

This Training System WILL IMPROVE Your Locker Rooms! Purchase it TODAY!

Dear Locker Room, Clubhouse or General Manager,

“The locker rooms are the soul of the country club.”

*Byron Nelson
Professional Golfer*

“The Locker Room is not just a mere dressing room, it is an INSTITUTION. Here is the birthplace of lasting friendships; here is the garden where club spirit is fostered and develops; here is the clearing house between the political arena of the lounge and the battlefield of the links.”

*Sandy Tatum
Former USGA President*

“As I think over a lifetime of a variety of golf experiences, it is remarkable how much the locker room mattered to the quality of those experiences. That is not something I can say about any other aspect of a clubhouse, least of all the parking lot.”

*Fitzhugh Scott
Clubhouse Architect*

What the quotes from the three gentlemen above show is what you already know; the locker rooms at your club are central to its culture. And more importantly, essential to the financial success of your club.

That’s because if your members aren’t satisfied with the services and amenities in the only area of your club where they can truly be themselves, it’s likely they aren’t happy with their club experience and could resign as a result. After all, as noted above, Byron Nelson called the locker rooms, *“The soul of the country club.”*

Because you’ve found your way to this web site, clicked on the ad and taken the time to read this far, you are serious about improving your locker room operations, so let me be brief.

In short, if your club invests in the *Ultimate Locker Room Staff Training System* and employs the training, tips and suggestions, your locker rooms **WILL IMPROVE**. In fact, they will become one of the **BEST** in your state and the **BEST** in your region of the country.

How? By utilizing a program that consists of three books, six learning modules with quizzes at the end of each - over 800 pages total - and a 90 minute interactive shoe care DVD (including a written version). Between all these tools, virtually every area of your locker room operation will be covered and greatly enhanced. Here are the results that a general and locker room manager have enjoyed:

“When I discovered this training program I emailed Todd and we spoke the same day. When we talked on the phone I was ready to purchase the system on the spot . . .

“The program delivers as promised and has added to the skills of our experienced staff. Get this system ASAP!”

*Doug Foote
General Manager
Beechwood Country Club
Cleveland, Ohio*

“Although I’ve had experience working in customer service in the hospitality industry, I had no idea what was expected of me when I became a locker room manager.

“The Director of Human Resources came across Mr. Dufek’s training program when she happened upon the association web site. It has provided me with all the information I need to successfully operate/manage our shoe and locker rooms. I can say beyond a shadow of a doubt that I would be lost without it.”

*Aaron Mercer
Locker Room Manager
Royal Oaks Country Club
Dallas, Texas*

Before I get any further, I want you to know that my goal is to improve the locker room services and amenities at every country club including yours, even if you decide not to purchase the training program or become a member club of the LRMA. Toward that end I’ve included an article entitled, *“The 10 Biggest*

Mistakes Locker Room Managers Make and How to Correct Them” beneath the payment information below. Be sure and pass it on to your locker room staffers.

This training system was created from 15 years of writings and is the result of three decades of managing locker rooms. If you were to buy each piece of the system separately, it would cost over \$1,600. It has been suggested that it is worth well north of \$2,000. See below for details.

THE GOOD STEWARD - Shoe Room Version	\$59.95
THE GOOD STEWARD - Locker Room Version	\$59.95
THE LOCKER ROOM MANAGER’S BOOK OF WISDOM	\$59.95
LRMA Shoe Care System DVD with Written Version	\$59.98
LRMA President’s Policy and Procedure Manual (sent in a file)	\$59.95
6 Training Modules	\$300.00
3 Year Platinum Membership in the LRMA (at \$299.00 each year)	\$897.00
1 Hour Mentoring	\$125.00
Sample Policy and Procedure Manual (sent in a file)	<u>\$39.95</u>
	\$1,661.73

The entire training program is available on the web site at www.yourlrma.com that can be accessed from any PC. It can be purchased via a credit card on the web site or by check. Cost: \$1,000.

To pay by credit card and receive access to the system within 24 hours, click on the following link, <http://www.yourlrma.com/memapp.htm>, scroll to the bottom of the Membership Application, click on the arrows next to "LRMA Member: \$99.00 USD - yearly," highlight "LRMA Training System: \$1,000 USD," click on it, click on the "Subscribe" capsule and follow the directions.

To pay by check follow the directions for paying a Membership Fee, but instead of paying the fee for a membership, include a check made out to *Todd Dufek* for \$1,000. Be sure to fill out the Membership Application form, print it, include it with the check and send it to the address below the COMMENTS box on the app. Be sure to pass on the article below to your locker room staff and THANKS IN ADVANCE FOR PURCHASING THE TRAINING PROGRAM!



The 10 Biggest Mistakes Locker Room Managers Make and How to Correct Them

Having been the president of the *Locker Room Managers Association* for 16 years, a shoe repairman for 10, a locker room manager for about 30 and trained locker room staff at several clubs in and out of state, I've seen my share of mistakes made by managers.

Before I get any further, I have to point out that when I was a shoe repairman, I shined only black and brown street shoes and was completely unprepared to deal with 30 - 50 pairs of white golf shoes a day. And the tidal wave of all the other styles of street and golf shoes that I encountered at my first job at a semi-private country club.

Added to that was the fact that I didn't know what amenities were needed, when to restock them or how they should be displayed. Nor did I have any idea what members and guests that frequented the country club expected. Simply put, I know about many of the mistakes on the pages ahead because I've made them myself.

Below I'll share the 10 biggest mistakes locker room managers make and how to correct them. I'll do so by first placing the mistake in a category, explaining each one and following that up with a remedy.

Shoe Care

According to the research I've done via surveys of the members of the association, managers spend as much as 85% -90% of their time shining shoes, making this facet of the many services they provide the most significant. Unfortunately, many managers make the same big mistake on footwear.

BIG MISTAKE #1: Putting too much polish on shoes. The most common mistake made by locker room managers is putting too much polish on street and primarily white golf shoes (I've seen the same offense committed on nearly every shade of shoe be it street or golf). White polish in particular is often put on so thick that it streaks, turns gray and/or turns into a chalky mess when it dries.

Worse yet is that if the pair of shoes is of the golf variety and a saddle, the white polish often bleeds onto the saddle areas when the shoes are cleaned and creates an ugly white “frost.” And this frost is often left on the shoe. I consulted at a club where this was happening and as you can imagine, the members were not pleased.

REMEDY: Resolving the situation is not as simple as telling a locker room manager to stop using so much polish. Instead he needs to adopt a new approach. All the instruction you need is contained in the *Locker Room Managers Association Shoe Care System DVD* and the written version of the system that comes with it. The DVD can be obtained from ‘Fore’ Supply Company for \$54.95 at 800-543-5430.

BIG MISTAKE #2: Failure to receive proper training in shoe care, shoe repair. Okay, this one doesn’t exactly qualify as a mistake. And could be misconstrued as “blaming the manager” for a having little or no training in shoe care when there’s no school or college where it’s taught. But it’s a huge problem at golf facilities nationwide (and an obvious contributor to BIG MISTAKE #1).

REMEDY: Despite the fact that shoe care is not rocket science and you may be doing a great job, there are numerous techniques and new products that can help you provide even better shoe care in less time. And you can also learn how to repair shoes and numerous other articles using a hand awl with a hook needle, heavy waxed thread and a simple stitch.

The primary resource besides the *LRMA Shoe Care System DVD* is a book I authored entitled, **THE GOOD STEWARD-How to Set Up and Operate a Shoe Room at a Country Club or Resort**. The book includes a chapter on shoe repair that teaches said stitch and other repairs. On site training and consultation is also available through *LRMA Consulting*, a firm I founded a few years ago.

BIG MISTAKE #3: Lack of attention to detail. In the shoe room book noted in BIG MISTAKE #2 there is a list in the tome entitled, “Telltale Signs of an Amateur Locker Room Manager.” Included under this heading is a list of dozens of mistakes locker room staffers traditionally make on footwear. These include getting polish on logos and sole edges (for example, white polish on black golf shoe sole edges), failing to tie shoe laces while machine buffing footwear, etc.

REMEDY: I’ve provided the list of mistakes below. You can also buy **THE**

GOOD STEWARD-*How to Set Up and Operate a Shoe Room at a Country Club or Resort* for more details in this area.

The Telltale Signs of an Amateur Locker Room Manager.

The locker room manager needs to be aware of those things that make his work appear unprofessional. If you want your list of regular customers to continue to grow, or the members to continue to rave about your work-hopefully to your boss-you would do well to avoid *The Telltale Signs of an Amateur Locker Room Manager*.

1. *Failing to clean shoes adequately so that dirt and grime can be seen under the polish, or polishing a shoe unevenly so that streaks are visible (particularly on white golf shoes).*

2. *Leaving grass or dirt on the welt area or sole edge (where the upper meets the sole) of a shoe.*

3. *Failing to clean spikes of dirt and grass on a golf shoe.*

4. *Caking on polish so that it fills in decorative holes, covers metal or thread emblems, obscures stitching, gets all over shoe laces and inside the shoes, or covers the original texture of the shoe. Or gets on a member's clothing.*

5. *Shining the entire shoe while leaving the last quarter inch above the sole edge dirty.*

6. *Getting sole edge dressing on the upper and leaving it there. Getting polish on a sole edge and leaving it there (on a white golf shoe with black sole edges, for instance). Noticing sole edge dressing on the upper of a shoe-put there by another steward-and not cleaning it off.*

7. *Polishing over marks on the toe or heel area of a shoe rather than removing them with cleaning fluid.*

8. *Taking shoetrees out and forgetting to put them back in or misplacing them.*

9. *Leaving shoelaces untied while buffing a shoe on a buffing wheel (this is not only amateurish but dangerous. Shoelaces can get tangled in the buffer shaft and cause injury and damage to shoes).*

10. *Failing to replace missing spikes.*

11. *Failing to check the spikes on a customer's shoes and failing to recommend replacement if they are worn out.*

12. *Forgetting when a customer wants his shoes done or failing to have them done on time.*

13. Making excuses for the appearance of a shoe you shined when more time spent on it would have resulted in an excellent shine.

14. Responding to a customer complaint by getting defensive and telling the patron that “I’m the expert, not you!”

15. Arriving at work late and/or not returning when you said you would.

16. Failing to keep the shoe room, locker rooms and bathrooms neat, uncluttered, and adequately stocked with supplies.

17. Failing to inform the pro shop staff as to your whereabouts if you are away from the shoe/locker rooms for an extended period of time.

18. Failing to keep track of locker rentals and fees, shoe club fees, golf shoe rentals and any paperwork connected with ordering supplies for the shoe or locker rooms.

Granted, most of the signs above (and if you’ve ever employed anyone, you can probably think of many more) are obvious. But all warrant mention because many employees will be guilty of at least some of them (all of us will if we’re in too much of a hurry). You want your room to be a professional one known for shoe care excellence, not shoddy work.

BIG MISTAKE #4: Refusal to use new shoe care products that work better and save time. This tends to be a mistake that is made by locker room managers regardless of age and even if they do a poor job on shoes. Why? Because managers tend to get into the profession by accident and develop their own methods. As a result of a heavy investment in their approach, managers sometimes refuse to consider anything that differs from their personal philosophy.

REMEDY: Provide locker room manager with the *Locker Room Managers Association Shoe Care System* DVD. Between the written version and what you’ll see in the video you’ll be using the latest products that will save time with excellent results. And there’s wiggle room for individual product preferences.

Customer Service

BIG MISTAKE #5: Reactive customer service. Many locker room managers react to what their members and guests require rather than being ready to meet their needs on the spot. A perfect example of this is how guest lockers are

sometimes managed. Lulled into complacency by seeing member after member on the same day of the week in a relentless parade they could set their watches by, managers and attendants can be thrown off their game when a guest walks in and needs a locker.

At some clubs staffers fumble through their locker assignment book trying to locate a guest locker while the guest slowly loses precious practice time and patience. As a friend in the golf industry who plays a number of clubs annually put it, “It is too much to ask for an attendant to take me straight to a guest locker when I walk into the locker room?!” Of course not!

REMEDY: Proactive customer service. The manager and his staff need to know the precise location of all guest lockers and be able to walk guests to them without hesitation. Better yet, if a guest comes in, it would behoove locker room employees to not only greet him, but ask what member he is playing with. And then, if lockers are available, be able to walk the guest to one in the member’s locker bay.

When it comes to the management of guest lockers I would suggest that you take this proactive approach a step further. In short, you should have amenities such as a shoe horn, a divot repair tool Advil, Tylenol, Benadryl, a toothbrush, a comb, a wipe for glasses and a wipe with sunscreen waiting in each locker to make guests feel welcome. To take it up still another notch, obtain guests’ names from the golf shop the day before they arrive, have their names engraved (or use a label) on metal or plastic plates that match your members’ lockers and install them.

If you take on a proactive role it will pay off figuratively in the form of greater guest satisfaction and literally in the form of bigger and more frequent tips.

BIG MISTAKE #6: Lack on enthusiasm. I have heard about locker rooms where enthusiasm didn’t die a slow and agonizing death - it never lived there in the first place. This is evident by locker room staff that are either hard to find or act as if they are being imposed upon when members or guests need basic services or ask for help. Members paying tens if not hundreds of thousands of dollars for the privilege of playing golf at their clubs expect and deserve better.

REMEDY: The proper attitude and appropriate ways of interacting with members can be taught via in-service training, but locker room staffers must be willing to project enthusiasm and communicate it in ways they respond to their member and guest requests (immediately and with a sense of excitement).

What can often be at the root of a lack of enthusiasm is the fact that some of us see our job as unimportant and therefore not worth getting excited about. I couldn't disagree more for reasons I've already stated above. Further, it's important that management let locker room staffers know that they are an invaluable part of the club's team.

Finally, I really enjoy the profession. But being a rather laid back, phlegmatic type of person, communicating enthusiasm to members and guests at the first club where I worked as well as my current one has been something I've had to work at over the years. And still do.

Wet Areas

BIG MISTAKE #7: Poor presentation of amenities. I've been to some high-end clubs whose amenities are displayed like bargain bins at Walgreens. All the products (razors, band aids, Tylenol, Advil, Q-tips, cotton balls, etc.) are thrown together helter-skelter or crowded so close together on such a large space that members need a map to find what they're after. And guests, well, they just walk away in disgust.

REMEDY: With all the dispensers available through *'Fore' Supply Company* there's really no reason for amenities to be displayed in a way that's even borders on disorganized. All you have to do is look through their current catalogue and you'll see items that dispense everything from razor blades to shampoo.

As for the display of amenities in wet areas, there are generally two philosophies when it comes to placing products on sinks, for example. One way is to create a personal grooming station at each one, providing everything a member needs to take care of his hair (head and facial), teeth and deodorant needs by having everything within reach.

Another approach is to put amenities on shelves on opposite ends of the row of sinks or in cabinets or on ledges above them so that members have to make more of an effort to obtain and use the product they need. It probably won't come as a surprise that the second option(s) usually results in the consumption of less amenities and can actually save your club money.

Finally, if you have trouble displaying the product and/or dispensers, use your club's interior decorator or a knowledgeable female member.

BIG MISTAKE #8: Amenities don't reflect member preferences. There are a number of ways this mistake can be made: First, you may have a younger membership and have outdated older products like hair tonic. Second, your members could be senior citizens that prefer older products rather than current brand names such as Vidal Sassoon. Third, you may have a mixture of young and old members and have a combination of products that neither group likes. And finally, you may have a specific company's brand, a generic or very expensive line of products in your wet areas with the same outcome.

REMEDY: Of course, the easiest fix here is to approach the problem like any amenities manufacturer, i.e., survey your target consumers (members) to find out what they like, and then provide them with that product. The easiest way to do this is to create a survey listing product in each personal hygiene category, put it in their lockers and then ask members to check off their preferences. Of course, because it's impossible to please every member, you'll have to go with those choices that most of the membership prefers (if someone wants a product that's not listed, buy it for them and put it in their locker).

The most difficult dilemma to be in when it comes to amenity choice is when product has to be ordered for a brand new club, often without direct access to members. In a case like this I often recommend going with brand names with an older product or two thrown in for the elderly members.

Most high-end private clubs tend to go with spa type quality products that are very expensive, often from the same company or line with a custom club logo on most dispensers. More modest clubs tend to go with name brand products. But in both cases there can be exceptions to these general rules mostly due to management preferences.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that it's not necessary to purchase separate shower gel, shampoo and conditioner for the men and women at your club. Most companies offer a unisex line that can be used by males and females that keep both happy.

BIG MISTAKE #9: Failure to keep amenities topped off. Obviously the solution is to keep product topped off, but getting there can be difficult if your staff is so overwhelmed with shoe care that they can barely find a minute to breathe, let alone take time to baby sit amenity levels. I know. I've worked at clubs where being snowed under with all my duties during the busy season was a

regular occurrence. Bottom line: restocking doesn't take more than 10-20 minutes (unless you work in a massive facility). In other words, being too busy to top off product is a lame excuse that doesn't hold water.

REMEDY: Usually topping off product the first thing in the morning and doing the same just before leaving for the day takes care of the problem. If the showers are in constant use during the busy season you can add a midday refill as well. With more modest clubs and smaller staffs, the locker room manager can take care of the amenities himself or direct an attendant to do so. At larger clubs this duty can be assigned to a different person each day, week or month.

Locker Rentals

BIG MISTAKE #10: Tracking locker rentals and cancellations by hand in an outdated assignment book. I hate to admit it, but when I took over the shoe and locker room at the semi-private club I referred to earlier, the locker assignment book looked like a relic from one of Christopher Columbus' voyages. I clung to that old assignment book for years, erasing and rewriting names back in until I nearly wore holes in the paper. It was easier to stick with an old assignment book that worked fairly well rather than take the time to create a new one.

What makes this a large error is that writing can become illegible leading to confusion over what member is assigned where. That can come back to bite you when belongings get placed in the wrong lockers and staff can't track them down.

REMEDY: Of course, with the common use of PCs - despite the fact that many locker room managers don't have them near their service counter and/or are intimidated by them - there's no excuse for not having clearly printed records. Even if a locker room manager is not computer savvy, it's likely that a member of the secretarial staff can convert the tattered handwritten locker records into a stellar printed version. And then records can be updated and reprinted monthly.

I would also encourage you to use a computer and *Jonas* software to track locker rentals and cancellations. In fact, when you pull up a member's locker number via this method you automatically retrieve his or her photo, which helps with name recognition.

Conclusion

After reading a piece like this it would be easy to conclude that locker room managers fall prey to big mistakes frequently, don't care about their jobs, or the members and guests they serve. But after meeting and corresponding with dozens of managers over the years, it is clear that the majority of them not only care deeply about what they do. But are always looking for ways to sharpen their shoe care skills and every other amenity their locker rooms have to offer.

It is easy for those of us that do this job to see that the level of professionalism and expertise of a locker room manager has a profound effect on member and guest satisfaction at any given golf facility. Since the manager is often the first person to greet members and guests and set the tone for their stay, his role in providing a seamless, thoroughly pleasant country club experience cannot be overestimated. As the saying goes, "You don't get a second chance to make a first impression."

However, it is one thing to state how important we are to our clubs and quite another to get management to recognize it. As the years have gone by it has become both my passion and mission via my books, DVD and the LRMA to get clubhouse and general managers to see that doing the job well takes a multitude of skill sets. And that we deserve to be compensated fairly for the many roles and responsibilities we are asked to shoulder.

Finally, it is my hope that by making each manager that reads this piece aware of possible locker room mishaps that they can be kept to a minimum, our members and guests experience at our clubs will be even better, and we will be rewarded for our efforts on a number of different levels.