

The Professional Golfers
Association of South Africa
P.O.Box 949
Bedfordview
Johannesburg

May 2018

Motivation: Manager of the Year

Dear Fellow Professionals,

I am humbled and sincerely thank you for the nomination.
It is with great enthusiasm that I submit a motivation for this wonderful opportunity.

I've been in the golf/hospitality industry for over a decade, of which my role as a PGA Professional was born at Benoni Country Club in retail and teaching the game of golf, this set me on a steady path into club management as the Director of Golf at Serengeti Golf Club in 2010, which was a new estate nestled in the heart of Gauteng, developing a private golf experience to the public, of which my duties included, operating and managing all golf related activities consisting of a 27 hole Jack Nicklaus signature designed course, retail, food & beverage, membership, events, finance, human resources, turf and fleet management.

Some of the many highlights included, best new course in SA, best CNBC property development, alongside the tournament planning and hosting of the 2011 & 2012 SA Open Championships. In 2010, 2011 & 2012 I was fortunate to be recognised by the Ekurhuleni Golf Union as the Golf Director of the Year. My passion as a PGA Professional has continued to grow; I've groomed my skills to align with club management and hospitality whilst still focusing on growing the game of golf and promoting the PGA brand. I've pushed myself to be well rounded for both developer and member owned facilities with a passion to inspire the up and coming professionals through lecturing at the annual apprentice residential's, club golfers improvement and holistically add as much value to the industry wherever possible.

Being a PGA Professional is more than a Job to me – It's a life, a professional passion, one where you motivate and build teams, 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 in a challenging industry while setting new trends for the future landscape.

In 2013 I was appointed as the CEO of Royal Johannesburg & Kensington Golf Club. My responsibilities include all aspects of management and operations at the club, including, strategic planning and property development. At the time the club was suffering significant losses with a backlog in capital replacement, poor operations, poor compliance and lack of proper governance. I was tasked to "turn the club around" and with the board members implement a long-term, robust and sustainable future. We started by restructuring the management team; surrounding ourselves with people of great integrity, energy and passion to deliver, while rightsizing the cost base and implementing best practices to ensure the business quickly met its operational and legal requirements.

The strategic turnaround included: a new Constitution, changing the Committee into a Board structure, developing a long term plan, while reshaping the membership model to work better in covering operating expenditure. The club now has an operating blueprint, service level agreements, a sustainable model and daily procedures that align with our vision.

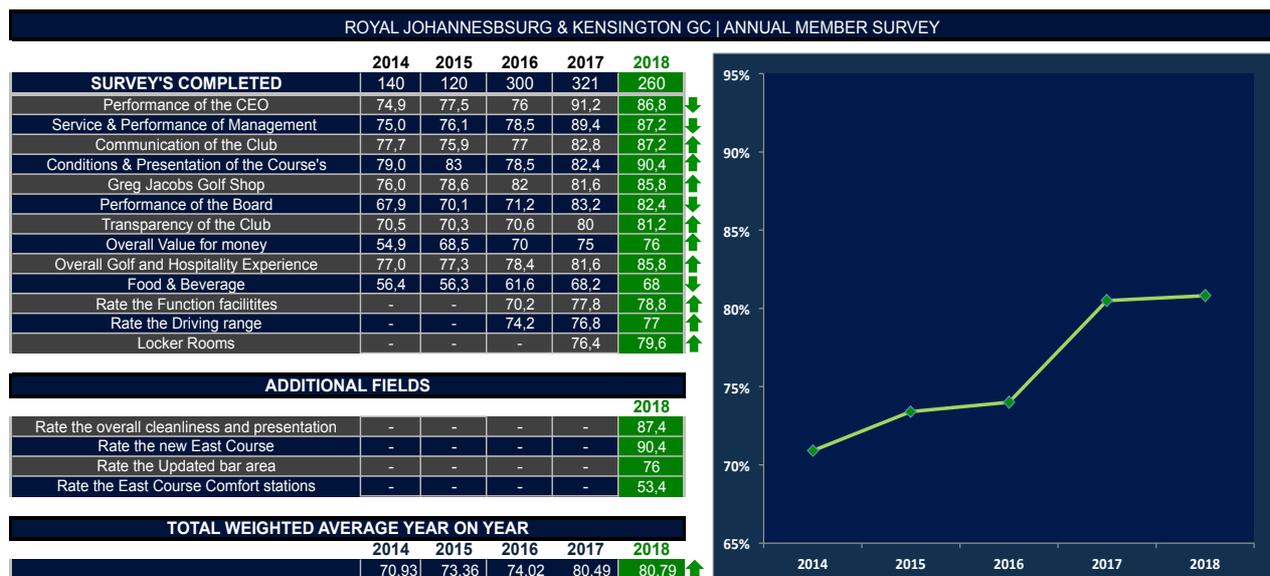
Royal has always had a large membership base, 2 wonderful parkland golf courses, The East Championship Course and the West Course, It has hosted several significant events over the years, of which I have been privileged to oversee the 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 Joburg Open Tournaments.

Despite the macro effects, we are very proud to have grown membership by over a 150 people in the past 12 months, from 1520 – 1678, even more rewarding has been the introduction of over 20 new comers into the game of golf alongside reducing the average age of the membership, this by offering a 21st century golf/hospitality experience when utilising the facilities, friendly PGA assistance at every turn, enhanced golf course quality, increased value, attention to detail, personalised service, great food and upgraded facilities, including the recently revamped East Course, which has received great praise from our Members and Industry alike, this also comes with other successful projects; upgraded locker-room, bar, restaurant, conferencing and halfway house.

Following the 6-month construction process as the Project Director of the “new” East Course it’s been satisfying to see the rise in the Golf Digest rankings alongside the current West Course, which has also improved. The “new” East has received several accolades already, including a nomination as “SA’s Best Course” by World Golf Awards and a honorable mention for delivering “Excellence” by Platinum Clubs of the World, to name a few.

“I have visited some of the Worlds Best Courses with Golf Digest, and unhesitatingly I would say with the new-look Royal is now up there with the best of them! The Club simply exudes class on and off its Courses.” Stuart Mclean

We have built a strong management team with the support of the Board, which has allowed us to achieve the medium term results we set over the past couple of years. Furthermore our membership base, which has supported and embraced the upgrades at each stage. Over the past five years we have conducted annual member surveys, to ensure we track progress, each year the results open a window into our member perceptions, satisfaction, performance and unmet needs, which plays an integral part in our priorities, I’m proud to share this data with you.



I believe true improvement, implementations and success as a PGA Professional is ultimately decided by the experience of the Patrons, Club Members & Guests we serve. Great things in business are never done by one person but a team of dedicated individuals who strive to reach the vision everyday. I'm exceptionally proud of the staff and PGA Professionals at our club on the continued improvement and consistency.

We don't plan on slowing down anytime soon as lifestyles continue to change, we continue to progress our plans, as we start with the West Course renovation in July 2018 and then focus our efforts around families and growing the game further. By 2022 our plan delivers a beautiful property development of some 430 upmarket homes through surplus land tranches on the outskirts of each course, a state of the art Boutique Spa, Fitness Centre and Kids Club, along with several other replacements and upgrades, bringing in more feet and more people to play our great game.

Our property and infrastructure plans are built to create annuity income in perpetuity for the Club. The model will increase membership, usage, facility offering and allow the Club to produce sufficient surplus funds whilst still being able to rejuvenate capital savings and most importantly it will be sustainable long into the future as a premium offering.

Additionally, whilst serving the Club and with the approval of the Board at Royal Johannesburg & Kensington Golf Club, I established my own management consulting company in 2016 called Just Pure Savvy Management (www.justpuresavvy.co.za) The drive to start this business was to push myself further, share solutions with golf clubs, operations, introductions and sustainability.

The business is flourishing but remains bespoke to not get thinly spread on deliverables. The consulting components, implementations and projects we have undertaken have been highly successful for clients such as Val de Vie Pearl Valley and Serengeti Golf Club to name a few, who have seen the difference in sustainability, planning, best practices and golfer satisfaction.

I'm an extremely proud PGA member with a passion to help others succeed. The PGA has given me the foundation to my career, from my apprenticeship to leading one of the largest Clubs in Country. I would be honored to be awarded the Manager of the year, and I thank you all for your consideration.

Yours Sincerely



Christopher Bentley
AAA PGASA Professional
Royal Johannesburg & Kensington Golf Club

"I have been travelling the world for 63 years, and during that time, seldom have I met anyone as professional as you and your team at Royal Johannesburg & Kensington Golf Club. I congratulate you on all the improvements you have made and continue to undertake"
Gary Player



May 2018

Dear PGA Professionals,

I am grateful for you considering Chris's nomination for Manager of the Year. It demonstrates the recognition of his exceptional contribution not only to Royal Johannesburg and Kensington Golf Club, but also within the Golf Industry as a whole.

I met and started working with Chris in 2013 when I joined the, then Committee, In the years since I have been a member of that Committee and Board and am currently Chairman of the Club. After many years of business experience at Executive and Board level I retired some time ago, allowing me the time to dedicate to RJKGC and my golf handicap improvement.

Chris was appointed as CEO of RJKGC at a time where the Club was in need of considerable effort to regain its position as a leading Johannesburg Club, capable of delivering satisfaction and a top golf experience to its members and guests whilst yet ensuring financial stability, proper business, industry operating procedures, standards and returning to sound HR practices. 5 years on, Chris has proven to be an excellent and effective leader and with the changes to and appointment of a sound management team has led to the acceptance of the changes by the membership, the development and implementation of our long term plan. Managing a club like RJKGC is no easy task, a large membership and two courses of which Chris now enjoys a high degree of respect by members and staff having proven his worth many times over. All of this is currently evidenced by changed attitudes within the Club members and the considerable improvement in results shown in all aspects over the years.

He has developed a strong communication platform and our members must rank among the best informed of any in the country. It is a pleasure to work with Chris. He is dynamic and demonstrates a sound knowledge of the golf industry, both domestic and international, together with a practical ability to implement those aspects that could benefit RJKGC. His passion and knowledge to keep growing the game of golf as a Manager & PGA Professional is highly commendable, having increased membership in the club by 10% in the past year. Royal has supported the creation of Chris's Management Company, which has not only benefited us but other clubs in the around the country. An aspect that needs comment is that I believe a large part of Chris's success stems from his extremely high standards, attention to detail and absolute integrity. He is a straight talker and Club Members, Staff and Everyone dealing with him are all very clear on where they stand. His work ethic is impeccable, he leads by example and his continued desire to learn and improve across all aspects of the golf business is highly admirable.

Sincerely,

Alan Field
Chairman