

Turning Uncertainty Into Opportunity With an Interim GM

El Niguel CC relied on the steadiness of the Club's Interim GM as the team navigated the path to a new hire.

By **Lori LeBard, Clubhouse Manager, El Niguel Country Club** | April 5, 2022



Kimberly Wood, CCM, had been the General Manager here at El Niguel Country Club for more than four years. Prior to her role as GM, she was Director of Operations. In total, she was with the club for more than 12 years. In September, she decided it was time for a new challenge and she accepted the position of CEO and General Manager with Ventana Canyon Club and Lodge in Tucson, Ariz. Being part of someone's career journey is always an incredible honor. I will miss her, but I know [Kimberly] Wood is proud to have been part of El Niguel's.

When she left, our Board of Directors contracted with Club Advisors to fill the role of Interim General Manager. The job responsibilities of an Interim GM are critical and necessary for a club to continue serving its members in a positive manner. Our club was fortunate to engage Doug Holtz. He became the support and laughter we all needed during a time of uncertainty and transition. He supported us and leaned on our Executive Team as the experts. He helped us to continue to offer the very best experiences to our membership.

Because of Holtz, we were able to continue our mission with no interruptions. He supported the team and made sure we had whatever was necessary. His winning personality helped with putting the minds of many at ease, which can be so difficult at times like these. When we hosted our first concert on the greens, Holtz had only been here for about two weeks. I hardly knew him. We hired a pizza truck and before the event, the truck got stuck in the mud. I was so nervous we would not be set on time, but then I looked over and Doug was laughing. I went over to him and asked, “What’s so funny? I’m stressed out!”

He said, “What can you really do about it?” I said, “Nothing.” He said, “You are exactly right. There is nothing to do but laugh. The pizza truck only makes money if they serve us tonight, correct?” I replied, “Yes.” He said, “Well then, I think they will figure it out. If not, we’ll order pizzas.”

It was a good lesson. Things happen that are beyond our control and in the grand scheme of club life, this was a minor blip. (Oh, and he was right. The pizza truck figured it out and served many pizzas to our amazing members and guest and no one even knew about the hiccup earlier.)

While Holtz was serving at Interim GM, the board hired a search firm and formed a search committee to find the best candidate for General Manager. Holtz supported the committee by making sure interviews and meeting space were always available. Other than that, his focus was on the operations of the club and keeping everything afloat.

I am pleased to announce that the club has hired Patrick Casey to serve as our new General Manager and CEO. And I’m even more pleased that I was able to work with Holtz during the transition between Wood and Casey.

Change is always hard, but Holtz made it easy as he reassured the team he was here for one purpose: to support us in whatever ways we needed him most. I think the biggest thing that changed during our time with Holtz serving as our Interim GM was our faith in the team. We know now that we can get through uncharted waters and uncertain times when we all pull together and work toward a common goal.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Lori LeBard, Clubhouse Manager, El Niguel Country Club

Lori LeBard is the Clubhouse Manager of El Niguel Country Club, Laguna Niguel, Calif.