

# 7 Habits of Highly Successful Directors of Racquets

## By Ken DeHart

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In my years in this industry, I've had the chance to work with and observe hundreds of racquet sports directors and managers across the country and the world. Combined with my own experience managing clubs, I've come up with these characteristics that successful facility directors and managers have in common."

### **1. Be the First**

- Be the first to get to your facility each day, then do a walk-through.
- If there's trash anywhere, pick it up.
- Make note of areas that are damaged or need to be physically improved, repaired or cleaned.
- Check all courts, accessories and amenities and schedule repairs.
- Note any equipment that is out of place, broken or dirty.
- When you get to the club, before all the daily activity starts, get "in the zone."
- Think of your game plan for the day, week and month.
- Consider what your coworkers need to know about your plans for the day.

### **2. Safety First**

- Always look for areas that could put your staff, your members and the club at risk.
- Check steps, hanging items, and the floor for slippery situations.
- Each quarter, have a risk management expert walk the facility with you to document conditions and fixes.
- Check all first aid supplies and AEDs—make sure they're easily accessible, visible, fully stocked and operational.

- Make sure certifications for you and staff are up to date for first aid, CPR and AED operation—plan ahead and schedule classes well before any certification expiration dates.
- Be aware of what staff can legally provide in terms of medical aid.

### **3. Relationships Matter Most**

- Your relationships with your staff and the staff in other departments will determine a lot about how effective you are as a director or manager.
- Maintenance staff are a key to your success—meet with them at least weekly to find out how they are doing, what they need to do their job better, any suggestions they have for you. And make sure to ask about them and their families.
- Leave thank you notes for outstanding service provided by any of your staff, notify other department heads if their staff were outstanding.
- Recognize outstanding service with gift cards to staff; plan a party for any season, event or birthday; do all you can to bring your staff together.
- Highlight a staff member in your newsletter.
- Talk about the culture of the club, history of the club and long-term relationships with staff members. Be sure to get new hires familiar with the history and culture you are developing.
- Do tours of your facility with other departments so they get to know you, your staff, and your goals.
- Attend events and meetings in other departments.
- Ask staff what they need to make their job easier.
- Conduct annual member evaluations of departments and staff performance.

### **4. Make Membership a “Moving Experience”**

- Plan and host social events, and be sure to appear at all activities, events, matches, etc.
- Get out of the office frequently—don’t be “out of sight, out of mind.” Show support for the facility and its programs and members. Members and staff want to see you and to talk to you.
- It’s better to talk directly than through email or phone. Head off potential problems face to face.
- Ask members what they would like to see through surveys and by talking with them and your staff.
- Talk to members about upcoming events, their families and their plans.

- Highlight new members and get them involved in a program particular to their needs and interests.
- Highlight member and team achievements.
- Work with other departments to cross-train staff and to introduce staff to other activities and others to your programs.

## **5. Check Your Calendar**

- Plan well in advance for all activities and events.
- In addition to your own calendar, be sure your staff has the same information, dates and times.
- Have a club calendar so all the members can see what's coming up.
- Highlight in detail immediate events and tease the upcoming ones.
- Do a review with staff after the event.
- Notify your owner or manager of your plans, trips or upcoming activities. Report on how these events enhanced your expertise, promoted your programs, staff or the club so they will know they received value for your time spent.

## **6. Hire Ahead**

- Always be looking for the next great employee. Staff seldom let you know ahead of time when they are thinking of leaving.
- Look within other departments to have people who already know your facility history and culture.
- Places to look: PTR and USPTA certification courses, divisional newsletters, job listings, friends, other pros in your area.
- Encourage continuing education for the pros and when possible, assist them financially with expenses. Let members know about their continuing education efforts
- Give the job descriptions of positions above them, so they have a “road map” for advancement and success.

## **7. Network for Life**

- Become a resource center for your members and staff on all topics, including injury prevention, rehab, etc. Have key, knowledgeable people you can use for reference to help others.
- Be prepared to help your staff go to their next level even, if it is away from you.

- Prepare for your own second career. Have a game plan for your next position in life.

And finally.....

**Love your life.** Take time to think about why you love your job, your family, your friends. Know you are working for a greater cause – your own enjoyment.