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GENERAL MANAGER/COO PROFILE: THORNBLADE CLUB (THORNBLADE) GREER, SC

The Club

Located in the picturesque valleys and foothills on the eastside of Greenville, South Carolina, Thornblade Club is a private, full-service, family-oriented golf and country club ideally located within a few minutes of downtown Greenville and the Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport.

The centerpiece of Thornblade's wide array of recreational amenities, as well as the greater surrounding Thornblade community, is a Tom Fazio-designed golf course. Nineteen-time Champions Tour winner (nine-time PGA Tour winner), Jay Haas, is a Founding Member and Honorary Director of Golf, and other PGA Champions, Lucas Glover and Bill Haas, make Thornblade their 'home' Club. For the past seven years, the Thornblade Club has been the host club for the web.com Tour event, BMW Charity Pro-Am presented by SYNEX, and it returns this coming May.

The Club also has an active golf program for all ages and skill levels, including active juniors, ladies' and men's programs. The junior program is considered one of the finest in South Carolina.

The tennis and pool complex at Thornblade features an impressive complex of 11 lighted courts, seven of which are Har Tru surfaced and the remainder all-weather hard courts. More than 150 players participate in nearly 20 competitive USTA league teams. The large pool area is adjacent to tennis and is a very active family-centric environment in the busy summer season. The "Blades" swim team is comprised of more than 150 swimmers most years and holds over 80 training and competitive events each season.

The expansive, traditional brick façade clubhouse with Palladian windows and soaring ceilings provides multiple interior and balcony dining options and accommodates up to 350 seated or 500 for a standing reception.

About the Club

Thornblade Club operates under the General Manager/Chief Operating Officer (GM/COO) Organizational Structure.

The GM/COO Reports to:

Club President and Board of Governors (total of 9)

Coordinates on an Advisory Level with all Club Committees, which include:

Finance, Membership, Golf, Green, House, Pool, Tennis, Service Excellence (SEC), Rules and Compliance, Handicap and Compensation Committees

Direct Reports to the GM/COO:

Controller

Membership Director

Clubhouse Manager

Head Golf Professional

Golf Course Superintendent

Director of Tennis

Executive Chef

Catering Manager

Human Resources Manager

Communications Director

Key Club Facts

- Overall operating revenues for the most recent year were approximately \$7.5M
- Food and Beverage revenues totaled approximately \$2.4M with a healthy amount of banquet/catering volume
- The Club is organized as a 501C7 not for profit corporation
- Approximately 23,000 rounds of golf are played annually
- There are approximately 85 FT and 25 PT year round employees, with that number reaching approximately 140 in total during the height of the summer season
- The Club has a \$60 monthly minimum for food charges
- There are approximately 750 member families in all categories, with approximately 540 in the Full Golf category
- Full Golf initiation fee, at present, is \$12,000, with annual dues in this category of \$545 per month along with a \$105 per month capital charge
- In recent years, the Club has made substantial improvements in its physical facilities, including the clubhouse, golf course, tennis and pool complexes.
- In Fall 2016, the Club began long-range facilities planning process guided by a nationally renowned club consultant. The plan will be finalized within the next several months.

Please visit the website: www.thornbladeclub.com

GM/COO Position Overview

The General Manager/Chief Operating Officer (GM) has responsibility for all day-to-day operations of Thornblade Club. He/She directs and administers all aspects of the operations---the amenities, staff and all programs and activities including each operating entity of golf, tennis, pool, and food/beverage operations, activities and programs to ensure outstanding service delivery to the membership and their guests. At Thornblade, this position is one of exceptional diplomatic graciousness with a high degree of 'personalized service' perspective, which will be a very critical and intuitive style that the new GM/COO will need to have in order to be successful. "Tone at the top" is of great importance in leading the entire Thornblade Team to a high level of "sincere and positive engagement" with members, guests and all other constituencies.

The GM /COO is responsible for the creation and implementation of all service standards and processes while providing dynamic, relevant, respectful and engaged leadership for key managers and staff at Thornblade, as well as being a thoughtful "partner" to the Board of Governors. Clearly, a primary objective is for the GM/COO to be the highly visible and interactive 'face' of the Club, and to ensure that goals and objectives are clearly defined, understood, evaluated and enhanced on a continuous basis, to meet the expectations of the membership as defined by the Board of Directors in concert with the GM/COO.

Primary Roles & Responsibilities

The GM/COO must:

- Be a proactive part of the process of strategic planning, membership recruitment and orientation, membership retention and activities/services programming, ensuring that each of these areas of focus consider current and future membership input and demographics.
- Be comfortable and competent being an integral part of developing relationships that may lead to membership interest and/or business opportunities (banquets/events), and in effectively orienting new members so that their initial experience with Thornblade results in more habitual use of the Club, growing top line club revenues.
- Recognize that all amenities at Thornblade need to be 'commensurate with the majority of members' expectations, and that his/her primary mission is to determine and ensure these levels are provided, and that the team at Thornblade consistently helps to identify this standard, and supports this goal and its delivery. Being a "highly visible and engaged presence" at each amenity or activity at appropriate times and frequencies is an important and intuitive style desired in the next GM/COO.
- Recognize that golf is a primary 'driver' of the Club, but that aquatics, tennis, family activities and especially quality food and beverage services are all integral parts of the amenities package of Thornblade and, as such, need to be commensurate with member expectations. Junior and family programs are also key 'drivers' and must be consistently innovative, vibrant, and led in a creative, energized manner.

- Ensure that members have consistent opportunity to provide direct input, suggestions, observations and concerns about all aspects of the Club and that he/she in turn has multiple opportunities for tactful and diplomatic communication back to each constituency.
- Recognize that Thornblade, throughout its relatively short history, has been a significant 'hub' for social and recreational activities of its members from the surrounding area, with an initial strong and primary focus on golf. Continued recognition and personal support and focus on these traditions are critical elements of the GM/COO's role, while at the same time balancing the needs and expectations of a changing demographic of members.
- Critically important is to recognize, respect and support the contributions of key managers and staff, many of whom have been a part of Thornblade for several years, but also holding them accountable for achievement of agreed upon annual and more frequently determined goals and objectives, while further ensuring that they work cooperatively and with mutual respect.
- Work with his/her team to create a service approach and delivery of a "Ritz-Carlton like" fashion; essentially a 'ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen' approach and staff culture environment. As part of this process, a strong focus on putting in place Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) is critical, as is the creation of a talent attraction and retention program that includes robust recruitment focus, training and on-going professional development, and the creation of an "employer of choice" focus within the greater Greer/Greenville community.
- Proactively work in concert with the Board and Club Committees, as appropriate, to keep them informed on all significant personnel actions.
- Ensure that appropriately skilled and competent departmental managers are in place for all key positions and that each of them does the same in their respective areas of responsibility. As noted, setting standards of performance with each department manager for their respective teams, and hold them accountable for maintaining these standards within the Club, most especially in member service areas.
- Conduct regular (at least annual) performance appraisals and provide on-going feedback relative to performance to each direct report. Interact with department managers pursuant to the appraisal, discipline, coaching, support and/or discharge, of their respective direct reports.
- Create and maintain a staff communications and support plan to ensure that each contributing associate at Thornblade clearly understands and supports the overall goals, objectives, standards and decorum of behavior expected in a respectful, positive workplace environment.
- Ensure that all department heads and other staff who have contributory responsibility for projecting and developing budgets and expending Thornblade funds are fully aware and understand the goals and expectations of the Club. The GM/COO is expected to hold the 'team' accountable for their results, as he/she will be to the Board of Governors.
- Be ultimately responsible to negotiate contracts, approve final projects and other expenditures while overseeing the day-to-day operations of Thornblade. Recognize the responsibility to maintain strong relations with vendors and other service providers by creating mutually respectful and reasonable standards of conduct and process with each group that helps Thornblade achieve its business goals.
- Be the primary verbal and written communicator (or primary final "approver" of such communications) of necessary and important information for members and staff, and recognize that the ability to convey information in an articulate, well-conceived and well-written manner is of utmost importance.
- Recognize that 'no surprise' management means keeping the President, Board of Governors or appropriate Thornblade Committees or Committee Chairs informed of all significant, or potentially significant operating matters, achievements or other situations of membership importance.
- Proactively review and recommend to the Board and/or appropriate Club Committee on policy and strategy changes in the structure and operation of each department and governance structure of Thornblade.
- Recognize the need to continually improve existing member services, and introduce new programs and services to enhance member satisfaction and the overall value of membership at Thornblade.
- Attend and coordinate meetings of the Board of Governors and all significant Club Committees on which he/she is an ex-officio member. Be viewed as a key 'partner' with the Board to proactively identify and effectively address all issues of importance to the well-being of Thornblade.
- Lead by example, providing true "mentorship" to the team, recognizing their contributions to the overall success of Thornblade.

- Have effective, demonstrated skills and experience with managing step-function “change” in an evolving club operation where the shift from a golf club to a much more family centric environment has occurred, and/or experience in a ‘start up’ situation where process, procedures and the development of standard operating practices has been required.

Initial Priorities of the General Manager/COO:

With the expectation that the new GM/COO will commence his/her role when the ‘high season’ of Thornblade will already be in execution, the following priorities have been identified as recommended primary focus:

- Observe, listen, ask questions and learn about the culture and expectations of the Members and Staff of Thornblade.
- Meet and sincerely interact with and engage as many members as possible; being highly visible, approachable and “engaged” is critical!
- Review the membership recruitment and retention plan and, with Board support, implement strategies to invigorate this essential ‘lifeblood’ effort to the Club’s success. As part of this review, consider the full on-boarding process for new members to ensure effective initial “engagement” of each new family member.
- Spend time with the team (staff in all areas of operations); getting to know them, their abilities and aspirations, consistently using this time to further communicate the vision and mission of Thornblade. (Note: make certain that the Mission/Vision is clear to you as well.)
- Review and revise as necessary all management/leadership personnel position descriptions and responsibilities to ensure they are appropriately aligned with Club objectives.
- Develop the Board and Committee relationship, working to create a strong bond and communication exchange of diplomatic openness.
- Work closely with the F & B team to ensure that an appropriate foundation of success is in place in this department, both in the culinary and service execution sides of the operation.
- Work with the Board to create a longer-term vision for Thornblade---a 5 to 7-year plan---and the supporting strategies and tactics to ensure relevancy, success and “results!”

Candidates should have:

- A minimum of 5 - 7 years of progressive leadership and management experience in an active, private member-owned club environment. NOTE: While having preference for those who have experience in the General Manager role, those current Assistant General Managers or Club Managers at well-recognized clubs, with verifiable records of achievement, will be strongly considered for this role.
- Helpful and desired are candidates with “turnaround” experience or at start up clubs; while Thornblade is not a turnaround situation, its forward challenges to adapt to changing markets and demographics are nonetheless substantial, we’d like someone who has built systems and processes, or significantly re-engineered them to be more relevant and consistent.
- A verifiable career track that demonstrates a record of tenure and commitment to previous employers, and that career moves were for enhancement of skills and experiences as opposed to ‘unplanned’ career changes.
- A proactive “thought partner” with the Board, as well as a natural catalyst to compel action, as opposed to someone looking for the Board and Committees to direct their actions. We are looking for a true GM/COO who “leads” the organization.
- The highest personal and business ethics and integrity, verifiable in the background and reference checking that will be done.
- The intuitive style and ability to understand that treating people, be they employees, members, guests or vendors, with respect and dignity is an absolute must, even during challenging times and moments.
- Strong general management skills with verifiable strengths in team development, financial performance, diverse recreational amenity management (golf, tennis, aquatics, rooms management, family activities and others are especially desirable), quality food and beverage programming, exceptional member/guest service programming, strategic planning, project management, and most importantly the ability to consistently define and achieve goals and objectives. Strong golf knowledge is desirable.
- Exceptionally strong communication and facilitation skills, both in writing and verbally, along with the appropriate personal presence, desire and ability to interact effectively before diverse constituencies of members, staff, vendors and other people who are part of the success of Thornblade. Communication with members and staff, and ‘sincere and engaged’ personal visibility is of immense importance at Thornblade.

- Had an exposure and responsibility to oversee and lead a high-quality operation in his/her previous positions---amenities, service, traditions and overall club ambience. It is critical that the GM/COO embodies the level of quality and consistency that is commensurate with expectations at Thornblade. The Club is not stuffy or pretentious, and the GM/COO needs to be commensurate with that style while at the same time personifying professionalism and a “can do; get it done” style.
- Prior experience in conceptualizing, creating, maintaining and managing high quality club physical facilities.
- Prior experience in coordinating and overseeing major club improvement projects, especially as these relate to construction and renovation projects is helpful as several important capital reinvestment projects will likely take place in the coming years.
- Business, creative and entrepreneurial sense for the overall evaluation of programs and services provided at Thornblade. Additionally, having the ability to recognize the quality and type of service that the majority of members (or future majority of members) expect, and which will continue to enhance the value of membership at Thornblade Club.
- Knowledgeable and current with both technology and Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) in the club industry and, preferably, on the cutting edge of metric orientation to help guide decision-making is highly desired.

A candidate must be:

- A strategic thinker who fully understands and has a passion for the club business, with a burning, infectious desire to be the very best. A proactive visionary – who will operate ahead of trends, opportunities and challenges; rarely needing to be reactive. A person who can knowledgeably and capably lead the board through major decisions on facilities and programs.
- An absolute “Team Builder.” A person who embodies the persona of ultimate coach and motivator who exemplifies a team spirit attitude; someone who brings out the very best in those around him/her by setting clear goals and expectations, providing consistent feedback and support, and who is respectful and professional in all interpersonal dealings. Someone who inspires willing followership among Thornblade team members.
- A confident, diplomatic and competent professional who is a ‘doer’ and take-charge person and who recognizes the importance of accountability. A creative problem solver who commands and earns respect because of the way he/she interacts with others and lives up to his/her word; not someone who is defensive in any way.
- A “no surprise” style leader who naturally shares information and direction rather than having a hidden agenda; someone who communicates openly, freely and operates with a high degree of transparency.
- Someone who is equally at ease in developing relationships with all demographics of members---long tenured, newer tenured, male, female, juniors, golfers, tennis players, social members, etc.---without favoritism and by using strongly developed listening skills.
- A person who understands and effectively functions in a non-profit, volunteer Board and Committee environment, and is especially sensitive to the fact that Greenville is a small city environment and that many relationships are linked, both inside and outside of the Club environment. Someone who is a strong consensus builder, and who embodies the behavior and skills one needs to be successful in this type of governance model.
- Capable of a high degree of initiative and resourcefulness in directing the activities of a busy family oriented country club; able to present a consummately professional image to the staff, membership, and the community at all times. The true “Ambassador” of Thornblade.
- An individual who is a change maker with the proven ability to lead and guide the organization through the processes to adapt Thornblade to our changing industry and market in order to be relevant and successful in the years to come.
- Have a high degree of creative and “fresh” ideas relative to food and beverage operations, member activities and programs.
- Possessive of strong organizational skills, and an obsession with covering the details necessary to consistently achieve high levels of quality, satisfaction and outstanding member experiences.
- Preferably, a college graduate, with Certified Club Manager (CCM) designation, and is committed to on-going professional development regardless of what stage he/she is in his/her career.

Salary & Benefits

Open and commensurate with qualifications and experience, with a strong incentive opportunity based on reasonable metrics will be developed. The club, along with the typical CMAA benefits, offers an excellent bonus and benefit package.

Application

We prefer to have you upload your resume and cover letter (in that order) to our resume service. ***Please note that you should have your documents fully prepared to be attached when prompted for them.***

Your interest in this position should be communicated as soon as possible, but no later than May 1st. Interviews are expected to take place in May.

IMPORTANT: Save your resume and letter in the following manner:

“Last Name, First Name Resume” &

“Last Name, First Name Cover Letter”

(These documents should be in PDF format and your letter should clearly convey why you are interested and in alignment with the position.)

Once you complete the application process for this search, you are not able to go back in and add additional documents.

For directions on how to upload your resume and cover letter visit this page [here](#).

[Click here](#) to upload your resume and cover letter.

If you have any questions, please email Nan Fisher: nan@kkandw.com

Lead Partner on this search is:

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