

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER (COO) PROFILE: WESTCHESTER COUNTRY CLUB RYE, NY

THE COO OPPORTUNITY at WESTCHESTER COUNTRY CLUB

The Westchester Country Club Chief Operating Officer (COO) is responsible for the executive management of the Westchester Country Club (WCC), and reports to the President and Board of Directors.

The Westchester Country Club COO must be an exceptional leader and manager who can earn and maintain the respect and confidence of the Club membership and employees. The COO is expected to work closely with the Board in formulating the Club's Annual Operating Plan and Budget and regularly reviewing and updating the Westchester Country Club Strategic Plan. *Most importantly, the COO is responsible for assuring the Club maintains and enhances its Mission to be: "ONE OF THE NATION'S PREMIER COUNTRY CLUBS PROVIDING ITS MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES WITH AN UNPARALLELED TRADITION OF THE FINEST IN GOLF, RACQUETS, BEACH, DINING AND HOTEL FACILITIES FOR ALMOST 100 YEARS."*

The long tenured current COO of Westchester will be retiring later this year after 25 years of distinguished service to the Club and industry. He is also moving into his role at National President of the Club Managers Association of America in February 2017.

WESTCHESTER COUNTRY CLUB & COMMUNITY

A self made man from Toronto, John McEntree Bowman came to New York when he was seventeen. He began his career as a groom in a stable and worked his way up to eventually own the Biltmore hotel group, one of the most exclusive and largest hotel chains in the world at that time.

Mr. Bowman sought to create the sportsman's paradise within easy reach from the bustle of Manhattan. He would go on to purchase land in both Harrison and Rye, New York for his flagship hotel project, the Westchester Biltmore.

Mr. Bowman had a vision:

Members would live in the hotel and in homes on the grounds. The Club staff would take care of all services, both in the hotel and in the homes. Meals would be delivered to the homes from the hotel kitchen. Maids and gardeners would be called in from the hotel to attend to the entire Members' needs. A large garage with a platoon of mechanics would service the cars of the Members. And maybe, there would even be an airfield to handle the Members' planes in the coming age of flight.

As for sporting facilities, the Club would offer the finest in golf, tennis, polo, horseback riding, swimming, boating, squash, tobogganing, skating, shooting, skiing...everything. It was going to be the most beautiful, most luxurious hotel-club-community anywhere. And, of course, no expense was to be spared.

Originally, 583 acres of land were purchased from Hobart J. Park, at \$2,500 an acre. Two months later a 62-acre tract was bought nearby on Manursing Island, valued at \$375,000. The following month 35 acres were purchased from the old Hill Estate on Parks Farm. In the summer of 1919 construction of the eight-story hotel at the top of the hill was begun, under New York architects Warren and Wetmore in the style of a nineteenth-century Italian villa. Landscape architects were Charles W. Leavitt & Sons. Billington and Smith-Mertz were contracted to build the polo field and five miles of roads.

Walter J. Travis, the great British and American golf champion turned golf architect laid out the two 18-hole golf courses. The courses were built by the Philadelphia-based architectural firm of Toomey and Flynn who built the modern course at Shinnecock Hills toward the end of the same decade. The Club joined the USGA on January 13, 1922, four months before the course opened for play.

On May 15, 1922 John McEntree Bowman formally opened the Westchester Country Club. Almost 1,500 members joined, paying an initiation fee of \$25. Gage I. Tarbell was named President and E.D. Miller Secretary-Treasurer.

The Beach Club opening took place two weeks later, when the large casino with a fine dance floor and handsome furnishings were unveiled. Facilities included eight hundred bathhouses, tennis and handball courts, a large saltwater pool, a seven-acre, man-made lagoon for swimming and canoeing and parking for seven hundred cars.

The total cost exceeded \$6,000,000, but the facilities were unequaled anywhere in the world. In addition to 45 holes of golf and the aforementioned facilities at the Beach, there was a brokerage office in the clubhouse, three polo fields (now the driving range); he constructed a separate short game area near the par-3 course, a bridle path, a track for horse racing, and fifteen tennis courts, including five superb grass courts.

Today, Westchester Country Club is one of the iconic 'brands' recognized throughout the club world, having hosted a number of championships, including the Thunderbird Classic in 1963, with Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus winning two of the first three years. The Thunderbird continued annually until 1967 when it became the Westchester Classic.

Ben Hogan played his final competitive round at the Classic on July 5, 1970. The event morphed again and was re-named the Westchester Buick Classic and later, The Barclays. These events were considered "tune-ups" for the U.S. Open with hard, fast greens, tight fairways and high rough.

The PGA returned to Westchester Country Club in August 2011 with the final Senior Major of the year, the Senior Players Championship, and the most recent championship hosted at the Club was the 2015 Women's PGA Championship.

As the Club has evolved over the years, the Manursing Island Beach Club property has become an even more significant part of the member amenities, with a recent 'makeover' of that property catapulting usage by the large number of younger families who have joined WCC the past several years. The extraordinary views and dining options at the Beach Club complement one of the largest salt-water pools in the country, and a fine array of family activities throughout the summer months.

Back at the main campus, approximately four miles from the Beach Club, members enjoy a wide array of options in addition to a premier golf experience. The Club has a large and well-equipped fitness center complete with private and group instruction. The tennis operation is thriving with the addition this past year of a 'bubble' over five of its Har Tru courts, allowing for a vibrant year round operation. In addition to this winter activity, the Club boasts 15 Har Tru courts in addition to the adjacent classic five grass courts.

For additional racquet sports, WCC is well known and regarded for the quality of its squash and paddle programs, keeping the Club active during the winter months when paddle ramps up with participation. The squash facility is state of the art and boasts a regular hosting of national amateur and professional events, and enjoys one doubles and six singles courts. The junior program is renowned for the quality of players it produces, with over 15 WCC junior players having reached top ten national ranking status and many going on to play at the college level. On the paddle side, the five courts were recently renovated along with the Paddle Clubhouse, and has very strong and active support this time of year.

Like many clubs, dining options are at the heart of the Club, and many options abound. From the traditional charm and ambience of the Mahogany Room, to the Sports Grill to the Sports House (currently under renovation and expansion), to multiple dining options at the Beach Club, the Club offers a little something for everyone. Additionally, WCC has a whole host of private function spaces and ballroom options, as well as coveted outdoor spaces for ala carte dining and events.

Finally, the eight story clubhouse at WCC has a number of hotel rooms and suites (approximately 57) and private member apartments (approximately 54) that require 24/7/365 care and attention, and which makes WCC a completely full service, year round family centric club with some of the finest amenities in the country.

WESTCHESTER COUNTRY CLUB BY THE NUMBERS:

- One of the largest club operations in the country, WCC has an operating budget exceeding \$37.0M, and has averaged approximately \$3.5M annually over the past ten years in capital improvements
- Food and beverage operations revenues exceed \$9.0M
- Annual Dues revenues total more than \$13.0M
- The Club operates with several unions covering staff in F & B, course maintenance, housekeeping and several other departments
- There are over 1,000 regular members including seniors, with another 400+ in other categories
- FTE staff in-season totals nearly 600, with approximately 250 in the off season months
- The average age of members is approximately 55 years
- There are a total of 15 Board Members, each serving three year terms
- There are 20 standing committees including: Admissions, Arts & Entertainment, Beach, Capital Projects Select Committee, Children's Subcommittee of Entertainment Committee, Club Governance, Engineering, Finance, Golf, Green, House, Insurance, Ladies Bowling, Ladies Bridge, Legal, Membership Committee, Nominating, Publicity Subcommittee of Entertainment Committee, Racquets, Technology, and Theatre Guild
- At present, the Sports House Kitchen and Grill are being renovated, and a Hotel Corridor Renovation and a South Course renovation to tees, bunkers and green surrounds are in process
- There are approximately 44,000 rounds played annually on the Club's two courses
- At present, there are ten direct reports to the COO including: Executive Assistant, General Manager, Director of HR, CFO, Membership Director, Publicity Director, Tennis Director, Director of Squash, Director of Golf, Director of Golf & Grounds

WESTCHESTER COUNTRY CLUB WEB SITE: www.wccclub.org

WESTCHESTER COUNTRY CLUB COO POSITION OVERVIEW

The COO of the Westchester Country Club is expected to be the quintessential hospitality professional who, in collaboration with the Board, Member Committees and Senior Staff is able to define and execute plans to ensure that WCC is viewed as the premier family centric country club in the greater metropolitan New York area, as well as one of the most highly regarded in the country.

Having full operational responsibility for the Club, the COO will be responsible and accountable to develop, monitor and manage the Annual Operating Plan and Budget, developing appropriate analysis tools and benchmarks, both internally and externally. Of primary importance is ensuring high levels of membership and associate satisfaction levels, as measured in annual survey tools.

Serving as the primary Club representative to the membership at large, the COO must have a natural and intuitive style of engagement, visibility, approachability and respectful communication. Gaining the confidence of the membership and staff through thoughtful, candid and considerate interaction is of initial primary importance, as well as ensuring that an appropriate talent acquisition, retention, orientation, training and evaluation program is in place.

Early additional priorities in the first 100 days include:

- Ensure that a full understanding of the history of the Club, its culture, it's Members, Board, Committees and Staff is considered before embarking on any significant changes.
- Evaluate current service standards, delivery consistency and overall effectiveness in concert with your Senior Leadership Team; develop and implement plans for enhancement, keeping the Board, Members and Staff informed of plans and expected outcomes.

- Provide clear goals and direction for each operating department after gaining clear understanding of expectations from collaborative discussions and planning with the Board and Club President.
- Ensure that the capital projects are done on time and on budget, quickly coming up to speed on their scope.
- An overall organizational chart review with full engagement of the Team, ensuring a strong sense of morale is in place.
- Creating a 'State of the Club' report and analysis, and along with a thoughtful SWOT of operations for Board consideration.
- Establishing a strong working relationship with the Board and Committees.

CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS

- A minimum of 10 years of progressive leadership/management experience in a private member-owned country club or high-end resort operation, preferably those with active member boards and committee involvement.
- Proven and verifiable leadership qualities with a demonstrated ability to direct, coordinate and control all aspects of a busy, full service, multi-campus country club with nearly 600 staff members in height of season, and operating and capital budgets exceeding \$40.0M.
- Prior experience in coordinating and overseeing major capital improvement projects, especially as they relate to construction and renovation of both course and clubhouse.
- Appreciation for and knowledge of golf, which is of tremendous importance at WCC.
- Clearly and intuitively, the new COO must have a demonstrable passion for the Club and his or her role.
- A plain spoken, respectfully direct and candid style is most appropriate for the next COO at WCC.
- Strong history of success and keen understanding of quality Food and Beverage operations, including revenue growth, training, innovation and creativity, and strong service culture development.
- Working and verifiable knowledge of strong procedural programming; the ability to define and institutionalize process and procedures (SOPs) on a consistent basis throughout WCC will be very important. Development and execution of Performance Standards and Performance Metrics is necessary.
- Technologically proficient and recognizing of best practices use of technology to improve 'high touch' service delivery to members, as well as to more effectively manage and lead operations.
- A motivator and leader who can bring out the best in others by setting clear goals and expectations, holding them accountable for outcomes, by providing consistent feedback, support and through respectful interaction and professionalism.
- Someone with a history of innovation, and a champion of new ideas and initiatives, looking to consistent improvement of member experiences and operational efficiency.
- A true, confident, diplomatic and competent club industry professional who recognizes the importance of accountability, and who has a strong history of success in working with member boards and committees.
- The ability to adapt and positively contribute to changing and evolving circumstances.
- A "*courageous thought partner*" with the Board, recognizing that he/she needs to be a creative problem solver whose ability to convey ideas, suggestions and solutions in a thoughtful, well-reasoned manner with a high level of integrity results in high levels of respect.
- Ultimately, someone with keenly recognized and natural "gravitas;" a charismatic and sincerely concerned and interested leader of teams, both paid and volunteer.
- Someone who understands and "embraces the pace," energy and diversity of a large metropolitan area like NYC.
- An organizationally focused individual who recognizes that obsession with details and consistency of delivery at a high level result in high member and associate satisfaction, high levels of quality and an overall outstanding member experience.

EDUCATIONAL AND CERTIFICATION QUALIFICATIONS

- A BS or BA degree (or equivalent) from an accredited college or university, preferably in business or hospitality management.
- A CCM designation or similar accreditation outside of the club industry is desirable.

SALARY & BENEFITS

An appropriate salary, commensurate with qualifications and experience for the desired WCC experience, will be offered. The Club offers an excellent performance bonus and benefit package, along with the typical CMAA and other professional benefits.

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO APPLY

In addition to a current resume, please provide a thoughtful letter of interest and alignment for this role and the greater metropolitan New York City area. The letter should be addressed to the Search Committee at Westchester 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](#).

[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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