

Employment Reference Guide

Introduction

As the golf season closes, offseason employment changes will undoubtedly begin to take place. With this in mind, the Employment Committee has put together an employment quick reference guide to aid Section Professionals find, interview and obtain new positions. We want to help our section brothers and sisters find and get the positions they want and need.

This is by no means an all-inclusive guide – this is meant to provide some basics for our Professionals to view and hopefully spark further research (resources are readily available via the internet including on pga.org under the employment section). Inside this packet you will find ideas on how to: find open positions, create resumes, and prepare for interviews. Most importantly, included at the end of this document are profiles of successful Wisconsin Section Professionals who have shared their career road maps and career building advice. These individuals would be able to mentor anyone in need of some guidance.

Current State of Employment

One of the most important and often most challenging aspect of landing a new position is finding out exactly what jobs are open and hiring. If you're not "in the know", your dream job may open up and become filled without you ever knowing it was available. Finding out what's open isn't the most simple of tasks, but there are resources and places to search. These include (but not limited to):

- **CareerLinks:** This service is offered through PGA.org and will match current job postings to your CareerLinks Profile. This is an invaluable tool for job seekers as you will receive email postings of the jobs that match your qualifications. For those looking for new positions, it is strongly encouraged that you fill out the profile and become part of CareerLinks.
- **Management Company Websites:** Many of the large golf industry management companies will have a "Careers" tab on their home pages. This page will list positions available at many or all of their properties. Normally, they will ask you to create a profile and attach a resume. These sites include: ClubCorp, OBSports.com, Troon, TPC, and Kemper Sports Management
- **Head Hunter/Job Placement Companies:** Another option to find employment is to work through a Head Hunter or Job Placement Company. Head Hunters will gather your information and experience and actively promote you to potential facilities. There is usually a cost (most times paid by the hiring company). A group that fits this category is Kopplin & Kuebler. You can register with them and then as companies contact them, they will reach out to you with the information.
- **Internet Job Posting Sites:** Available to anyone via the internet, you can search for jobs/positions through website job postings. These might include Indeed, Monster, Hcareers, etc. Sometimes these do not offer the best options (as not all golf facilities use them), but they can be worth checking.
- **Networking:** One of the best ways to find open positions is through networking with your fellow golf professionals. Day in and day out, we all interact with guests and members who have knowledge of other facilities and jobs that might be available. By creating and expanding your own network, you may be able to learn of open jobs that haven't been posted or aren't planned to be posted.

PGA Career Consultant

The greatest ally in your job search is our Regional PGA Career Consultant. The Career Consultant can help you by:

- Evaluating your Resume and Cover Letter

- Help Your Search for the Proper Position
- Offer Advice in Prepping for Interviews
- Offer Career Counseling

The PGA Career Consultants are true occupational professionals whose focus is to help you find the best possible employment for your skill set. Our PGA Career Consultant for the Wisconsin Section is Tim Marks. Mr. Marks is an extremely talented and well respected professional. As you begin any job search, it is highly recommended that you consult with him. His contact information is: tmarks@pgahq.com or (269) 221-6009.

Cover Letter, Résumé, & References

Obtaining an interview for an open position is no easy task. For popular and in demand positions, employers may receive dozens to hundreds of interested candidates. So the question becomes, how do you get selected for an interview? The answer is - with a professional, well written, and relevant résumé and cover letter. Make sure you use quality paper, check for grammar and spelling mistakes, and put them together in a nice folder or binder. If this is truly a job you want, put effort and class into your materials – show the employer the position is important to you.

Your cover letter is the best way to introduce yourself to a potential employer. Your cover letter should briefly describe you and your skill set and how they match the needs of the employer. You are describing why you will be the best candidate and how you can help the employer's facility become better at what they do. Be professional – use Mr./Ms./Miss – and keep the letter to one page.

Your résumé is going to highlight the experiences, education, skills, and knowledge that you bring to the table. Résumé formats can vary but make sure that skills you have that directly relate to the open position are emphasized and easy to understand. If you are applying for a teaching professional position, you will want to emphasize the lessons you have done, clinics you have run, your teaching methods, teaching instruction you have received and so forth. Always be truthful, but make sure the employer knows why you think you are the best candidate for the job. Make sure you proofread your résumé (and have someone else proofread it as well) and make it look nice/professional. It is strongly recommended that you have a PGA Career Consultant look over your résumé prior to sending it (they can help you immensely!).

When it comes to references, have 3-5 individuals who would be willing to speak on your behalf about employment. Have personal and business references. Make sure these individuals will be able to speak to your character and skills. Make sure to inform these individuals when you do apply somewhere (so they know a call might be coming). Your reference page should be one page with names, titles, and contact information.

Interviewing Basics

Once your cover letter and résumé get you an interview, you have to be ready for it. There are a lot of interview prep materials available (web, books, etc.), but here are some basics to remember.

- Punctuality: Be on time for your interview – and by “on time”, we mean early (at least 15 minutes). Know where you are going. Know where you are supposed to meet. This is going to be your chance to impress your future boss – being late doesn't impress anyone.
- Dress: Wear professional clothing. Suit coat and tie (for men), business professional attire for ladies. Dress like the position is important to you. Interview day will be the best look your employer ever sees from you – impress them!
- Word Choice: When answering questions, think about what you are saying. Don't ramble and don't use foul language. What you say and how you say it will define who you are to your future employer.

- Be prepared to highlight and stress what you can offer a facility from a revenue generation standpoint (increasing rounds, increasing memberships, etc.). Be ready to create a presentation to highlight your ideas and assets.
- Remember and Use Proper Names: Addressing someone by name (Mr. Johnson or Mrs. Jones) represents a level of respect and professionalism. How you treat the interviewer should represent how you will carry yourself to the membership or guests or clients, etc.
- Remember to Breathe: It is only natural to be nervous. Employers will expect you to be nervous. Take a deep breath and answer the questions to the best of your ability.
- Prepare Questions to Ask: Every employer will ask if you have any questions. Always prepare a couple questions. If you don't, it will seem like you do not care about the position or are ill prepared for the interview.
- Say Thank You: Make sure to say "Thank you" to the interviewer for the opportunity to interview even if nothing materializes out of the interview. May sure to send a Thank You Note after the interview thanking the interviewer for their time and the opportunity.

In addition to the basics above, there are certain interview questions that you should always be ready for and able to answer. These would include, but not limited to:

- Tell me/us about yourself? (Be professional and relevant with your answer...don't ramble)
- How will you help increase revenues?
- How will you increase membership?
- What does customer service mean to you?
- Why do you want this position?
- What is your greatest strength?
- What is your greatest weakness? (Make sure to explain how you are minimizing your weakness and how you plan to turn it into a strength)
- How do you manage people?
- Describe the toughest situation you have been involved in and how you handled it?
- May we contact your present employer?
- If you were hired, when could you start?

Conclusion

Hopefully you find the materials contained in this packet to be helpful. Again, this is not an all-inclusive step by step "how to" manual. This is meant to get you headed in the right direction. Utilize resources, research the web (PGA.org is great), talk to a PGA Career Consultant, or talk to your fellow golf professionals – help is all around, you just need to reach out. Good luck in your job search!

Section Mentors

On the next few pages, the career biographies of several successful PGA Professionals will be detailed. Each of these individuals has risen to the highest levels in their respective industries. The biographies are provided to help others figure out their own career roadmap – how they can become the best golf professional they can be. Each of these individuals has provided contact information and is more than willing to offer advice and wisdom. Please take them up on the offer!

Aaron Buesing
PGA Member since 2004
Classification: A-20

I had known I wanted to be in the golf business as early as high school and started my career as most of us do, working at a golf course growing up. When asked to share my story about how my career has lead me to where I am and how I moved up in the industry, my first reaction when thinking back on things is that I have been very lucky. I was in the right place at the right time, working as an Assistant Professional at Bristlecone Pines GC, when the Head Professional at the time had to leave the position. I was promoted to my first Head Professional position at that time. I held that position for 3 years when, for personal reasons, I decided to make a career change and look at the expanded career paths within the industry.

Again, I was very lucky that a member at the club owned Prestwick Golf Group and I moved into a sales role at that company. From there, I have grown within the company taking on higher and higher positions to get to where I am today which is overseeing a large portion of the company.

When I thought back on these moments more closely, luck certainly had a lot to do with it, but, more than that, good networking had more to do with it. If there is anything that I would offer as advice to people just getting into the industry, this would be it. You need to spend as much time as possible networking and getting to know people. This includes people within the industry as well as people at your respective club. All of my good breaks came as a result of knowing people and maintaining these relationships. I can even remember back to my days in high school, when I knew I wanted to be in this industry, where I was doing this. I made a sincere effort to always introduce myself to other Professionals and let them know I was going to get into the industry. I did the same in college and never stopped.

Our community of Professionals and the associated business's that are connected to them is very close knit. No matter where you are currently, you are not very far from making a connection with some of the most influential people in the game. Also, Professionals want to help and advance the careers of people getting into the industry. If you work hard, people will notice you. If you network well, you will be noticed by many.

As for me, the expanded career paths have been a great option. But, it is not for everyone. I spend much less time playing golf and working with others on their games and I miss that. However, my position in Sales has allowed me to work with some very influential people worldwide which has been awesome. Everyone needs to find out what career path is best for them, network well, and work hard. If they do that, their career aspirations will certainly come to fruition.

If desired, people can always reach out to me for any other information at abusing@prestwick-group.com or at 414-793-7447.

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My thoughts on how to navigate through a PGA apprenticeship. These are in no particular order...

#1 – Commit to the profession – Understand the decision to become a PGA Professional doesn't come without strings. You agree to work weekends and holidays which is opposite of your friends. You agree to work 60+ hours per week with little time off during the summer. You agree to dedicate time and resources towards the PGA PGM program and advance quickly and efficiently. You agree to make relatively little money during the apprentice period.

The upside – if you stay committed you will have a real opportunity to make a good living and support a family. You will be looked upon as a leader in the club/community. You will have neat experiences – meet/golf with famous people, entertain business leaders – have face time during a round of golf, get to intimately know members and or guests by the relationships you form – and to be among the first to celebrate their wins and confide in any loss.

#2 – Work for the best – My recommendation is to work at the best facility you can – even if that means going backwards in position. By working for the top facilities in the country adds immediate credibility to your resume. Make your employment history “jump off the page”. Generally speaking, working for these facilities will expose you to best practices of the best golf professionals.

#3 – Hop onto coat tails – Find a mentor that is willing to show you the ropes. This may require you to spend even more time away from home and off the clock. Ask for regular appointments with the mentor (or as much as the mentor has time for) and stick to the schedule. Reconfirm the appointments the day before and come prepared with an agenda of items you wish to learn, i.e. how to code invoices, how the merchandise operation works, management/leadership philosophies, teaching philosophies, budgets, etc. Your relationship should provide you opportunities at either his/her facility or at least a strong reference.

#4 – dress for success – By dressing the part people take you more seriously. Not unlike a police officer or doctor, what you wear separates you from the crowd. By ironing your clothes and keeping your shoes shined shows that you are a neat and organized person. You will be taken more seriously.

#5 – Volunteer to cover shifts – While playing golf is an important part of being a golf professional, it will play less and less a role as you progress in the business. By offering to stay longer and cover the shop during a tournament that ran over or to help pick up a shift because someone was sick will show your commitment to the club and your career.

#6 – Ask your boss if he/she needs help – After you've finished your daily duties, ask your HP/Director of Golf if there is anything else you can do to help. This will likely result in a smile and a “thank you” and again sends the message that you are committed to the operation and will at some point result in an assignment that will be beneficial to your career.

#7 – Be reliable – When you are asked to do something...do it. And if you have questions on how to do it...then ask. Don't be afraid to share your thoughts on the project. Making

suggestions or giving your thought shows that you are interested in the task. Taking care of tasks on a timely basis and with good information is invaluable to your boss.

#8 – Do your homework before an interview – Find out as much information as possible about the hiring committee. Use this to position yourself ahead of the competition.

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Like a lot of people I had no idea what I wanted to do when I graduated from college. My golf instructor suggested I turn professional and get a job as an assistant professional. His logic was that if I didn't enjoy the golf business, I most likely would meet someone that may help me transition into a business career.

I spent four years as an assistant professional and earned my PGA membership. One of my duties as an assistant was to conduct the junior tournaments for the Milwaukee County Parks. I also played in most of the section tournaments during that time as I liked to compete. Before and after my round I would often find myself assisting the section staff with scoring. I found that conducting events was one of the most rewarding aspects of my position and involved myself in that role whenever possible. I was asked to assist the section with conducting the Las Vegas Program when the WPGA Tournament Director couldn't attend.

When the Tournament Director decided that she was not going to return the following season, the Executive Director contacted me to ask if I was interested in the position. Had I not volunteered at so many events, he would not have contacted me about the position. After a brief interview I accepted the position. Less than one year later the Executive Director of the WPGA resigned. The board of directors initially offered the position to a candidate that turned down the position. At that time, they decided to open the position for resumes and I applied. I wasn't sure I had a real chance to earn the position but new it was worth trying. Luckily for me, the WPGA hired me and I have been fortunate to hold the position for the past 21 years.

Jim Richerson, PGA
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My father started me playing golf when I was 7 years old. Like many of us I joined my local club's junior program in the summers and enjoyed playing and enjoyed spending time at the course with my father. This later grew into a passion for the game and I participated in many local junior tournaments and later played golf in high school and college.

While in college I spent my summers working at a resort called Tan-Tar-A in the Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri. The resort was managed by Marriott hotels and they talked to me about making golf a career and working for the company full time. During those years I had never even imagined making golf a career. I didn't realize all the various areas of the business. Operations, teaching, tournaments, sales, administration, etc...

After doing some research on the Marriott Corporation, I learned that they had great training programs, believed in promoting from within the organization and were in an expansion mode and were targeting to open several new resorts in the 1990's. I then received a great piece of advice from the Head Golf Professional at Tan-Tar-A, Bill Nault, who is now the Vice President of Operations for Marriott & Ritz-Carlton Golf. Who encouraged me to learn all that I could, every area of the operations and industry, take on additional responsibility and always keep my eyes open for new opportunities.

I decided to take the job with Marriott and was hired and transferred to their Camelback Resort location in Scottsdale, Arizona. Then taking Bill Nault's advice, I moved around the country with Marriott and Ritz-Carlton hotels and gained experience in Resort, Public and Private golf operations. Starting as an entry level assistant professional and working my way up to 1st Assistant, Head Golf Professional, Director of Golf and eventually as a General Manager. The experience and knowledge I accumulated helped me then acquire a position as the Senior Director of Properties with the PGA of America overseeing the operations at Valhalla in Louisville, KY and the facilities at the PGA Golf Club in Port St. Lucie, Florida. Which eventually led me to the position I've held since 2007 as the General Manager & Group Director of Golf for Kohler Co. at Whistling Straits and Blackwolf Run.

At the same time my job with Kohler has given me the ability to become more involved with the PGA of America and the governance process. Where I currently hold the position as the Secretary of the WI PGA Section as well as the role of District 6 Director representing the members of the WI, IL and IN sections on the National Board of Directors. And currently Chair the National Properties Committee and sit on the National Budget Committee and National Finance Committee.

The large operations at Whistling Straits & Blackwolf Run along with my involvement with the PGA of America keeps me busy but allows me the opportunity to continue to learn, gain knowledge and grow as a golf professional. Learning and gaining new or additional knowledge from the many PGA Professionals I've met and worked with from throughout the country has been the best and most rewarding part of my job. I hope that I can share some of my knowledge that may be able to help someone else along the way.

Vince Pulizzano
Head Golf Professional
Westmoor Country Club
Brookfield, Wisconsin

Completing his second year as Head Golf Professional of Westmoor Country Club, Vince previously served as the Head Golf Professional at Hamilton Farm Golf Club located in Gladstone, NJ. Prior to working in New Jersey, he was the First Assistant at Conway Farms Golf Club in Lake Forest, IL. Vince is a graduate of Ferris State University where he earned a BS degree in Marketing and Professional Golf Management. Vince has been a Class A PGA member since 2005.

Vince's philosophies in the golf business are focused on customer service and mentoring Assistant Golf Professionals. Ensuring the golf staff at Westmoor Country club exceeds the expected service standards of each member, guest and patron. Encouraging his Assistant Golf Professionals and others from around the country, Vince has been fortunate to advance the career positions of several young Professionals.

Contact Information

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Ryan Wieme
Head Golf Professional
University Ridge Golf Course

Golf has been a lifelong interest that turned into a career immediately after graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. My early love of the game drove me into interests related to golf course design, competitive golf, and "summer" employment at a local municipal golf course in my hometown of Rochester, MN. It wasn't until I started working at University Ridge in 1999, that I began to consider a career as a golf professional.

Today, my job is not easy to describe so instead I'll list my core responsibilities.

- Head and only buyer for a golf shop that sells over \$500k in sales per year.
- Lead instructor, 300+ hours personally, 450 hours from Assistant staff
- Marketing; email, overall message and facility image

I love to stay busy. "What's next.", is my theme song. I'm always looking to keep our facility on the right path with my employer's interest in mind. To me, being a golf professional is defined by the facility or business with which one is employed. Representing the University of Wisconsin-Madison is my #1 responsibility and every decision I make follows in line with the UW mission. The three main reasons that I've stayed put for the past seventeen years is #1 The job changes with the season. #2 I'm always busy. #3 I truly love the University that I work for.

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