

## GENERAL MANAGER/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER PROFILE: FOUNTAINS COUNTRY CLUB LAKE WORTH, FL

### The Club

In 1968, a group of men formed a Florida corporation and purchased a 600-acre tomato farm that stretched along Jog Road from Lake Worth Road to Lantana Road in Lake Worth, Florida. The plans began with a clubhouse and just one nine-hole course (North Course) designed by Bruce Devlin and Von Hagge. During the past 40 years, the Club developed a tomato patch into a top country club community in South Florida. In 2003 the Fountains community voted for Mandatory Membership – the single most important trend in the Florida Club industry.

Ultimately, the Club came into being in 1972 and eventually enjoyed 54 holes of championship golf and over 1,700 units within the gates, including condominiums, villas, townhomes and single-family residences. The 865 acre community in the heart of Lake Worth is ideally situated near the Palm Beach International Airport, beaches, the island of Palm Beach and a wide array of shopping, recreational and social options.

Fountains Country Club has invested substantially in its future! In 2012, the Club undertook a major renovation of its amenities including a new Golf Pro Shop, expanded bag storage, expanded men's and ladies' locker rooms, new card rooms, a new casual "Pub" dining facility seating 230 people inside and out, a new Sports Complex with an 8,000 sq.ft. fitness center, and a 2,200 sq.ft. tennis pro shop with 12 Har Tru courts. In addition, a new South Gate Grille and main dining room of the Clubhouse was expanded to accommodate over 300 people. The members' amenities at the Fountains are in great shape and the Club is very well poised for the future.

Like many South Florida clubs, the Fountains has seen a slow decline in golf participation over the past several years and ultimately voted to sell a portion of one of its courses to a developer and expects to use the significant proceeds from that sale to further reinvest in amenities and improvements, as well as to pay down the debt incurred from the renovation noted above. Further investments into the 36 holes of golf are being considered with top industry architect and local resident, Nick Price currently making recommendations on enhancements.

The Club hosts a number of special events throughout the year including wedding receptions, Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, charity galas, private parties and golf outings. Members participate in a wide variety of clubs within the Fountains from reading groups stitch and chat to pickle ball. Members are also very involved in charitable organizations, and many perform community service within the Palm Beaches.

Many of the staff at the Fountains are H2B and J1 visa holders and supplement a strong cadre of local staff, but the coordination of staff procurement is a significant annual activity.

**For more information, please visit the Club's website:** [www.fountainscc.com](http://www.fountainscc.com)

### General Facts about the Club

Fountains Country Club is operating under the General Manager/Chief Operating Officer (GM/COO) Organizational Structure and currently has an interim manager in place after the termination of KemperSports. Gross operating revenues of the Club are approximately \$13.0M, with F & B revenues running over \$2.2M. The Club has done an excellent job of maintaining and improving its amenities and facilities over the years, and has additional projects under consideration for the near future. Members have a monthly capital charge, primarily for annual cap ex, and various other charges for service, minimums, etc.

There are approximately 700 equity members in all categories and an additional 300 non-equity members largely from outside of the community. The average age of the membership is 68, trending younger. The Club does ramp up in the winter months, as approximately 40% of members are year-round, the remaining 60% spending much of the 'season' from October – May in Florida. While not exclusively so, the Club has a large Jewish membership population, with additional religious representation with a good number of the members coming from New York and New Jersey.

South Florida-based GL Homes is in contract with the Country Club to pay \$17 million for two parcels of land equal to approximately 44 acres or about 9-holes of one of the golf courses at Fountains. GL Homes plans to build as many as 200 single-family homes priced from \$400,000 to \$600,000 on one of the parcels and 250 to 300 rental apartments on the second parcel. The single family homes will be within the gates of the Fountains Country Club while the rental community will be outside of the gates with no access to the community.

The Club has approximately 165 FT employees in season and approximately 120 FT employees in the off-season. FCC operates as a 501 (c) (7), not-for-profit FL Corporation.

**The GM/COO Reports to:**

Club President and Board of Directors (15 in total at present; currently being reduced to 9 by 2019)

He/She coordinates on an Advisory Level with all Club Committees, working closely to guide their success and overall coordination with FCC's annual and longer-term strategic goals and objectives

At present, Committees include:

Budget and Finance

Golf (including Greens and Grounds)

House (including Food and Beverage and Social

Legal (including Grievance)

Membership

Tennis/Fitness

**Direct Reports to the GM/COO at present include:**

Administrative Office Manager

Controller

Director of Agronomy

Director of Food and Beverage

Director of Maintenance

Director of Membership

Director of Sports Operations

Head Golf Professional

**General Manager/Chief Operating Officer Position Overview**

The Club recently decided to terminate its agreement with KemperSports to provide management services, and to return to a GM/COO concept-led club. The Board is fully committed to this model and is dedicated to find the right qualified candidate who is ready to "partner" with a club poised to restore its position within the club communities of Southeast Florida. The Board's goal is to focus on policy and strategy and allow the GM/COO to be the true COO and operator of the Club.

The GM/COO be responsible for all day-to-day operations of Fountains Country Club, closely coordinating with the separate HOAs within the gates to ensure consistent quality throughout the community. He/She directs and administers all aspects of the operations---the amenities, project development, staff and all programs and activities including each operating entity of golf, tennis, pool, fitness, and food/beverage operations, activities and programs to ensure consistent, outstanding service delivery to the membership and their guests. This position is one that requires exceptional diplomacy with a high degree of visibility and a strong, 'personalized service' perspective, a personification that is critical for all team members to emulate. Critical to the new GM/COO's success is the intuitive sense to be "present," and to sincerely engage with members and their guests.

The ideal candidate should have a great degree of "polish," an intuitive "gravitas" about him/herself, and be able to recognize the need to be fully engaged and committed to the Club in the especially busy winter and shoulder season months.

The GM/COO will be responsible for the creation, implementation and consistent maintenance of all service standards and processes while providing vibrant, innovative, relevant and respectful leadership for key managers and staff at FCC. 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 defined, understood, evaluated and enhanced on a continuous basis. Most important to one's success will be to meet the expectations of a majority of the membership, as defined by the Board of Directors *in strong collaboration with their "thought partner," the GM/COO!* Additionally, the keen ability to say no, when appropriate, but to be able to do so in a thoughtful, consistent and diplomatic manner.

The GM/COO must be a proactive part of the process of strategic planning, talent acquisition and retention, membership recruitment and orientation, membership activities/services programming, ensuring that each of these areas of focus consider current and future membership input and demographics. Additionally, he/she must recognize that all amenities at FCC 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, often times compelling the Board and helping to direct Committees to recognize trends, evolving demographics and what will help sustain FCC for years into the future.

The new GM/COO will recognize that golf has been a primary 'driver' of the Club, but that pool, tennis, fitness, social activities and especially quality food and beverage services are all integral parts of the amenities package of FCC and, as such, need to be commensurate with member expectations.

Being a strong mentor, along with a continuous development of the team, both senior and support staff, is a critical success factor for the new GM/COO. Working with his/her team to improve and enhance the current service approach and delivery of a "high end country club" product, the GM/COO must seek and maintain a staff culture that will further elevate the standards of delivery and refinement of FCC team.

A key requirement is to be able to work proactively with the Board and Club Committees, as appropriate, to keep them focused on key goals and objectives that benefit the long term well-being of FCC, and to ensure that significant capital projects are successfully executed, keeping all significant constituencies well informed throughout. The Board is "not interested in running the Club," and is looking for a more CEO-like mindset from its GM/COO who will take a strong role, be "out in front of issues," and to provide them with solutions and execution leading to successful outcomes where and when needed.

Outstanding communication skills are necessary for this role and to be successful at FCC. As the primary communicator of much information at the Club, proven outstanding verbal and written skills are absolutely critical, as is a keen ability to "listen," "engage," "build trust" and "be highly approachable." Additionally, of critical importance is being responsive to the Board and other inputs, as appropriate.

As with most innovative, high performance clubs, 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 FCC is a critical success factor. Moreover, being highly proactive in doing so, sometimes pushing the Board for support of certain actions is the desire; in essence, acting as a partner toward relevant 'visioneering' to make FCC "*the club community of choice*" in the competitive local market is very important and a priority.

#### **Initial Priorities of the General Manager/Chief Operating Officer**

With the expectation that the new GM/COO will commence his/her role in early summer 2017, the following priorities have been identified as recommended primary focus:

- 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. *F & B operations are of utmost importance to the membership and meeting a majority of members' expectations in this area is a critical success factor. Service standards and consistent delivery thereof is an important focus.*
- 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 FCC. Understand if and how processes and procedures have been developed, if in place and being followed, and whether or not they are appropriate or in need of modification.
- Develop the Board and Committee relationship, working to create a strong bond and communication exchange of diplomatic openness.
- Observe, listen, ask questions and learn about the culture and heritage of the Fountains. The Club Board appreciates that a set of "fresh eyes" may identify areas of improvement or attention.
- Meet and sincerely interact with and engage as many members as possible.

#### **Candidate Specifications**

##### **Candidates should have:**

- A minimum of 7 - 10 years of verifiable, progressive leadership and management experience in an active, private member-owned club environment. NOTE: While having a strong preference for those who have experience as a General Manager/Chief Operating Officer, those current Assistant General Manager/Chief Operating Officers or Club Managers at well-recognized clubs, with verifiable records of achievement, may be considered for this role. Additionally preferred, but not mandatory is South Florida experience.
- 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.
- Strong general management skills with verifiable strengths in talent acquisition and retention, team development, *exceptional member/guest service programming*, financial acumen, systems and process expertise, diverse recreational amenity management (golf, tennis, fitness, aquatics, and others are especially desirable), *quality food and beverage programming* (especially important), strategic planning, project management, and most importantly the ability to consistently define and achieve goals and objectives.
- Possess a true sense of ownership, recognizing that this role is a "highly visible" position and there is a strong, in-season need to be a constant "face" of FCC.

- 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 FCC. *Communication with members and staff, and 'sincere and engaged' personal visibility is of immense importance at FCC. The natural ability to remember names of the members is a critical success factor.*
- A “strong network” of industry professionals in order to assist the Board and Committees with planning for the Club’s future needs based on trends, demographics, etc.
- An exposure and responsibility to oversee and lead a high-quality operation in his/her previous positions---amenities, service, history and 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 FCC.
- Prior experience in coordinating and overseeing major club improvement projects, especially as these relate to construction and renovation projects, similar in size and scope to which FCC has undertaken over the past few years.
- Business, creative and entrepreneurial sense for the overall evaluation of programs and services provided at FCC. 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 Fountains Country Club.

**A candidate must be:**

- Able to “challenge status quo,” but in a thoughtful, diplomatic manner and only after understanding history at the FCC.
- Able to commit to a six-day week in season, recognizing the ‘balance’ of off season months and a much less personal time commitment is then required. Activities are offered all year long as more and more of the membership becomes year-round residents.
- 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 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.
- A person who understands and effectively functions in a non-profit, volunteer Board and Committee 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.
- An individual with 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.

**Education:**

Preferably, a college graduate, with Certified Club Manager (CCM) and a Certified Chief Executive (CCE) designation, who 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. ***Fountains Country Club is poised to enhance its position and become known as a top SE Florida club community and is looking for a new GM/COO who helps to make that happen.*** The club, along with the typical CMAA benefits, offers an excellent bonus and benefit package.

**INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO APPLY**

**In addition to a current resume, please provide a thoughtful letter of interest and alignment for this role and for living in the greater South Florida/Lake Worth, Florida area. The letter should be addressed to the Search Committee of Fountains Country Club.**

**Please upload your resume and cover letter (in that order) using the link below.** You should have your documents fully prepared to be attached when prompted for them during the online application process.

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 Word or **PDF (preferred format)**)

Note: 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

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