



Clubs sometimes face challenges that can lead to dire consequences, and just sometimes, a leader turns those challenges into triumphs. That's the case with Doug Green, the outgoing president of the Polo Club of Boca Raton, Fl., and BoardRoom magazine's Distinguished Club President for 2012.

"This club has made a tremendous amount of headway and Doug Green is responsible for it," stressed Kurt Kuebler, a partner in Kopplin & Kuebler LLC.

"Doug gets the big picture perspective. He has been able to build the confidence of his board members and the membership and that really helped energize the club." Green, a former senior partner in the office of the chairman and board member of KPMG, and his wife Toni have lived in the Polo Club community since 2001.

And the challenges...well, some of the same issues many clubs face: a fractured board, getting the board to communicate with membership, getting members to support needed change, and getting certain capital improvements supported by the board, management and members. It's being able to rise above the challenges that make the difference for a club, and that's been accomplished at the Polo.

"Doug had a board that was, in many ways, fractured, and molded it into one cohesive unit," explained Stanley Goldberg, who succeeded Green as the Polo Club's president this year.

"Today, we have a board that acts as one body and works together. In the

The Polo Club's Doug Green Honored as BoardRoom magazine's

Distinguished Club President

past, there was a lot of dissension — no one could agree on anything. Now, when board members walk out of an important meeting, they stand together as a unified front.

“Doug’s biggest achievement was improving communication, and helping to put a new management team in place that the members are very happy with. I know he’s proud to leave office knowing he’s helped to make the club a much better place than it was four years ago,” Goldberg added.

BoardRoom, for the fifth year, is recognizing 21 clubs as Private Club Presidents of the Year – 2012 for practicing what they preach – leadership for the betterment of their clubs...board presidents or chairs who have served as the volunteer leaders of their club.

“Kurt and I are very enthused that BoardRoom’s Club President of the Year program continues to develop,” commented Richard Kopplin, partner, Kopplin & Kuebler LLC. The firm is one of the major supporters of this BoardRoom endeavor.

“We have often honored club general managers and other employees in the private club world but this is the first effort to recognize club members who give so much of their time for the betterment of their clubs by serving as their club president. It’s about time they receive some accolades for the work that they do to benefit their fellow club members,” Kopplin added.

“Clubs expect top performances from the GM/COO, but it’s especially gratifying to find a president who truly ‘gets it,’” Kuebler injected.

“This is a very exciting story of a club that has had to work hard to get up off the ground,” exclaimed BoardRoom publisher, John Fornaro. “Doug Green’s steadfastness and hard work is a tribute to that. It’s a wonderful accomplishment for the Florida club.”

Nominations of the top 21 have been reviewed by BoardRoom’s industry experts who have an understanding of the industry – the structure of the board of directors, and the role and responsibilities of the club’s board of directors, which also clearly defines the role and responsibilities of the club’s chief executive.

The Polo Club, a \$40 million operation, is a premiere gated community located in Boca Raton Florida. The club opened its doors in 1986 and today has 3,400 members and 1,700 homes on 1,100 acres.

The club features 27 Har-Tru Tennis Courts, two 18-hole Tom Freeland-designed championship golf courses, a 45,000 square foot clubhouse featuring five dining venues, and a 35,000 square foot spa and fitness center.

“The board’s primary role is to ensure its fiduciary responsibility to the membership,” Green emphasized. “The best boards do not manage the organization, but ensures the organization is well-managed. How? By hiring the best management team, retaining the best management team, and holding them accountable. At the end of the day, it’s management that runs

the club, but it’s the board’s responsibility to make sure management is doing the job they were hired to do, and at the level of professionalism and excellence we expect.”

After an extensive four-month search, the board found that person: new COO / general manager Brett Morris.

“Leadership is about surrounding yourself with the best people and allowing them to do their job to the best of their abilities, while supporting and making them better every day,” said Green. “We chose Brett not only because we believe he is the best at what he does, but we felt that he is also the person our members would be proud to call our leader and our partner.”

Brett’s extensive experience and expertise in food and beverage in the private club industry also fulfilled another goal of Green

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Page 20: L-R Brett Morris, GM/COO; Doug Green, president

Page 21: Entrance sign to The Polo Club of Boca Raton

Page 22: Aerial view of the family friendly resort complex of The Polo Club at Boca Raton





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and the board: to elevate all aspects of service and quality of the club's food and beverage operations to be second-to-none.

"Today, everything from the valet, to food and beverage offerings, and the wait staff all across the club is discernibly better than it was a year ago," explained Green. "Those are the things we needed to improve, and while we've made a discernible difference from six months ago, we still have work to do," Green stated.

"Knowing how to communicate and listen — that's a huge part of what we had to do. It was important to get the board communicating better, but it was also important that we — as a governing body — listen to our members.

"As president, I wanted to address the members' concerns in a timely manner. Open communication, and truly listening to their needs, helped to build the trust that allowed us to move forward and implement the changes we've made in the past few years," he added.

Today the club embodies much of what makes private clubs more efficient and effective, including continual strategic planning.

"Strategic planning at Polo is ongoing. It doesn't stop; you do it continually. It's a process that never ends," emphasized Green.

"If the Polo club continues in the direction it has taken in the past two years, with the ongoing support of the membership, our members will experience an enhanced lifestyle

to be enjoyed by family and friends, and the community will attract a younger, more active demographic — a generation of more involved golfers and tennis players, leading to an increase in home sales."

Currently the club's strategic plan uses the input of nine sub-committees to move forward with improving the club's operation.

"The most successful organizations anticipate change, plan for change, and implement the appropriate strategies — setting priorities, both short and long term — that will allow for appropriate change. If you are going to stay ahead of the competition, the status quo simply will not work. You must be one step ahead at all times," remarked Green.

"Doug was instrumental in keeping members informed and involved, which is so important," commented the club's GM and chief operating officer Brett Morris. "He is also very good at being transparent with all that goes on behind the scenes. These points are key to running a large operation like Polo: you have to be willing to put it all out there to the members. 'Make the invisible, visible,' as Doug would say."

While the Polo Club continues to emerge as one of South Florida's most desired residential resort communities, the real challenge will be not only to sustain this position, but also to continue to build on Polo's "reputation" and "brand equity."

Green measures his success by membership satisfaction: "I look at member satisfaction because that is the business we're in. Our goal here is to provide our members with a

great experience, day in and day out, and with our recent membership survey, which received a score of 92 percent member satisfaction, that says it all. That's how I measure our accomplishments.

"We are in two businesses: member satisfaction and home sales. If the members are happy inside the gates, then word gets outside the gates, and that's why we've seen a substantial increase in home sales this year," Green explained.

"Our members are now feeling good, especially about the areas of the club that needed improvement, including food and beverage, service excellence and marketing, which are now well underway. He accomplished what he set out to do, and he can be proud of what Polo stands for today," GM Morris enthused.

And that's what being a Distinguished Private Club President is all about! **BR**

Top 21 Private Club Presidents

BoardRoom magazine, for the fifth year, is recognizing 21 club presidents and chairs as Private Club Presidents of the Year – 2012 for practicing what they preach – leadership for the betterment of their clubs.

"This kind of recognition for volunteers who give so much to the club has been long overdue, and since the first awards there's been a steady growth in the nominations by club general managers and others in the private club industry," exclaimed BoardRoom publisher John Fornaro.

Private club board presidents play a huge role in the professional operations of their club as a volunteer working diligently with their board of directors and general managers, striving for well informed, but not emotional decisions.

These outstanding presidents exemplify the focus on the leadership responsibilities, the accountability and the management of the board, providing a healthy respect for the club's macromanagement. They understand the importance of working, effectively and efficiently, with their volunteer boards and the dedication that's required from everyone with whom they work.

It's a point made by this year's Distinguished Top President, Doug Green of the Polo Club of Boca Raton, FL.

"The boards' primary role is to ensure their fiduciary responsible to the membership. The best boards do not manage the organization, but ensures the organization is well managed. How? By hiring the best management team, retaining the best management team, and holding them accountable." Green explained.

Systems along do not insure a good board. Key elements include commitment, competence, diversity, collective decision making, openness, transparency, effective communication with management and the membership, fiscal responsibility, development and establishment of the club's mission, vision and policy direction, especially through establishment of a strategic plan. A successful board president draws upon the expertise of other board members, the club's institutional memory and stewardship of the club's resources. As well, the board president provides new board members and future president with information they need to perform effectively as board members.

Congratulations to these outstanding private club board presidents.

Distinguished Presidents

Mr. James W. Abbott

Jonathan Club, Los Angeles, CA

Mr. Brett Shane Bernstein

Lakewood Country Club, Rockville, MD

Dr. Travis Brannon

Hillwood Country Club, Nashville, TN

Mr. Pat Demens

Marine Drive Golf Club, Vancouver, BC CANADA

Dr. Luke Faber

San Luis Obispo Country Club, San Luis Obispo, CA

Mr. Jody Gallagher

Thornblade Club, Greer, SC

Dr. Richard M. Goldenberg

The Club at Admiral's Cove, Jupiter, FL

Mr. Doug Green

Distinguished President of the Year

The Polo Club of Boca Raton, Boca Raton, FL

Mr. Tom Hutchinson

Tavistock Country Club, Haddonfield, NJ

Mr. Doug Ideker

The Club at DC Ranch, Scottsdale, AZ

Mr. Mike Irvine

Rancho Santa Fe Golf Club, Rancho Santa Fe, CA

Dr. Ken Jensen

Monterey Peninsula Country Club, Pebble Beach, CA

Ms. Sue Jerovsek

Spring Lake Country Club, Spring Lake, MI

Mr. Richard Kaplan

Aberdeen Golf & Country Club, Boynton Beach, FL

Mr. Bill Marks

Sand Point Country Club, Seattle, WA

Mr. Brian Murphy

Milltown Golf Club, Milltown, Dublin IRELAND

Mr. Mike O'Donnell

Mirabel, Scottsdale, AZ 85262

Ms. Jeanne Poorman

Michigan Shores Club, Wilmette, IL 60091

Mr. Peter Ruggieri

Valley Country Club, Warwick, RI 02886

Mr. Ivan Snyder

Broken Sound Club, Boca Raton, FL 33496

Mr. David Townsend

Hamilton Farm Golf Club, Gladstone, NJ 07934



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