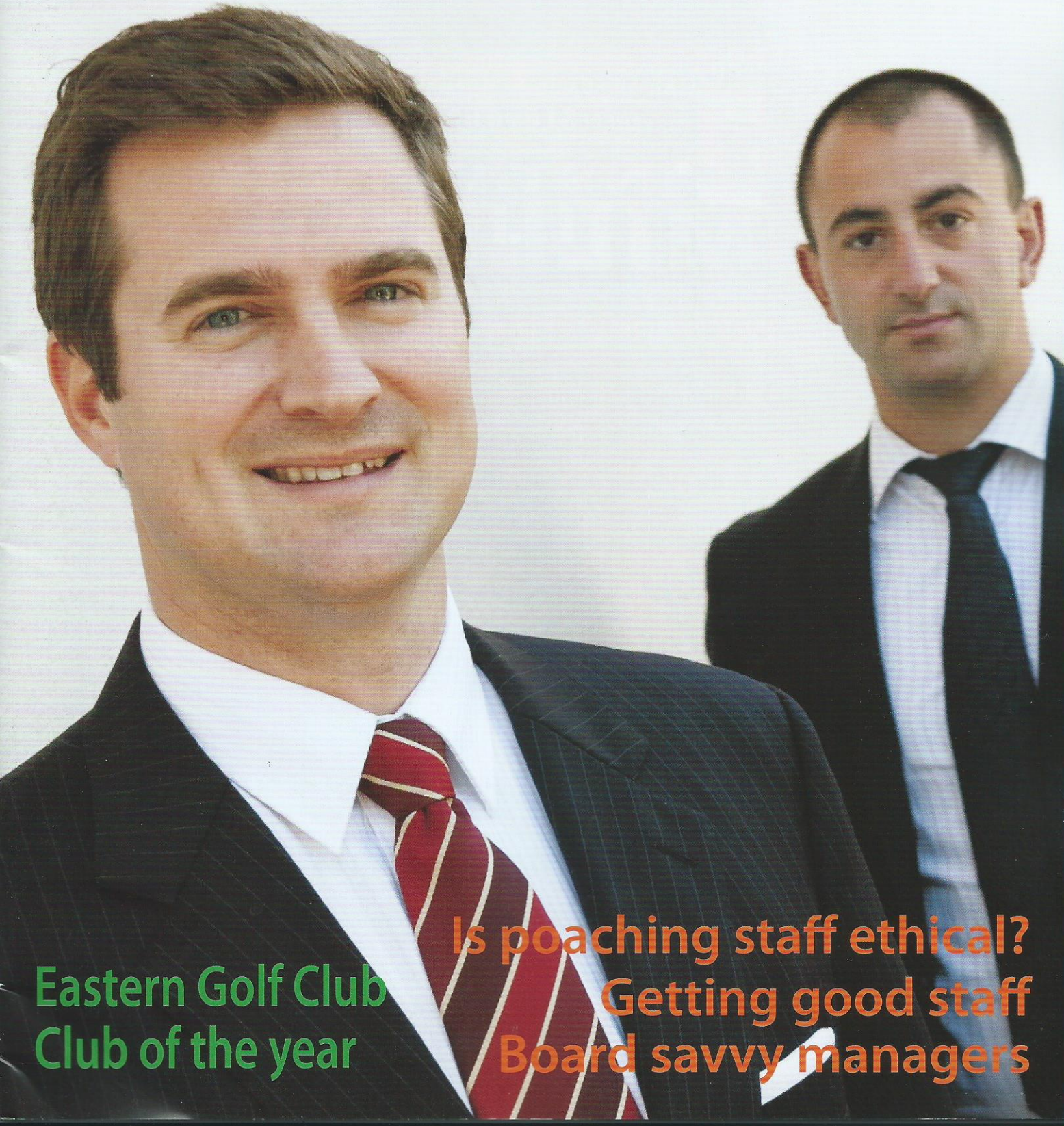


# The People Issue



Eastern Golf Club  
Club of the year

Is poaching staff ethical?  
Getting good staff  
Board savvy managers

# What Does Being a Board Savvy

## Club Manager Mean to You?

By Steven Bowman

- Does it mean understanding what the Board requires from you and your staff?
- Is it about providing information to the Board in a manner you know they can receive?
- Is it about how to keep the Board strategic and out of your back pocket?
- Is it about navigating the unknown personal agendas of Board members so you keep your job?
- Is it all of these and many more?

**B**elow are the eight attributes of a Board Savvy Club Manager that we have found to make a difference. Are there any of these areas you may need to tighten up?

1. A deep understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Board. A Board Savvy Club Manager will steer the Board to ensure that all responsibilities of the Board are carried out. You need to be up to date with the latest Governance and strategic thinking techniques, constantly review the work of the Board to ensure that the Board is truly adding value, and work very closely with the Club President and the Board members to keep focused on all the responsibilities of the Board. Subscribing to relevant professional governance organizations, reading extensively and participating in governance forums all contribute to a Board Savvy Club Manager.
2. Awareness of the skills and aspirations of each Board member. A Board Savvy Club Manager will be aware of the skills of each of the Board members, both formal (education, work related etc) and their informal, personal skills. Often Board members have untapped skill sets, and the Board Savvy Club Manager will understand and make use of these. Each Board member will have different aspirations regarding their term as a Board member, and the Board Savvy Club Manager will have discussions with each Board member regarding these aspirations and work with the Chair to meet or to manage these aspirations.
3. Strong working relationship with the Club President. A Board Savvy Club Manager will forge a strong, robust relationship with each Chair of the Board. Before the Chair formally takes their position, have a discussion about how it would best work for both of you. The Board Savvy Club Manager will facilitate the Chair to perceive the responsibilities and possibilities of the Chair position, and will create a clear set of expectations between the CEO and Chair position. The Board Savvy Club Manager will brief the President on any potential surprises and issues in the Board agenda of each Board meeting, prior to the meeting, and work with the President to develop processes for Board and Club Manager succession planning, performance



management, and evaluation. Click here for a more detailed article on how the Club President and Club Manager can work together productively.

4. A conscious working relationship with the Board. A Board Savvy Club Manager will develop a strong working relationship with the Board as a collective entity. This means have robust performance evaluation measures in place, both for the Club Manager and the Board, continually refining the information that the Board receives and monitoring if that information is providing what the Board needs, and developing relevant mechanisms to show that the Board can trust the Club Manager, as that trust is constantly tested and independently verified.
5. Strong performance management system in place for themselves. A Board Savvy Club Manager will ensure that there is a robust performance management system in place for themselves, and will continuously monitor the perception of the Board regarding achievement against these performance measures.
6. Champion of Board evaluation. A Board Savvy Club Manager will champion the notion of regular Board performance evaluation. This performance evaluation will ensure that the Board reinvigorates itself when required, that succession planning is more formal, taking into account changing needs of the organization, and will further increase the professionalism and value of the Board.
7. Ensuring that Board professional development meets the needs of the Board. A Board Savvy Club Manager will develop a regular Board professional development program that meets the aspirations and needs of the Board members individually and collectively. Develop guest speaker sessions to support the Board. This might include presentations from other Club Manager's of like Clubs, organizations, funding bodies, academics etc.
8. Focusing the Board strategically, whilst keeping them aware of the operational components. A Board Savvy Club Manager will focus the Board strategically whilst keeping them informed of the key operational aspects of the organization. Reports to the Board will provide strategic options, not the answer. Strategic questions will be posed by the Club Manager, not the Club Manager trying to ramrod a decision through the Board. The Board Savvy Club Manager will create a culture of strategic awareness within the Board, not rubber-stamping. cC

*Steve Bowman is a specialist in helping Boards maximise their potential and can help clubs improve their governance processes.*

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