you have completed your master plan, annual updates will be necessary to keep your plan current.** Be sure to include all new purchases as well as any changes in direction due to new trends and opportunities

**Important tips to protect your investment:**

- Don't scrimp on maintenance. Today's neglect means you'll pay much more later – so think short and long term. Hire the best maintenance personnel possible and develop a weekly, monthly, and quarterly schedule to perform regular maintenance of these your assets. Develop a system to verify accountability and completion of the maintenance tasks.
- Understanding the life expectancy of common furnishings and equipment along with the documentation of the age, condition, and

maintenance practices for each asset can give you immediate opportunities to effect the future of these assets. Extending the life expectancy of your furnishings and equipment allows you to divert dollars to other key areas of need.

- Always provide a contingency for unknowns. Unexpected surprises behind the walls can have a domino effect and create serious problems with your budget. Understandably, older properties should have higher contingencies.
- Be cautious about hiring members to perform professional services. 3<sup>rd</sup> party objectivity is vitally important. If you receive pressure to utilize the services from a member, use him in an advisory capacity such as helping you to sort through the bids.
- Obtain 3 bids for all construction projects. Utilize the resources in The Blue Book @ [www.thebluebook.com](http://www.thebluebook.com) to insure that you are working with reputable companies.
- Always engage the services of club designers to ensure that all products are suitable for the club environment. Proper specifications ensure safety, ease of cleaning, and longevity. This will protect your investment.

#### **Common product errors:**

- Inferior carpet products: yarn quality, weight, and backing are only the beginning of proper carpet specifications. Installation methods and quality of glue can negate the manufacturer warranties. Beware of installers who are not certified to install patterned carpet in hospitality environments. You could end up losing your investment in materials and labor.
- Residential quality dining chairs: proper chair specifications include stretchers (the horizontal bracing that spans from leg to leg) @ the legs for strength and stability, and crumb rails for easy cleaning.
- Inferior finishes on furniture: clubs require catalytic finishes that can take heavy abuse and hold up against alcohol, acids, and food stains.
- Improper treatment of fabrics used in drapery: fire safety codes require that fabrics be treated for flame retardancy.
- Residential quality fabrics applied to furnishings: contract grade fabrics meet standards of durability and clean-ability and have a double rub coefficient of 30,000 double rubs or greater. Residential fabrics are most frequently intended for light use (only 7,000 – 15,000 double rubs) and will wear prematurely in a club environment.

#### **Things you can do today:**

- Recycle worthy assets

- You can breathe new life into your club by rotating existing art and furnishings. Remarkably, a club can take on the appearance of a major refurbishment by simply investing in 'a makeover' where minor purchases of accessories are added to a skillful rearrangement of the club's existing furnishings, accessories, and art.
- "Power-clean" your club
  - Nothing is communicated more clearly than a well cared for club. Believe it: Members and guests notice.

Remember that each design and purchasing decision will take you one step closer to your ultimate goal or move you one step further away. Strategic planning is the key to ending the cycle of reactionary decisions and will help you set important groundwork for shaping the future of your club.

Having a vision for the future is key to insuring that each dollar spent today is an investment in your club's goals of tomorrow.

**The Master Plan is your map for success.**