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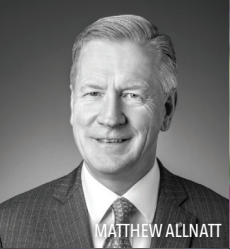
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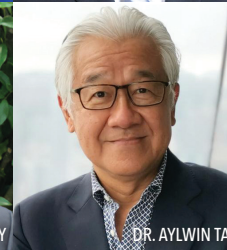
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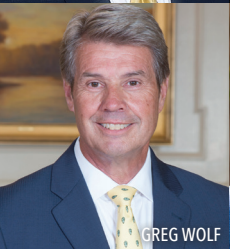
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## ELEVATING EXCELLENCE

THE STANDARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
ENHANCES BOARDROOM'S DISTINGUISHED CLUBS

10 | PUBLISHER'S PERSPECTIVE  
EMBEZZLEMENT: HOW PREVALENT IS IT AT PRIVATE CLUBS?  
WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT IT?

64 | JOHN FORNARO IMPACT AWARD  
MATT ALLNATT

66 | DAVE WHITE EDITORIAL AWARD  
HENRY DELOZIER

80-83 | DISTINGUISHED CLUBS  
DISTINGUISHED GOLF DESTINATIONS





ROBERT C. JAMES

Robert C. James, CCM, CCE, CHE, is vice president of DENEHY Club Thinking Partners. He can be reached via mail: bob@denehyctp.com www.denehyctp.com

## Work-Life Balance and Beyond Management Holds the Key

Recent studies show that a key driver in work-life balance is how employees view their jobs.

Burnout and mental and physical fatigue are more manageable for employees with good holistic health. They are happier in their jobs, perform better, stay longer and report a better work-life balance.

MetLife's 21st (2023) Annual U.S. Employee Benefit Trends Study reveals "care" is a key driver of life and job satisfaction and not prioritizing it is causing major issues in the workplace. Feeling "cared for" at work is a key driver of employee holistic health and happiness, strongly connected to employee productivity and job loyalty.

Yet the study found nearly half of today's employees (42 percent) do not feel cared for by their employers. The study also reveals that when employees do not feel cared for at work, their well-being, happiness and overall satisfaction take a hit. They are over two-thirds less likely to be holistically healthy and happy than employees who do feel cared for. These employees are also 65 percent less likely to feel a sense of belonging at work and 72 percent less likely to feel valued by their employer (two top drivers of good mental health and high employee engagement).

These concepts are interesting to hospitality leadership since at its core hospitality is how we make members, guests, consumers and employees feel. While the sophisticated, humanistic leader understands these concepts, we wonder how many boards understand that responsibility.

**Caring for** is more than **caring about**, but it does not necessarily mean that the club must embark on a full array of employee "engagement" programs and strategies that only the larger organizations can afford.

Much of the **caring for** is about how management and club leadership treat employees, the culture of the work environment and the focus on the emotional needs of employees. Attending to these environmental factors can overcome other mental health symptoms, such as burnout and quiet quitting, and lead to high productivity, improved morale and happiness on the job.

Recent articles by McKinsey & Company ("Some Employees Are Destroying Value. Others Are Building It. Do You Know the Difference?") and the McKinsey Health Institute ("Reframing Employee Health: Moving Beyond Burnout to

Holistic Health") about their research explain that employees who are highly engaged with their work are likely to report good holistic health. *What is particularly important to the club industry, where employees are often under stress and suffer from burnout and fatigue*, is that highly engaged employees with good holistic health can better manage the symptoms of burnout, stress, and mental and physical fatigue because they tend to be resilient. *You could have a good work-life balance if you are highly engaged in your work and holistically healthy even in highly demanding and stressful work that may require long hours.*

Is the reference to Herzberg's seminal hierarchy of needs correct? I did a Google search and found this: 1. Herzberg's theory of motivation and 2. Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Work-life balance is a personal perspective, but it is important to note that the basic "Survival Needs," as in Herzberg's seminal Hierarchy of Needs, which may now be interpreted to include living wage, health benefits and good working conditions, must be met first before an employee can raise to higher levels and achieve work-life balance or holistic health.

We will not discuss these basic needs in this article, but clubs can and must meet these needs. We may be unable to change the nature of our employees' work; we should be able to change our employees' perspective by addressing their primary and higher-order needs, both the things that "enable" a good working experience and the "demands" that detract from it.

The MHI study defined five categories of demands as "workplace factors that require sustained cognitive, physical and/or emotional effort. Demands can be thought of as challenges in the workplace," particularly as they pertain to burnout and retention, listed below from the most significant to least significant:

- Toxic workplace behavior
  - Bullying
  - Demeaning comments by colleagues
  - Being excluded or left out
- Role (job) ambiguity
- Job insecurity
  - Not having performance reviews and active feedback
  - Being passed on raises or promotions
  - Ignored or avoided by management

- Work pressures
- Other: workload, work hours, there are more.

Conversely “**enablers** are team, job and individual-level drivers that help to offset challenges, allowing employees to move forward and experience positive growth and development.” The following are the most significant to the individual:

- Self-efficacy: Employees’ belief in their capacity to act in the ways necessary to reach specific goals
- Adaptability: Willingness and capability to change and adjust to new conditions
- Belonging: Also noted along with valued at work in the MetLife report
- Meaningful work
- Psychological security: Being valued at work, confidence in their performance and job security.

Which, if any, of these enablers and demands are not significantly within the control of management or come with a high price tag?

Caring for your employees is not a big financial ask, yet the benefits can be significant to your club and employees. It can be insurmountable if leaders are not centered, reflective and living in truth from the onset.

Clubs will succeed with a strong employee base founded on competitive pay, benefits and good working conditions. These are where the costs are centered. It costs little or nothing more to create a positive work environment that builds employee holistic health that fulfills and creates outstanding employees. The best leaders are not only technicians but also motivators with the sensitivities of an industrial psychologist, a complex and compelling set of talents.





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