



GAUTENG CENTRAL ANNUAL AWARDS

PGA MANAGEMENT

Chris Bentley

Royal Johannesburg & Kensington Golf Club

I am sincerely thankful to my fellow professionals for the nomination. It is with great enthusiasm that I submit my answers/motivation for the opportunity.

1. What led you to becoming a PGA Professional?

Love for the game, people, hospitality and 'the business of golf' - been in the golf industry is more than a job to me – It's a professional passion, one where you motivate, build teams and improve people's lives, whether it be in business, friendship, membership, the board or employees. My driving force is to develop and share these values, find sustainable club solutions, whilst setting new standards and trends for the future landscape.

2. What is your current job title?

Chief Executive Officer - my responsibilities include all aspects of club management, operations, growing the game, memory creation and innovation, including strategic planning and property development.

3. How long have you been in your current position?

I have been in my current position for 7 years & 9 months.

4. What have you implemented in your position the past 18 months that has contributed to the success of your facility/golf club/business?

The past 18 months has been a rollercoaster to say the least, it has reminded us of the importance of family and good health, but also how valuable the game of golf and our wonderful industry is in our lives. The pandemic pulled back the curtain and showed our vulnerabilities. We learnt that culture determines everything, connection doesn't just happen face to face, food does more than fill an appetite and the simple act of playing golf provides a sense of normalcy in an otherwise very challenging time. Our club is a place that creates memories, history, safety, fun and friendships that stand the test of time and over this period our club has not only weathered the storms, but we are coming out stronger than before. Some of the key implementations include:



1. Accurate assumption and scenario plans, which enabled us to "be in control of our own destiny", remain focused on collaborative solutions in health & safety and the protection of the clubs balance sheet, whilst prudently managing our capital, which has ensured execution of all our economic and social responsibilities.
 2. Rightsized the business operations by 30%, to align with the reduced revenue levels over the period, this has now allowed us to efficiently scale up again.
 3. With no weddings, functions and or events, our food & beverage department's revenue was reduced significantly. One of the key initiatives was our 'curb side' home delivery service for groceries, meals, drinks and other essentials to our membership. This initiative replaced a significant amount of lost revenue over the period and now serves as a new revenue stream for the club.
 4. We successfully brought our food & beverage operation in-house and since doing so we've produced a net result of R2.5m.
 5. We tactically re engineered our property development plans and timing, which has driven significant apartment sales and the ability to fast-track various other capital improvements.
- 5. Share a minimum of 2 successes that you have achieved in your position the past 18 months.**

Retained the clubs key personnel, looked after the membership base and managed to keep both our golf courses and facilities in great condition.

Raised significant capital to assist those who are less fortunate. I.e. caddy responsibility fund.

310 new members joined the club over the past 18 months.

We achieved a break - even financial year.

We have developed an all-encompassing masterplan, including:

- "Off the grid" solutions.
- Electric & autonomous course machinery.
- Floodlit night golf on the West Course.
- Residential management rights.
- Annuity income in perpetuity.

We have recently started the construction/development of our state-of-the-art family centre (restaurant & kids club) alongside a fitness and wellness facility which is set to open in November.



To date we have avoided on site transmissions of the Covid-19 virus, attributable to strict protocols, standard operating procedures, staff training and dedicated communications.

6. Do you have any environmental or sustainability goals that you have met and would like to share?

We are fostering best practices when it comes to a sustainable, future environment. Whilst our Club is certified and regarded as highly responsible for its environmental practices on course, we are starting the process to better prepare for future legislation from government. We are on an educational journey to better understand the impact we have as consumers and conserving resources through self-sustainability and we are at a point where we are calculating what our carbon impact is as a facility and how to one day become carbon neutral.

In the short-term, we have made some swift progress, (i.e. front of house procurement, packaging etc.), and whilst we are still learning, the objective/initiative is secure a ten year performance plan for the club. Making a difference, leading on environmental matters, improving sustainability and being in control of our own destiny, which is a key driver in our masterplan.

7. Please give us a brief outline of the path you took to lead you to your current position?

After matriculating I quickly realised, I was never going to be good enough to play on tour, it was a good decision, as I still can't chip over bunkers:)

I commenced my PGA apprenticeship at Benoni Country Club in 2006, under PGA member, Bryan Prytz, and quickly developed a passion for the 'business of golf'. Thereafter, I enjoyed a memorable chapter at Serengeti Golf & Wildlife Estate from 2009 – 2013, as the Head Professional and Director of Golf, under the great leadership of Ryan Reid & Dietrich Uys.

In 2013 I was appointed as the General Manager of Royal Johannesburg & Kensington Golf Club and shortly after a business restructure at the Club, my role changed to CEO in 2014. Nearly 8 years later and "still loving every minute".

Fellow PGASA Professional | International Hotel School | Swiss University, Bachelor's Degree, (BBA Y3) | PGASA lecturer | Ambassador at Cupcakes for Kids with Cancer.

8. Why do you feel that you would be a good candidate to win this award?

I'm a proud PGA member with a passion to help others succeed, a highlight for me includes lecturing at the annual PGA apprentice residentials, inspiring the up and coming members the way numerous other PGA members did and continue to do for me. The PGA has provided the foundation to my career, from my apprenticeship to leading one of the



finest golf clubs in the country. This award would be a reflection of facing adversity and our teams' immense efforts to not only succeed through the pandemic but deliver beyond expectations and fast track our unique property development.

In my view there is no greater award than been recognized by your peers, and I would be honored.



Social media accounts:

Twitter - @CJBents (Royal_JHB_Golf)

Instagram – chris_j_bents (royal_jhb_golf)