

# KOPPLIN KUEBLER & WALLACE

THE MOST TRUSTED NAME IN EXECUTIVE SEARCH AND CONSULTING

## GENERAL MANAGER POSITION PROFILE:

**KENT COUNTRY CLUB**

**GRAND RAPIDS, MI**

### GENERAL MANAGER AT KENT COUNTRY CLUB

The General Manager (GM) role at Kent Country Club is an opportunity to be part of club going through a significant strategic planning process to assure itself of a vibrant, successful future. Moving back to a true GM Model-led club operation, while at the same time working on a master facilities plan to ensure much desired amenities will continue to meet the expectations of the next generation of members will be a significant part of the new GM's focus. The Club, though the oldest in the state of Michigan, is poised for a great future with an outstanding Donald Ross golf course, convenient location, and a team and membership ready to continue its position as one of the top clubs in the State. The new GM will find an energized team, a supportive membership and an opportunity to make an immediate positive impact at a Club located in a growing, highly desirable community with great schools, easy access to arts and multi-recreational venues, in a very family-oriented community with a vibrant economy and solid business base. The Greater Grand Rapids area is the fastest growing community in the State of Michigan since 2010.

[Click here to view a brief video about this opportunity.](#)

### KENT COUNTRY CLUB

One of the oldest clubs in the United States and *THE* oldest in Michigan, Kent Country Club dates back to 1896 when successful Grand Rapids businessman Edward Lowe invited his brother, Rowland, and ten friends to dinner to tell them about a wonderful game he had played in England. These gentleman formed the original nine-hole Grand Rapids Golf Club. About 15 years later, the Golf Club moved to its current location where the founders successfully introduced golf to West Michigan. They took pride in having a challenging Donald Ross course, built a fine clubhouse and hosted the best players in the nation, counting among its members the 38<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. But that was merely the beginning...today, over 120 years later, the rich traditions and members' commitment to the Club continues.

With a unique location just minutes from downtown Grand Rapids, Kent Country Club offers a location that is simply unparalleled in the heart of the city. With years of culture and camaraderie as well as a history of tradition and excellence, Kent Country Club has evolved into a sanctuary for generations of families who appreciate and value what Kent represents. Today, the Club's membership, often referred to as "The Kent Family," treasures family fun surrounding almost any occasion. Kent Country Club has become a "*home away from home*" for its members.

Offering members, a true Donald Ross designed 18 holes of golf, playing Kent is a truly unique and prestigious experience. Additional family friendly amenities include the pool area that offers adult lap swim, Junior Swim Team competitions, and poolside service, plus a children's playground area and a zero-entry swimming pool. A year-round racquets facility provides competitive or casual tennis, paddle or pickleball in addition to a full-service pro shop plus a fitness area that is available to members 24/7 with a variety of equipment options, including free weights and assorted machines.

This exceptionally family-friendly club offers junior programs throughout summer, a Kid's Club center as well a family-friendly dining and events.

## **KENT COUNTRY CLUB BY THE NUMBERS**

- 18,000 Annual rounds of golf
- Initiation Fee \$3,000 for Full Golf
- Annual dues approximately \$8,900 for Full Golf
- 385 Members, all categories
- \$4.35M Gross volume
- \$2.28M Annual dues volume
- \$862,000 COVID-era F&B volume, 69% a la carte / 31% catering
- 25 Full Time Employees; 63 seasonal
- Club is a 501(c)(7) organization
- 9 total Board members each serving three-year terms.
- The Club uses ClubEssential POS and accounting software
- At present, the Club has a \$50-\$75 monthly capital charge, depending on member category

**KENT COUNTRY CLUB WEB SITE:** [www.kentcountryclub.com](http://www.kentcountryclub.com)

## **GENERAL MANAGER POSITION**

The General Manager (GM) will have full responsibility for all aspects of operations at Kent Country Club (KCC), effectively managing all resources and reporting to the Board of Directors through the President and is expected to be the embodiment of an “exceptional member-centric experience.” The GM will lead the management team, several of whom have many years of tenure at the Club, be representative of modern management ‘metric-oriented’ practices, and indirectly supervise all employees of the Club while intuitively promoting a positive, engaging, collaborative and highly competent service culture in all operations. Without a GM for the past ten years, some operations have become a bit “siload”, and the new GM will be charged with creating a seamless experience throughout all Kent operations.

He/she is expected to be an interactive “thought partner” with the Board and Committees, working closely with both groups to collectively make decisions and set strategic direction for the long-term well-being of the membership. Although it hasn't historically, KCC has a large number of new, younger members with families and the balance of tradition with relevance to today's member needs and expectations is a critical success factor. Supporting and effectively working with a reasonably small number of committees, who are an important part of KCC's long history and success, is a necessary and important skill set.

As noted above, the Club is transitioning back to a general management concept-led operation, which has not been in place since around the time of the recession in 2009. While fully supported by the Board, continued focus of the new GM will be to ensure that the membership, volunteer leaders and senior staff are more fully aware of clearly defined roles and responsibilities of each contributor to the Club's overall success. Being the ultimate catalyst for “energizing” all aspects of the Club and maintaining the strong positive momentum the Club currently has are important to the new GM's success.

## **INITIAL PRIORITIES OF THE NEW GENERAL MANAGER**

- Listen and observe, a lot, while “learning and assessing” the operation.
- Get to know members and staff as quickly as possible, engaging them in a naturally sincere and enthusiastic manner. Creating a series of focus group sessions with members to more quickly get to know them, their views of the Club and what it does well and needs to enhance will be necessary in the first many months in the role.
- Work closely with the Board, Committees, and senior management staff to ensure a full and complete understanding of KCC, its history, culture, and traditions before making any significant changes.

- Focus on the Food and Beverage operation, recognizing that it is the ‘heart’ of the KCC experience, and its consistent delivery and execution of a positive, well-regarded product is a critical success factor.
- Understand the financial model, its history for implementation and need for adherence by all departments/managers, and clearly understanding how KCC makes and achieves financial projections.
- Focus on the key elements to long-term success at KCC --- membership engagement, membership recruitment/retention, and building a staff culture of efficient, effective service. Additionally, a strong focus on details of operational presentation of member areas is critical.
- Conduct a full and complete evaluation of the organizational chart and return to the Board within 60 days a ‘State of the Club’ report with executable and soundly backed recommendations.
- Work with the Board to establish and memorialize the roles and responsibilities matrix, as well as the creation of a performance management system that identifies clear goals, objectives and accountabilities to success outcomes.
- Establish an immediate ‘trust’ with the Board so as to be able to become a true ‘thought partner’ with them, ultimately being able to push them for actionable decisions, provide them with industry validated recommendations and establish yourself as a true “leader” in the clubhouse. As part of this effort, a strong focus and plan for increased transparency and “education” of all constituencies is necessary.
- Establish thoughtful and meaningful orientation programs for staff, members, committee and board members.
- Create a plan for expansion of year round activities and programs for the membership. With the significant growth in younger families joining the Club, the traditional operating schedule with shutdown or limited activities in the winter months needs strong consideration for improvement.
- Creation of a plan to ensure that Kent Country Club becomes viewed and delivers on a promise of a “Community Employer of Choice” culture, therefore being able to attract, retain and develop great team members to support the goals of a strong member service and experience culture.

To reiterate, fostering a culture of solidarity and teamwork throughout the team and the Club at large is very important to the staff and membership. Significant to this expectation is the ability to lead a team of friendly, engaging, competent, and passionate staff who are sincere about serving the Club’s members. Being a natural “mentor” and “educator” to each constituency is a key attribute to success for the new GM, as is a clear “walking the talk” approach

### **CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS**

- A minimum of 7 - 10 years of verifiable, progressive leadership and management experience in an active, family-centric club or well-regarded, service focused, iconic hospitality environments where relationships are well-developed. NOTE: While having *strong preference* for those who have experience in the General Manager or GM/COO role, those current Assistant General Managers at well-recognized clubs, with verifiable records of achievement, may be considered for this role, as will those coming from quality resorts or hotels. This IS NOT an ‘OJT learning’ situation; verifiable successes in current or past roles will be required.
- Strong financial acuity with outstanding communication skills, both verbal and written, with natural comfort to interact with members and guests.
- A strong understanding and preferred history of installing appropriate technological upgrades where “high tech can help to improve high touch” with the membership.
- Verifiable success with creative and innovative programming, events and activities.

### **EDUCATIONAL AND CERTIFICATION QUALIFICATIONS**

- A Bachelor’s Degree from a four-year university or college is desired, preferably in Hospitality Management or Business Management.
- From the club industry, Certified Club Manager (CCM) designation is desirable but not necessary.

### **SALARY AND BENEFITS**

Salary and Benefits are commensurate with qualifications and experience. The Club, along with the typical CMAA benefits, offers an excellent bonus and benefit package.

#### **INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO APPLY**

Please upload your resume and cover letter (in that order) using the link below. You should have your documents fully prepared to be attached when prompted for them during the online application process.

**Preparing a thoughtful cover letter of interest and alignment with the above noted expectations and requirements is necessary.** Your letter should be addressed to **Mr. Gary Milligan, President and the Kent Country Club Search Committee**, and clearly articulate why you would like to be considered for this position at this stage of your career and why Kent Country Club and the Grand Rapids, MI area will be beneficial to both you and the Club if selected.

You must apply for this role as soon as possible but no later than Friday, April 9, 2021. Candidate selections will occur mid-April with first Interviews expected very early May and second interviews a short time later. The new candidate should assume his/her role in Summer 2021.

**IMPORTANT:** Save your resume and letter in the following manner:

**“Last Name, First Name Resume” &**

**“Last Name, First Name Cover Letter - KCC”**

(These documents should be in Word or PDF format)

Note: Once you complete the application process for this search, you are not able to go back in and add additional documents.

[Click here](#) to upload your resume and cover letter.

If you have any questions, please email Patty Sprankle: [patty@kkandw.com](mailto:patty@kkandw.com)

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