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Report on "Vision '77" and the Long Range Planning Committee of the Club Managers Association of America : a graduate project

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REPORT ON "VISION '77" AND THE LONG RANGE
PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE CLUB MANAGERS
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

by

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A GRADUATE PROJECT

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PREFACE

The writer has undertaken the task of preparing an indepth report on the long range planning effort of the Club Managers Association of America. The primary objective of this report is to show some of the background, studies, and results of those studies produced by CMAA's Long Range Planning Committee. In addition, the report is presented to show some of the long range conceptual thinking, priorities, and careful examination which the committee has addressed itself to over the past decade.

Before describing some of the difficulties encountered in the preparation of this report, it is necessary to briefly state the sources of information used to produce this project. First, the main source of information was provided by the Club Managers Association in the form of various reports published by the Long Range Planning Committee over the last ten years. In addition, the textbook "Private Club Administration" by Henry O. Barbour was used to develop some of the background of the private club industry. And finally, the writer used numerous business periodicals to develop and capulate the past as well as the future economic picture discussed throughout this paper.

Since this report will ultimately be published and distributed to the entire CMAA membership, it had to be both interesting and informative, yet brief and succinct. Toward this end, the first draft was reduced from ten thousand words to nearly half that length. Still, the final product is somewhat more lengthy than the writer had originally envisioned. Despite this difficulty, it must be emphasized that further reduction could seriously reduce the report's impact and clarity.

The final report is organized into two sections. The first section includes a historical survey of the Long Range Planning Committee's activities over the past decade, while the second section outlines some of the future predictions and recommendations made by the group in order to guide and direct the Association and its members.

The writer found the preparation of this report to be most stimulating. He hopes that CMAA members find it as interesting to read as it was to prepare. Therefore, with great pleasure this project is presented to the Club Managers Association of America with the belief that it may serve to strengthen the channels of communication and promote further understanding between the

club field and the educational field.

Richard Clemons

Miami, Florida
May 1976

CMAA

REPORT ON "VISION '77"

AND

THE LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

1967-1976

Change characterizes today's organizations. New technology, new ideas, new values and new problems make up the decision agenda of today's manager. Yesterday's solutions to today's problems are, for the most part, simply not adequate. What is needed to cope successfully with our rapidly changing world is a keener sensitivity to the forces bearing on the manager and his role as a decision maker.

Never before in history has our society experienced so much change in such a short period of time. The forces of change bearing down upon us have come from both internal and external factors. Inflation, unemployment, environmental policy, and the unpredictability of world events are only a few of the enormous challenges that face today's manager.

We need look back no further than the early 1970's to observe how rapidly economic stability can transform itself into economic calamity. In October of 1972, the Federal Reserve had begun to tighten credit; and, in response, the prime bank rate rose from 5.5 percent to 5.75 percent. In December, that rate went from 5.75 to 6 percent, and businessmen began to complain. A year and a half later, the prime rate would be 12 percent, and America was in the throes of double-digit inflation. Who would have guessed that the price of wheat, which

had risen to \$1.73 a bushel in September, 1972, would then soar upward to \$2.06 a bushel in March, 1973, and then up to \$4.78 at its peak in that year? And that, in its soaring, wheat would carry the price of a loaf of bread from 27 cents to 60 cents two years later? Or, who could have guessed that the oil exporters of the Middle East would confront the United States with their oil embargo placing Americans in long lines at the gas pump paying outrageous fuel prices.

Looking back today, there is still no unanimity among economists as to what happened in those years of chaos. That is not the point. The point is: our society has experienced and will continue to experience rapid change at an ever-increasing rate!

Almost a decade ago, the CMAA, recognizing that we were entering an era of dramatic change, implemented a long range planning effort. It was known as "Vision 77".

The participants of "Vision 77", meeting in Philadelphia in May, 1967, were attempting to determine what might happen to our industry in the wake of dramatic economic, political, and social change. More specifically, the members of this group addressed themselves to three major questions.

1. In view of rapid social change, what would be the demand for private club membership over the next ten years?

2. What new skills and competencies would future club managers be required to develop?
3. What changes, over the next ten years, would CMAA have to make in order to remain a valuable asset to its membership?

It was the objective of "Vision 77" to look ahead to 1977 and attempt to answer these questions as well as chart a course for future success of the association and its members.

The "Vision 77" group was very successful in isolating some of the major trends, factors and developments that would reach maturity in 1977 or shortly thereafter. After careful study and critical evaluation, the major influencing factors were identified as:

1. Rising labor cost and the increased use of automation.
2. Growing scarcity of natural resources.
3. Increasing inflation.
4. Higher personal and business taxes.
5. Increased influence of women in society.
6. The advent of electronic data processing.
7. Increased family income and leisure time.
8. An increase in the popularity of large apartment and townhouse complexes offering recreational facilities.
9. Increased mobility of club members.
10. The dominance of the union as an influencing factor.

Besides identifying some of the economic and social factors that would confront the industry over the next decade, the "Vision 77" group outlined some positive steps that should be taken by the Association in order to meet these challenges. Toward this end, the following proposals were made.

1. Upgrade the present educational activities and programs of CMAA to prepare its members for the clubs of the future.
2. Implement an aggressive public relations program to enhance the public image of the club manager as a professional.
3. Investigate the feasibility of regional cooperative purchasing as a cost control measure.
4. Engage in more market research to identify the wants and needs of club members.
5. Investigate the feasibility of an industry wide computer system that would generate management information and membership research information.

In the second meeting of "Vision 77", which took place in New York City in November, 1967, the group re-examined the list of problems and possible solutions that were generated by the May, 1967 meeting. Three task forces were created to expand the list. These newly created groups successfully isolated nearly two dozen problem areas that could affect club managers as well as CMAA in the next ten years. Besides this, the

group agenda emphasized a review of what a "professional club manager" is or should be today--his needed areas of competence, his differentiation from other related fields, and his role as a club manager. Consideration was also given to the direction in which clubs are headed and what CMAA could do to prepare its members for the clubs of the future.

"Vision 77" was a very productive project and an excellent point of departure for the long range planning effort of our organization. In 1968, the "Vision 77" group was renamed the Long Range Planning Committee. Under this arrangement, no longer would a specific target year be identified; but the committee would be charged with the responsibility of looking, on a continuing basis, at least three years into the future with the specific objective of evaluating all factors of change that might confront CMAA and its members. Even the objectives of the committee were slightly changed.

"The committee's primary task is to stay long range, stick to conceptual thinking, and avoid involving itself in implementation procedures."

After being reorganized and armed with solid objectives, the Long Range Planning Committee engaged in many ambitious studies and projects over the next few years.

As a result of these studies, between 1968 and 1974, many recommendations were sent to the Board of Directors for consideration. The following recommendations are only a few of the most notable proposals.

CHAPTER EDUCATION-1970

The Long Range Planning Committee recommended that the Board charge appropriate committees with developing a series of packaged educational programs to assist chapters in reaching the required minimum of three educational meetings per years.

CLUB IMAGE-1970

The Long Range Planning Committee recommended that the projection of the general overall club image is not CMAA's responsibility. However, new emphasis should be placed on publicizing the accomplishments of individual managers and chapters, both inside and outside the industry's media.

CERTIFICATION-1970

The committee recommended to the Board that the Certification Committee lay aside its work on the Master Club Manager (MCM) and concentrate on strengthening the CCM program. It was the opinion of the Long Range Planning Committee that a written examination is essential

for the long range success of the CCM program and such an examination should be proctored by cooperating educational institutions.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS-1970

The committee suggested that entry requirements should be relaxed. A club manager should be eligible for membership immediately upon entry into the field. However, the Long Range Planning Committee felt that an assistant manager should wait one year before being eligible for membership, provided that his employer-manager is already a member of CMAA.

PUBLIC RELATIONS-1972

The Long Range Planning Committee recommends that ample funds be provided to the Public Relations Committee for preparation of an indepth Public Relations Program. Funds should be available for the addition of a qualified public relations person or to utilize the services of a good public relations firm.

OFFICE BUILDING-1972

The committee proposed that a Site Committee be established to study the feasibility of building our own office facility large enough to house an education center, office space, club, and rental space for allied associations.

DEVELOPMENT CLUBS-1973

The Long Range Planning Committee recommended that the Membership Committee investigate the new club category known as "development" clubs so that the CMAA could have a long range plan for this type of member.

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP-1973

The Long Range Planning Committee recommended to the Board of Directors that the Membership Committee be requested to consider the establishment of a student membership for those who are attending a bona fide hospitality school in order that we might interest young men in private club administration as their chosen field.

EDUCATION-1973

Recommended to the Board of Directors that CMI give consideration to:

1. a complete overhaul of the educational programs of the local chapters.
2. placing new emphasis on the continuing educational aspects of the Summer Workshop Schedule.
3. studying the educational needs of the association beyond the present Workshop Program.
4. the employment of a professional educator or consultant, as a staff member of CMAA, who would guide the association in the area of continuing education.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS-1973

Reaffirmed the need to relax the requirements of a manager's eligibility for membership.

PUBLIC RELATIONS-1973

Reaffirmed the need for a strong public relations program.

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP-1974

Reaffirmed the need to create an official student/CMAA relationship including membership and chapter organization.

EDUCATION-1974

Reaffirmed the need to upgrade the continuing educational program of the Association.

This lengthy history of Long Range Planning Committee has not been an attempt to aggrandize the committee; but was presented to illustrate some of the long range conceptual thinking, priorities, and careful examination which the Long Range Planning Committee has addressed itself to over the last decade. In addition, this historical account was presented to show some of the background, studies and results of those studies. After reviewing this historical account, it becomes clear that the major priorities of the committee have been in the

following areas:

1. isolating the factors of change that will confront the industry.
2. measuring the impact of those changes.
3. upgrading the educational activities of CMAA.
4. implementing a strong public relations program.
5. reassessing membership requirements.

The historical presentation was long, but its nature dictates that it be lengthy in order to fulfill its intended purpose.

OUTLOOK: 1976-1986

What does the future hold for our industry? What changes, trends, and developments will we encounter over the next ten years? If the next decade is anything similar to the last, our industry faces enormous challenges in the future. Unfortunately, predicting the future is no easier now, than it has been in the past.

At present, there are many conflicting signs which make it nearly impossible to foresee, even short-range, what may occur in the general economy. Never have the positive and negative factors so neatly counter-balanced each other. On the one hand, the recovery of business during the past few months, although painfully slow, has been complemented by a rise in the stock market, usually a sign of consumer confidence. But, on the other hand, higher prices for energy, housing, and food are assured. The reaction to these factors as well as continued high unemployment is very difficult to estimate.

Despite these difficulties, the Long Range Planning Committee has, after careful examination, identified some of the major trends and developments that will influence the future of the private club industry.

1. Dramatic changes in the cost, type, and consumption of food.
2. Growing scarcity of natural resources.

3. A decrease in the popularity of in-town urban living.
4. Increased disposable income and leisure time.
5. Rising labor cost and the increased use of automation.
6. Increased mobility of the club member.
7. An increase in the popularity of large condominium complexes offering recreational facilities and club type atmospheres.

By examining these trends and developments more closely, perhaps a clearer picture of the future will begin to emerge.

There will be dramatic changes in food; beef consumption will be less, while the consumption of fish and chicken will increase. There will be changes in types of protein food. The supply of food will not be as much a problem as price. Great imagination must be exercised by club managers in innovating food and atmosphere within their clubs in order to compete with restaurants. There appears to be a great trend in the food area towards serving simpler type foods, leaving behind the seven course gourmet dinner concept.

We may experience a rather critical material shortage in the future as other nations share in the world's resources.

Housing habits will change. Apartments and condominiums have become more popular while the demand for single family dwellings has decreased. The "number two" home concept is also becoming more popular.

There is obviously more disposable income now; and it appears that this trend will continue, thus providing more funds for more people to enjoy more leisure time. There will, however, be higher taxes, both from a personal level as well as a business level. Higher taxes could adversely affect clubs as this trend continues.

Demands for affluency will increase. The desire by working people to involve themselves in the service area (servitude) will decrease. Automation will increase, conceiving automatic vacuum cleaners, automatic bed makers, and other mechanical and electrical devices.

Considering the inflation experienced during the past ten years as well as the value of the dollar, the dues structure has increased very little. In many cases, they have actually declined in relation to other increases such as food, energy or housing. As mobility of the club member increases, initiation fees may well be reduced; and dues, perhaps, will be charged on a use basis.

The future appears to be bleak for city clubs. For many years clubs were generally located within the downtown community itself or in the immediate outlying areas.

It appears now, however, that clubs are moving to the outer peripheria. It appears to be coming more important for people to live a moderate distance from downtown areas. Thus enjoying more recreational opportunities, greater social contacts, even though it requires some commuting. These activity and recreation oriented clubs will grow in substantial numbers while the old line exclusive type club may well diminish.

It appears that condominium developers are interested in the financing, design, and construction of club complexes; however, they have very little interest in managing them after construction has been completed. Thus these new type developments will require many more club managers in the future. The Club Managers Association of America should become more aware of this type development and prepare its membership educationally for this newcomer in the field.

Thus these and other factors indicate some rather dramatic changes in the private club industry. There was some optimism as well as pessimism expressed.

If we are actually going to experience these dramatic changes in the concept of club life, we should certainly determine what course of action we should follow. Perhaps we do need to redefine our educational needs and perhaps confirm the need toward a broader base of educa-

tion. We also certainly need to take a stronger look at our present membership criteria and the bylaws that govern the same.

EDUCATION

In the area of education, the Long Range Planning Committee feels that a fresh new approach is needed. It is the recommendation of the Long Range Planning Committee that the continuing education program be based upon four levels. The first level being directed toward the new member. The second level to the more experienced manager, the more professional person and the third level would move into new teaching techniques and new management concepts. The fourth level is working with professional educators.

The first level instruction could utilize instruction within the field of club management along with some academic teaching assistance, perhaps in the area of team teaching--some instructors from the industry and some from the academic level.

The second level would include more instruction on progressive management technique. This secondary level would be open to all, but would concentrate primarily on the more advanced precepts. Instruction would be developed more along the current concepts of club operations.

The third level, of course, would advance beyond

this area and a broader base would include a curriculum as follows:

1. Real Estate Development.
2. Property Management.
3. Broader Base Recreational Management.
4. Land Management and Sales.
5. Building and Construction Curriculum.
6. Membership Development and Sales.
7. Banking, Finance and Investments.

The fourth level could be entitled educating the educators. Although some progress has been made in opening channels of communication and promoting genuine understanding between the club field and the education field, there is ample room for improvement and a vital need as well.

Such a concept would stimulate the growth and expansion of our educational programs and activities. Thus, CMAA would be more closely identified with the initial object of the association in providing education to persons connected with the management of clubs and other associations of similar character and to promote and encourage efficient and successful club management.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

In regard to the growth of CMAA, it is vitally important to consider present membership requirements. It is the feeling of this committee that qualifications for membership should indeed be based upon the individual rather than the nature of the club he manages. The objective, of course, is to develop some criteria for making membership requirements in CMAA more compatible to the times.

We should continue to maintain our present membership classifications including provisional, active, associate, retired, and honorary. We could, however, broaden our base on definition so that anyone involved in club management could join CMAA as a provisional member. In this category, a provisional member would receive the benefits of the Association's insurance programs, receive the various mailings sent to the membership and all other advantages except he could not vote, hold office, or hold a committee chairmanship (with possible exception at the chapter level).

Such a concept would not damage the prestige of CMAA membership. We have established a very high standard in CMAA through the certification program. A member must meet certain standards in education, experience, and association activity, plus taking an examination in

order to become a certified club manager. For a provisional member to become active he would be obligated to meet these standards.

It is the opinion of the Long Range Planning Committee that such a concept would increase membership size, enable CMAA to serve a broader base of the industry, and stimulate more interest and participation in the certification program.

The Long Range Planning Committee invites the Board of Directors to give some consideration to these suggestions. The Long Range Planning Committee feels it would be most advantageous for the Association to take some positive steps in these directions. This report and reports previously submitted by the Long Range Planning groups delineates in some measure what the future has to offer. We should not procrastinate in the area of planning. We are obligated to progress. This committee strongly feels that they should advise and make CMAA's leadership aware of the pending changes within our industry and offer encouragement for our Association to take some positive steps in order that we might successfully adapt to change.