



Renovating Your Club: How and When a Redesign Project is Most Effective

By Tom Hoch

It's a club's worst nightmare -- losing members and revenue due to under-utilized spaces that occupy prime locations, and loss leaders that continue to eat profits. Meanwhile, operators and owners find themselves searching for immediate solutions that might help turn the tide.

For owners and operators buried in day-to-day operations, a change in the built environment doesn't usually present itself as an option. However, a well-designed club renovation can boost the bottom line by transforming loss leaders into valuable revenue-producing centers, increasing membership and restoring the morale of existing members, guests and daily fee golfers.

A remodeling project is an investment in a club's future. It sends a message to membership that the club is interested in growth and development, while creating a measurable ROI. A new appearance for the golf shop, a revamped dining experience, or the addition of a new spa are enhancements that can be the difference between member retention and attrition.

Signs it's Time for a Makeover

Leading indicators that a club is in need of a makeover include visible signs such as dated interior, furniture and finishes and aging equipment, such as HVAC systems, plumbing and kitchen appliances. If an interior finish is more than five years old, it may be time to consider an upgrade. If it is beyond seven years (the hotel industry standard), upgrading may be imperative, as mold and other allergens can emerge as health issues.

Other less obvious indicators, however, can be "silent revenue killers" that pass unnoticed. For example, rooms and entire wings that are unoccupied and seldom used not only create an unnecessary operational and maintenance expense, but also drain energy from the club and take up valuable space that may be used in more effective ways.

Revenue-Based Design

Instead of being revenue-negative or neutral, a club's operations can and should be revenue-positive. A revenue-based, interior design model factors in aesthetic elements, while balancing the operational needs and financial goals of a club with the overall experience and emotional connection members and guests make with the space. For instance, if there is a dining room that seats 80 people, what are the revenue projections for the space? If an addition is considered, what is the revenue impact of adding seats? Combining the financial model with the design ensures the facility's success as a revenue-enhancing space.

Space planning is an “inside-out” (interior design based) design approach toward developing the best arrangement, scale, and proportion for a club’s interior spaces. Proper space planning plays a large role in whether a clubhouse will drive or drag revenue opportunities. It also carefully considers the human element of how each interior space is intended to serve and engage a club’s customer.

Experienced based, space planning by a qualified interior designer brings clubhouse design teams invaluable solutions to properly organize and size interior spaces, thus maximizing operational efficiencies and creating more opportunities for customer enjoyment. It also does more with less square footage. Basically it’s where inside-out design (interior design based) meets outside-in design (architectural based). It has to happen early in the design process to be effective and beneficial to the clubhouse design endeavor.

Timing is Everything

While actual golf course renovations are often long, drawn out processes, clubhouse renovations can provide a club or course with a quick shot of life that will energize membership and daily fee golfers. With a majority of courses in the Upper Midwest having a true off-season, renovations can take place while the course is closed during the winter. By the time golfers return in the spring, they’ll be walking into an upgraded facility.

Tom Hoch is the President of Tom Hoch, a leading design-build firm based in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Founded in 1963 by his parents Tom (senior) and Joanne Hoch, Tom Hoch specializes in club, resort, hotel, restaurant and recreational spaces. Tom Hoch has revolutionized the category via its “revenue-based design” model, a space planning, sizing and mapping process for retail-driven spaces such as golf shops and food- and-beverage operations. www.tomhoch.com.