

Contrarian Metrics

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Making the Numbers

I love to “do lobby.” An hour a day, meeting and greeting. Pressing the flesh. Welcoming the members, guiding the guests, saluting the mail man. Giving the love.

Important stuff. A big time job.

I’m making my numbers. Doing metrics. Non Stuff stuff that’s the stuff of clubs.

Huh???

If I was to ever apply for another club job I’d try to explain my role as The Lobby Guy and why “doing lobby” makes me The Club Guy They Want and Need. Why I’m the master of Non Stuff and Non Stuff is the Right Stuff for club managers. I can imagine the looks, the stares, the quizzical smirks I’d get from the search committee, from my head hunter friend, from the Chairman of the Ladies Auxiliary. You do Non Stuff? And you do it well?

Huh???

“That’s all well and good (guffaw), but what about The Numbers? What about the metrics of performance? What about The Numbers collected, collated and published by the nationally famous and world renown XYZ Accounting Firm? Let the front office do lobby. You’re the manager! Talk to us about Doing Club. Enough of this foolishness.” (Guffaw.)

I’d laugh, scream, cry. Don’t you get it? Don’t you see? Metrics are what I’m talking about. Non Stuff Metrics. Making the numbers. Doing Non Stuff and doing it well. The “other side” of the success equation.

And the search committee would stare at me in wide eyed silence. Where’d this guy come from?

Measuring Stuff Ain't Enough

Managers generate “stuff” every day and boards use Stuff Metrics to measure manager performance. Rounds played. Covers served. Drinks sold. Cost of sales. Man hours per cover. Managers can't “do club” without doing “stuff,” doing stuff well, and measuring how much stuff gets done in a given period of time. Stuff Metrics are the language of business.

But doing “stuff” well is not enough to Do Club Right. A good beginning, but a measure or two short of The Right Stuff for club professionals.

The Right Stuff includes intangibles, Non Stuff, the “soft side” of the business, the people side of clubs, the touchie-feelie stuff. Smiles. Laughter. Empathy. The buzz. The glow. The Love. The warm embrace. Good managers create lots of Non Stuff and they know how to measure it. Non Stuff expresses soul and soul is at the very core of the club experience.

Boards and managers want to measure soul, collect the numbers, put them on a monthly statement.

Measuring Non Stuff

How we measure is based on how we see. Each of us sees through our own set of experiences and use those experiences to create our own set of metrics. I've worked thirty years in the club business, twenty-four at The Beach Club, and I have a graduate education from the Hotel School at Cornell. I've poured drinks at The Moose Club, recovered lost children from the beach, played Santa Claus in the board room, burned steaks, swabbed floors, and explained financial statements to partners from Deloitte and Touche. I am a club guy, a small business person, a trench digger. I do Stuff and Non Stuff and have metrics for each. I learned Stuff Metrics in graduate school and Non Stuff Metrics in the trenches. It's how I see.

Cornell professors taught me Stuff Metrics in the classroom and staff taught me Non Stuff Metrics over popcorn and beer. We talked lots and talked often about measuring the hospitality experience. What's important? How can we count it, replicate it, sustain it? Hotel school professors understand that the “service world” is filled with tangibles and intangibles, that there's a need to measure both. So do employees, the trench diggers of the club world.

Trench Diggers and Professors have a lot in common when they talk metrics.

Staff and members see Stuff and Non Stuff whenever they visit. Whether consciously or not, they're auditing the culture, measuring performance, evaluating "the good" and "the bad," looking for soul. Each visitor uses their own set of criteria to measure the "people" side of the business, then they look for alignment between the Non Stuff Metrics of people and the Stuff Metrics of things. What are the numbers? What's the alignment? Is there any soul in the machine?

Each of us "sees" through our own experiential filters. We collect data. We evaluate the numbers. Tangibles and intangibles. Stuff and Non Stuff.

And we create metrics to measure the worlds we experience.

Looking for Love

Managers and staff do Stuff and Non Stuff. Both are critical to a club's success. Stuff and Non Stuff can be measured. Stuff Metrics are well known, well documented, easy to locate, easy to compare, found each month on the P. and L. Non Stuff Metrics are a voodoo science, elusive and rarely documented. Unique to each club, unique to each manager. Personalized. Contrarian Metrics.

Here are a few of mine own.

Non Stuff Metrics for Evaluating Staff:

- a. Number of waves offered by staff to members between the parking lot and the dining room.
- b. Number of hellos offered by staff to members between parking lot and locker room.
- c. Number of members greeted by name.
- d. Number of balloons blown up by the front office for children in a week.
- e. The number of children playing in the front office while the parents enjoy dinner.
- f. The number of minutes spent by the management team "Doing Lobby" in a day.
- g. The number of rides in the security golf cart given by parking lot security to member children in a week.
- h. The number of tables visited by the chef in an evening.
- i. The number of members addressed by name by the chef in an evening.
- j. The number of laugh moments between staff and members in a day.

Non Stuff Metrics for Evaluating the Manager:

- a. The number of high fives between manager and members in a day.
- b. The number of high fives between manager and children.

- c. The number of high fives between manager and staff.
- d. The number of hand written notes sent to members in a day.
- e. The number of children who call the manager by name.
- f. The number of children who the manager addresses by name.
- g. The number of members who the manager addresses by name.
- h. The number of “air kisses” given in a day.
- i. The number of new member hairstyles noticed and acknowledged by the manager in a week.
- j. The number of laugh moments between manager and staff in a day.
- k. The number of laugh moments between manager and members in a day.

Change the Metrics, Change the Culture

Club cultures that give great “stuff” and superior “non-stuff” are distinct from those that don’t. They’ve got The Combo and have long waiting lists, low employee turnover, and a joy that’s palpable in the lobby, hallways and pro shop. Call them successful clubs.

Successful clubs measure stuff and non-stuff. Often.

Want to change your club, alter the culture, get on the high road to success? Measure the Non Stuff as aggressively as the Stuff. Let the manager and staff know that the Non Stuff is being measured as closely as The Stuff. Demand to see a list of the Non Stuff being measured. Hold the service team accountable.

Measure the Non Stuff. Feel the love.

And enjoy the journey!