

wellforce



The Next Generation **Country Club**

Designing the Club of the Future





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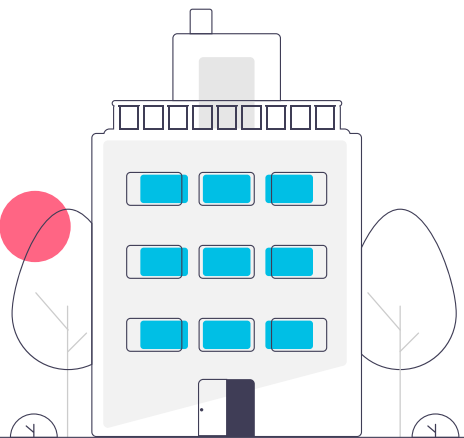
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Introduction

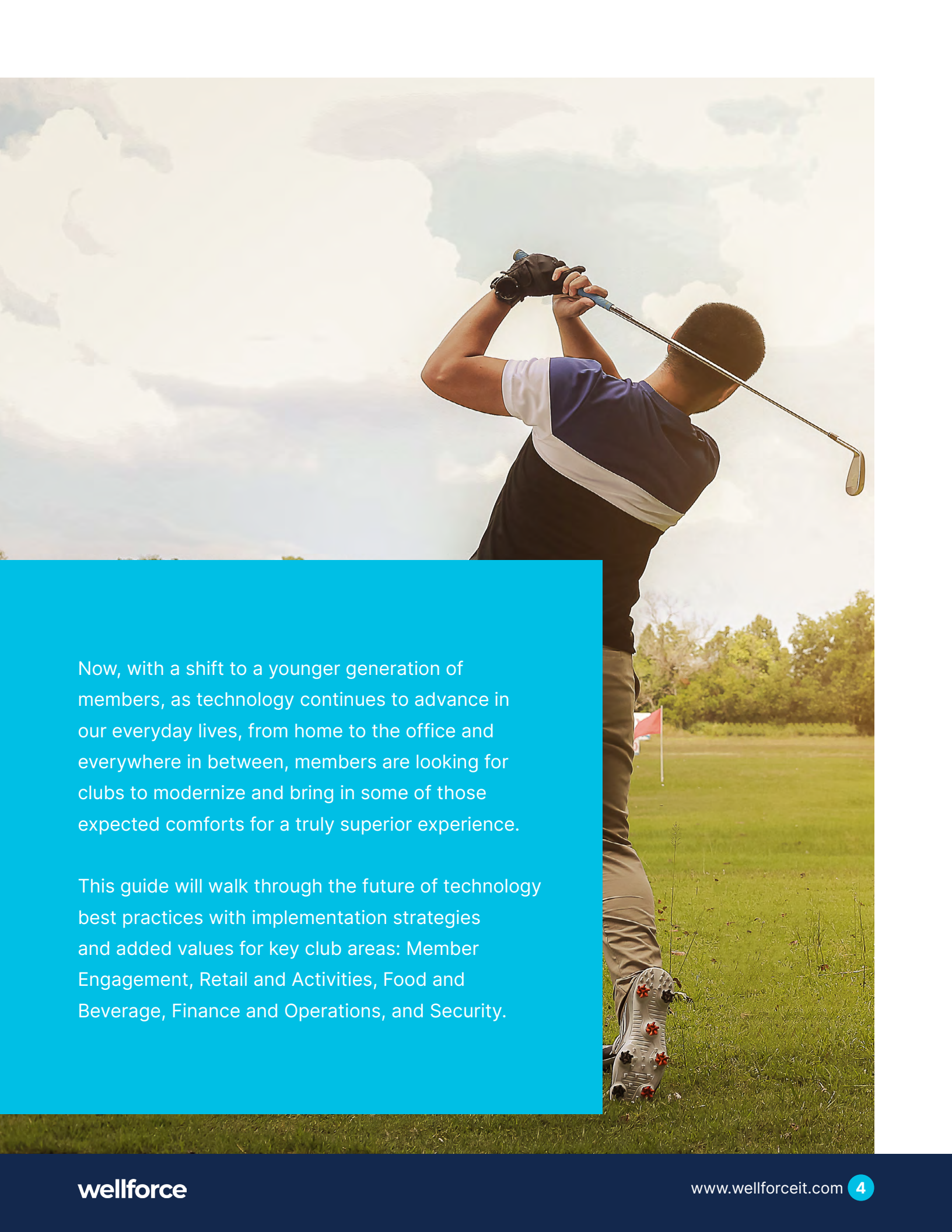
Imagine every time a member enters your club, every employee within 20 feet knows their name, their family member names, what reservations they have, and maybe even their preferred beverage. Your staff greeting goes from generic to hyper-specific, you have a to-the-minute view of everyone on premises, and the data you collect helps inform staffing and training needs and identify new areas of potential revenue. This is the club of a future – your members’ “third place” that provides not only social connections and sporting options, but includes state-of-the-art technology for an above-and-beyond experience.



Changes came in the form of more family-focused activities, relaxed dress codes, additional racket sports, and an increase of gym equipment.

Historically, technology hasn't been a primary focus for country clubs, but instead concentrated on creating an exclusive environment for the elite with manicured grounds, fine dining, and a variety of sporting activities. From there, changes came in the form of more family-focused activities, relaxed dress codes, additional racket sports, and an increase of gym equipment.

In the last ten years or so, we've seen a strategic shift to improving technologies with cloud-based printing and servers, tablet-based point of sales, and meeting rooms equipped with business conferencing applications for townhalls and Board of Governor meetings. More recently, the pandemic has forced a rapid evolution of technology in clubs, with features like contactless mobile ordering and [GolfBoards](#) and [Finn Scooters](#) for socially distanced travel, requiring clubs to commit and adapt to necessary upgrades.



Now, with a shift to a younger generation of members, as technology continues to advance in our everyday lives, from home to the office and everywhere in between, members are looking for clubs to modernize and bring in some of those expected comforts for a truly superior experience.

This guide will walk through the future of technology best practices with implementation strategies and added values for key club areas: Member Engagement, Retail and Activities, Food and Beverage, Finance and Operations, and Security.

Member Engagement

Since the very beginning, creating an exclusive, world-class member experience has been at the heart of every country club's mission. While high-touch services were the original standard, changes in demographics, technologies, and post-pandemic expectations have shifted member needs over the last decade. To meet these evolving needs and continue to grow their membership, clubs need to continue to evolve their member engagement opportunities.



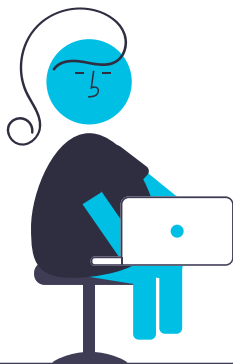
Designing the club of the future



As a first step, clubs need to provide lightning-fast connectivity throughout the club. In our Definitive Guide to Managing Technology in 2023, we broke down infrastructure and security trends, including Wi-Fi insights and best practices. Namely, switching to tools like [Meraki](#) for all-in-one cloud-managed networking and upgrading to the latest 6E Wi-Fi with faster speeds and lower latencies that improve connectivity and create a better member experience.



Then, we can expand member communications. In addition to the in-person socialization benefits of the club, provide member-exclusive online forums and chat groups for members to connect anytime, anywhere on anything from building professional connections to finding mom groups. By facilitating these wider and deeper connection opportunities, members gain that “third place” experience beyond the physical borders of the club.



Provide member-exclusive online forums and chat groups for members to connect anytime

The Extra Mile: The Mobile-First Experience

Smartphone usage on golf courses is changing, with 76% of golfers reporting at-will or tolerated policies around usage at the club and on the course, and 96% of members keeping their phone in easy reach while golfing¹. Give members the digital experience they're looking for with a mobile app, including:

Club calendars for events

Fitness and class schedules

Tee times

Court and dining reservations

Mobile ordering

Member directory



ProTip: Use the app's push notifications to send reminders and share special events and promotions, as well as subscribe members to text, email, and in-app marketing communications.



Retail and Activities

The range of activities at country clubs has evolved over the years, with an original focus on polo, cricket, horseback riding, and fox hunting. They quickly developed into golf clubs and eventually expanded into an array of racket sports. Now, instead of expanding further, clubs need to deepen the capabilities of their existing amenities to avoid a sub-par experience (yes, pun intended).

Designing the club of the future

It's all about data. By aggregating and analyzing a few sources of data, you can not only provide a better, more curated member experience, but increase retention and revenue.



Performance data – by tracking performance metrics for various club activities (e.g. golf launch monitors, swing analysis, and indoor simulators), you not only enable players to improve their performance, but gather data to provide targeted classes and training opportunities.



Personal data – in your app, allow members to optionally fill in personal details, like areas of interest and what sort of socializing events they'd be interested in, then use this data to design and invite members to targeted events.



Attendance data – everyone loves a rewards program. Start tracking how often members visit and complete different activities and build exclusive perks or special offers based on attendance. As a bonus, gamify the experience, allowing members to compete against each other, encouraging additional socialization and promoting more regular activities.



Inventory data – upgrading from an error-prone Excel sheet to an inventory management app integrated with your CMS will allow you to accurately track stock levels, identify top-selling items, identify lost revenues, and improve forecasting.



Pro Tip: The more smart devices you offer, like robotic caddies and GPS-enabled range finders, the more data you'll have available to analyze and improve member engagement and revenue opportunities. For example, use POS tracking data to reach out to popular brands and get custom deals for members.



The Extra Mile: AR/VR

Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR) may still seem relatively new age, but can be truly impactful to every business, even those in the hospitality industry.

Some clubs have already started utilizing VR for club tours, but it could easily be used for golf and tennis lessons. Or, taking it a step further, imagine playing an entire round of golf in VR. You could have thousands of members playing the same course, exponentially increasing member engagement, while still allowing them to stay connected to those they choose.

As for Augmented Reality, it could be used by members around the club as a heads-up display for things like scoreboards and getting directions, or it could be used for club events, like feature releases and updating or adding new facilities. The possibilities are endless.

Food and Beverage

The dining experience has always played a critical role in the value of country clubs. While the formal-only dining has relaxed for many and others have implemented grab-and-go offers, providing a 5-star environment remains a priority.



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The first step is to enable mobile ordering to guests, either through your own app or through a third-party tool. In addition to the easy and contactless experience for members, nearly 60% of restaurants² can expect more sales when they offer online ordering. They can expect a sizable bump in retention, too – customers who place an online order with a restaurant will visit that restaurant 67% more frequently³ than those who didn't.



Pro Tip: By utilizing your own app, users have the added benefit of sharing food allergies and preferences and reviewing billing history when needed.

Next, deploy inventory management software. By tracking club inventory levels, you can reduce waste, save space by limiting over-ordering, and ensure you never run out of customer favorites.

The Extra Mile: Data Analytics

Remember how we said it's all about the data? Use the tools at hand to track member spending habits and preferences. Are you constantly selling out of similar products? Is there seasonality to purchases? Do you sell more kid menu items during the summer break? Analyze the data to better understand what areas of the club members use most, decrease spend and maximize profits, and improve overall food and beverage offerings.



Finance and Operations

The backbone to any organization, successful finance and operations teams develop clear processes, ensure always-on facilities, and provide real-time line of sight into spending and forecasts. By implementing modern technologies, automations, and business intelligence, country clubs can easily increase club-wide efficiencies.



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Utilizing modern technologies, like IoT devices for tracking pool cleanliness, HVAC health, and utilization data allows clubs to stay ahead of maintenance needs, while tools like cloud-based accounting software can simplify processes and reporting and improve accuracy.

Deploying automations around the club streamlines repetitive tasks, standardizes procedures, and simplifies event management. With automated course management systems, you can optimize club operations and allow staff to focus on higher priority tasks, like member experiences and sales.



Pro Tip: Use risk management software to identify and mitigate risks and protect against financial loss.

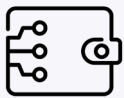
Lastly, deploying PowerBI for reporting can help identify top-performing areas by utilization and areas in need of improvement. Proper reporting across the club helps maximize profits, prepare for seasonal needs, and track membership retention.



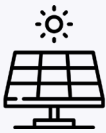
The Extra Mile: Go Green

These days, sustainability is a key criterion for many consumers. As of 2020, 80% of consumers said sustainability was important to them and of those, 70% were willing to pay a premium price from companies that are known to be environmentally responsible⁴.

Three easy areas for country clubs to go green:



Paperless billing – reduce your carbon footprint, help decrease deforestation and pollution, and increase data security by simply going paperless.



Solar power – used to power club houses, irrigation systems, electric golf carts, and everything in between, solar panels also help reduce your carbon footprint while saving up to hundreds of thousands of dollars on electric bills.



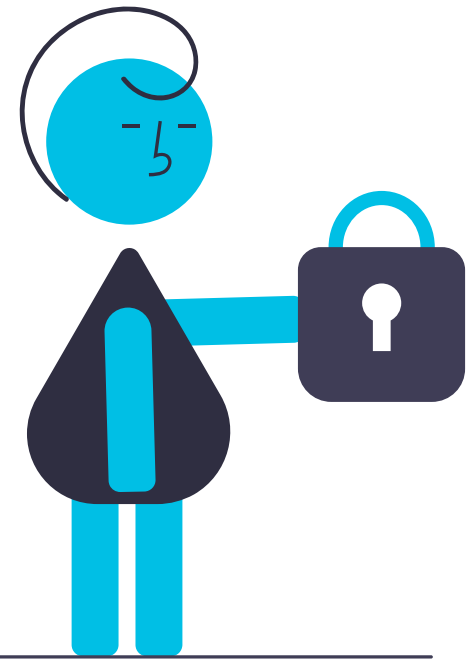
Water conservation – by using recycled water, low-water-use turfgrass, water-saving devices like in-ground sensors, and using mulch to reduce evaporation loss (among many other tactics) helps save money while protecting a precious limited resource.

80%

of consumers said sustainability was important to them

Security

Unfortunately, for most companies, security is treated as an afterthought, handled only when crisis strikes. But considering the constant flow of members on-site and the amount of Personally Identifiable Information floating around, security should be a top concern. Luckily, it only takes a few easy changes to create a worry-free environment for members and staff alike.



You can also deploy mobile-based access and identity controls that club members are required to use to unlock certain areas or access facilities after-hours.

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Physical protection capabilities can be upgraded with the use of license plate readers, tracking and identifying cars coming and going, backed by Artificial Intelligence, used to detect unusual patterns in surveillance footage and identify potential threats. You can also deploy mobile-based access and identity controls that club members are required to use to unlock certain areas or access facilities after-hours.

As for data protection, in addition to making your privacy policy readily available for members, clubs can improve security with advanced protections such as Cloud App Security, an EDR solution like [SentinelOne](#), or [BitDefender](#) for next-generation end point protection. Also be sure to always lock down machines in public areas that are easily accessible!

The Extra Mile: Proximity Identification

To enable Proximity ID, members will need to download your app and enable location services. This will allow a club's system to recognize members within a certain range, providing staff with all relevant information, for example family members, scheduled tee times, and dining reservations. This experience creates a wide range of benefits for both members and staff:

- ✓ Scanless access to the club create a hassle-free experience for members
- ✓ Instant recognition allows every staff member to provide a personal and customized experience for every member, regardless of how long they've been on the job
- ✓ Scanning all members at every access point increases security by tracking the exact number of members on site at any moment and logging names, dates, and times, to reference later if needed



Pro Tip: In 2020, women made up 84% of all new golfers⁵. By tracking member locations across the club, female members are provided an additional level of comfort, especially when alone or using the facilities after-hours.

Conclusion

It's important to understand that modernizing infrastructure, implementing sustainability, building apps, and designing automations take time. *A lot of time.*

To get started, you'll need to define priorities, build a multi-year roadmap, and determine your budget for each phase of the project. It's important to have a vision of where you want to go, but to avoid errors and potential for confusion, take it one step at a time.

Prioritize quality over quantity.

And don't forget about change management! Any big changes require clear and ongoing communication to members and staff to ensure proper training, set expectations, and limit potential disruptions. Document everything, automate where possible, and keep it simple. One step at a time.



Need help getting started? Wellforce provides an IT Recommendations Assessment where we review your current processes and tools, benchmark your results against our gold standard Ideal State, and provide an easy to follow roadmap for quick remediation.

Contact us at info@wellforceit.com to start your IT Recommendations Assessment



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 3. 20 Food Delivery and Online Ordering Statistics

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