

Preferred Management Competencies of Golf Course Directors in the United States

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The rapid growth of the golf industry has created a strong demand for skilled golf course management. Since golf course operation is complex and has many different aspects, the golf profession requires expertise in a variety of areas such as turf grass management, retail operations and merchandising, food and beverage management, personnel management, accounting, risk management, marketing, golf teaching skills, and customer services (PGA, 2005). Further, this surge of golf as a leisure activity has led to a tremendous opportunity to explore the managerial and financial needs of this industry.

Management competencies assist managers to meet organizational goals and changes, as well as to improve organizational effectiveness (Whetten, & Cameron, 2002). These are related to skills, knowledge, ability, tasks, processes, expectations, and core content regarding one's job (Boyatzis, 1982). Though golf has a worldwide following (Kelly & Freysinger, 2000) and many researchers have described management competencies in a variety of sport contexts, there have been few research efforts to specify and clarify contemporary management competencies that reflect the requirements of golf directors. Thus, it is necessary to examine a profile of actual competencies of golf course directors to possess in different golf environments such as different types of facilities, different populations served, and year-round/seasonal golf facility. The purpose of this study is: (1) to identify differences in response toward the importance of management competencies among golf course directors in diverse regions of the United States; and (2) to identify the differences in the perceived importance of management competencies among golf course directors in disparate types of golf courses (private, semi-private, and public) in the United States.

A total of 391 PGA certified golf course directors who were in a golf operation position participated in this study. Regarding the sampling method, judgment sampling was used to measure different golf environments including year-round and seasonal golf facility, different populations served, familiarity, and/or willingness to provide directories for sample regions. Among the Association's 14 Districts, four Districts (District 2, NY, NJ, & PA; District 11, CA & HI; District 12, NM & TX; and District 13, FL & GA) were chosen from the 2005 PGA Membership and Golf Directory. Through reviewing literature in management competencies of recreational sport managers, Toh's (1997) Competencies of Sport Managers (COSM) instrument was chosen with modification. Hereafter, the instrument is identified as the Competencies of Golf Course Directors (CGCD). A total of 91 competency statements in 10 categories were maintained through the content validation process by expert jurors.

The results of the MANOVAs, ANOVAs, and Scheffe's post hoc tests indicated that the importance of perceived management competencies differed among golf course directors at disparate types of golf courses in diverse golf environments. The perceived importance of preferred management competencies between Districts differed [$F(30, 1110)=.856, p=.001$]. Golf course directors in District 13 regarded some management competency items (facilities/equipment management [$F(3, 70)=4.67, p=.003$], legality/risk management [$F(3, 75)=6.30, p=.000$], and research/evaluation [$F(3, 75)=3.35, p=.019$]) as more important than did directors in District 2. Since legislation within each state differs, the importance of legality and risk management may vary depending upon each District. In terms of facilities/equipment management, differences between District 2 ($M=19.30$) and 13 ($M=21.30$) occurred. This difference could be due to the presence of many resorts in Florida. It is believed that directors in resorts may have regarded facilities and equipment management to be more important managerial competencies than did directors working at stand-alone golf course.

The perceived importance of preferred management competencies between disparate types of golf courses differed [$=.900, F(20, 756), p=.005$]. Directors at private golf courses considered management techniques to be more important management competencies than did directors at semi-private golf courses [$F(2, 192)=4.23, p=.015$]. According to the results of mean scores on management techniques between different types of golf courses, both directors at private ($M=41.71$) and public ($M=41.72$) facilities rated these items higher than did directors at semi-private golf courses ($M=39.60$). Regarding source of revenue, directors in semi-private golf courses might consider management techniques differently than do directors in private and public golf courses. Directors at private and public golf courses shared opinions management techniques to be important management competencies. Other than aforementioned significant differences regarding management competencies between different types of golf courses in diverse regions, there were no other significant differences found. Therefore, there was some consistency in the perceived importance of each competency among golf course directors. It appears that directors who are employed anywhere in the United States shared perceptions of important management competencies for golf course directors.

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The findings of this study represented the existing golf management competencies among golf course directors in the United States. These findings underlined an understanding of the theoretical and foundational areas important to the golf management field, including business procedures, communications/public relations, computer skills, facilities/equipment management, governance, legality/risk management, management techniques, research/evaluation, philosophy/sport science, and programming technique/event management. When comparing the present study with management competencies investigated by management theorists as well as sport management scholars, similar findings were discovered. The golf management competency items included the six most cited management competencies: technical, human relations, conceptual, negotiation, political, and intuitive skills.

These findings provided golf course directors with important information regarding adequate preparation for golf management. Golf course directors in different environments of the United States utilized many of the same management competencies to manage their golf courses. Thus, one can infer that golf directors trained and educated in one region of the United States could effectively manage a golf course in a different region because the management competencies needed by golf professionals are similar regardless of golf environment. The realities of the golf industry indicate that golf professionals should be prepared to enter a wide range of golf management-related careers. This study reveals support for Professional Golf Management (PGM) programs in both PGA and higher education departments housed in either Business Administration or Recreation units. Though the nature of accreditation is beyond the scope of this study, golf management curricula can be developed for PGA golf professionals using these identified competencies and course content areas of this study as a guide. Regardless, consistent standards reflecting the importance of core competency areas related to the golf management field can assist in the improvement of academic preparation in this area.