

## EXPERTS' CORNER

**Q** What are some of the best practices for hiring club employees? Are background checks necessary?

**A** From a financial perspective, the cost of a bad hire can be considerable, from the amount of time and money spent on hiring the individual to the unnecessary disruption it can cause club operations. Putting in place the right steps to properly hire will benefit your club for years to come.

When clubs are faced with filling vacant leadership positions such as the general manager, green superintendent, golf professional, chef and chief financial officer/controller, typically a club board will appoint a Search Committee (Committee) to find the best candidate.

The Committee will keep the board apprised during the selection and hiring process. The first step for the Committee will be to discuss a range of issues, such as the duties and responsibilities for the open position and the job qualifications and pre-requisites that a candidate should possess, as well as a competitive compensation package. The next step in the process will be preparing a thorough job description incorporating all the significant items discussed.



During the hiring process a number of clubs will look to industry leaders for comparable club data, e.g., compensation/benefits, job descriptions at similar size clubs, etc. NCA provides a variety of resources on these topics, including "Earning Power" found in the Spring 2015 issue of *Club Director*, the *Club Director Reference Series* and *HR Management: Best Practices for Private Clubs*. In addition, clubs may also look to executive recruiting firms to assist in managing the process as well as generating a pool of qualified candidates that have been properly vetted prior to being presented to the Committee for consideration. Once the Committee selects a final candidate, it is important to check the prospective employee's references to confirm the individual's reliability, trustworthiness and work ethic. It is not unusual that many past employers will only confirm dates of employment. Therefore, the Committee will also typically want to conduct a background check on the candidate's criminal history and credit worthiness before making a final decision.

The background check should include a standardized consent form for candidates to sign, and the process may include such screening elements as a review of criminal record databases and confirmation of past employment and educational credentials.

The Committee uses this information to assist in assessing the applicant's risk and liability. However, over the last few years there have been a number of states that limit the timing and scope of an employer's ability to inquire into an applicant's credit history and criminal background. It is important prior to undertaking a background check to consult with legal counsel regarding any applicable state and federal laws and the required permission process.

The ultimate intention of each step in the hiring process is to find the most qualified individual who understands the club's culture and whose experience will work best in the club's environment. Establishing a Search Committee, consulting an industry specialist, and ensuring legal compliance are all prudent steps in hiring the most qualified individual.



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