



PROFESSIONAL CLUB MARKETING ASSOCIATION

Members Relations

Face-to-Face Communication vs. Digital Communication

In an era that seems to be trending towards digital, digital, digital...has the push to communicate with our members this way created an environment that impedes on our ability to create those personal, "member touch" moments? I've attended multiple conferences, various industry and non-industry specific continuing education sessions and networking events, and a continual take away is the importance of creating "experiences" and "touch moments". So, by implementing the use of tablets in our dining rooms, kiosks for food ordering and automated answering systems, has the digital evolution of communication had any effect on the overall member experience?

iPad Wine Lists vs. Club Sommelier, Kiosks/In-App Ordering vs. Host/Server/Attendant, Automated Answering System vs. Receptionist, which do you feel is ideal for the club industry?

Technology is convenient, it is smart, it can learn patterns and trends, it offers a readily accessible database... it's a great, and valued, tool. However, in our "relationship business," we cannot lose site of the importance of capturing those "touch moments".

A Club Sommelier, a Host, a Server, an Attendant and a Receptionist all have the opportunity to greet members by name, whether it's when assisting them or just a pleasant, familiar face in passing. All parties, through one-on-one interactions, can provide tailored recommendations, ensuring the member or prospect feels valued. We should remain mindful of how digital offerings, whether it be in a dining room, out on the golf course or when a member or prospect contacts the club may impede on our desired outcome to build relationships.

So, all in all I think a combination of both face-to-face communication and digital communication creates a happy medium. As an industry, we definitely have to keep up with the times in order to avoid becoming obsolete, but we also have to remember we're in the relationship business. Ensuring those "touch moments" are not lost to a screen, or potentially one day a robot (scary), are key!



PCMA members can look forward to Jessica's full perspective in our June issue of Club Membership and Marketing Magazine.

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