

GENERAL MANAGER/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER PROFILE: THUNDERBIRD COUNTRY CLUB RANCHO MIRAGE, CA

GENERAL MANAGER/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER OPPORTUNITY AT THUNDERBIRD COUNTRY CLUB

Thunderbird Country Club (TCC or Thunderbird), located in one of the most desirable areas of the country in Rancho Mirage, California, is seeking a new General Manager/Chief Operating Officer (GM/COO) to lead the distinguished and widely recognized club with a rich history. The Club is seeking a leader who can guide strategic initiatives for the next generation, while respecting and preserving the culture that defines the membership experience. The ideal candidate will provide clear direction to the Thunderbird Board and management team, maintain strong visible engagement throughout the property, and champion best-in-class quality and service consistency. This individual will be proactive in team development and bring clear club expertise, innovation, and operational excellence across all areas of the club.

Thunderbird Country Club is seeking a partner to lead efforts to sustain a strong workforce. This includes understanding the current team's needs, implementing effective attraction and retention strategies, and maintaining the Club's position as a hospitality employer of choice in the Coachella Valley. The successful candidate will be a visible, engaging, and approachable communicator who can establish a strong working relationship with the Board and serve as a thoughtful partner in strategic planning. Experience in capital planning and project execution is essential, as the Club has a long-range capital plan with multiple projects scheduled across the amenities and golf course in the next several years. Above all, the next GM/COO must bring presence, credibility, and professional gravitas to the role.

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

ABOUT THUNDERBIRD COUNTRY CLUB

Founded in 1951 in Rancho Mirage, Thunderbird Country Club is widely regarded as the birthplace of desert golf in the Coachella Valley and a pioneer in the evolution of the modern club experience. Among its many distinctions, Thunderbird was the first course to introduce the use of golf carts, forever changing how the game is played. Its championship pedigree was cemented when it hosted the 1955 Ryder Cup, bringing international attention to the desert and establishing the club as a premier venue for elite competition. So influential was its reputation that Ford Motor Company named the iconic Ford Thunderbird after the club, a testament to Thunderbird's cultural impact and cachet during the golden age of American leisure.

From its earliest days as a retreat for Hollywood luminaries and national leaders—including Frank Sinatra and Gerald Ford—Thunderbird has embodied a rare blend of glamour, discretion, and sporting excellence. Today, it remains a timeless symbol of understated luxury, where mid-century architectural heritage meets a deeply rooted sense of community. Set against the dramatic Santa Rosa Mountains, Thunderbird continues to honor its 75-year legacy while thoughtfully evolving, preserving its position as one of the most prestigious and significant private clubs in the United States. The feeling at Thunderbird Country Club is: “We are a club of HOW are you, not WHO are you.”

THUNDERBIRD COUNTRY CLUB BY THE NUMBERS:

- Initiation Fee: \$125,000
- Annual Dues: \$38,275
- Capital Reserve: \$5,136
- Total members across all membership categories: 342
- Annual gross volume: Approximately \$16M
- Annual F&B revenue: Approximately \$2.6M
- Approximately 15,000 rounds of golf annually
- There are 9 Board Members, each serving 3-year terms

- There are 8 Committees: Executive, Membership, Finance, Racquets & Wellness, Golf & Green, House & Entertainment, Legal, Audit, and Long Range Planning
- Average member age: 69
- Tax Status: 501(c) (7)

THUNDERBIRD COUNTRY CLUB WEBSITE: www.thunderbirdcc.org

GENERAL MANAGER/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER – POSITION OVERVIEW

The General Manager/Chief Operating Officer is responsible for all day-to-day management of the Club. Reporting to the Board of Directors through the President and Executive Directors, the GM/COO is charged with delivering an exceptional, member-centric experience, effectively managing resources to budgeted plans, inspiring a culture of excellence, and upholding the Club’s long-standing values.

The GM/COO will lead a seasoned management team, many of whom have a long tenure at the Club, and will promote a modern, metrics-driven management approach that prioritizes collaboration, innovation, and high performance. Through thoughtful delegation and genuine engagement, the GM/COO will supervise all employees while maintaining a strong presence throughout all areas of operation. Outstanding communication skills are necessary for this role. As the primary communicator of much information at the Club, proven outstanding verbal and written skills are critical, as is a keen ability to listen, engage, build trust, and be highly approachable.

As noted above, the GM/COO must serve as a strategic thought partner to the Board and Committees, guiding long-term planning, identifying opportunities for enhancement, and balancing tradition with evolving member expectations. As the membership continues to grow, the ability to blend timeless customs with contemporary relevance will be key to sustaining the Club’s vibrancy.

Above all, the next GM/COO must be a genuine, sincere, and unifying leader who fosters a sense of pride, purpose, and solidarity across the organization. He/she will build and nurture a team of friendly, competent, and service-driven professionals who reflect the Club’s values in every interaction. Creating an environment where staff are inspired, empowered, and held accountable will be essential to sustaining the exceptional experience that members have come to expect.

INITIAL PRIORITIES OF THE NEW GENERAL MANAGER/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

PEOPLE/ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES

- Spend considerable time with the Board, Members, and Staff to listen and understand the culture and history of Thunderbird Country Club before making any significant changes. Be highly visible, approachable, and available.
- Review and evaluate the current organizational chart and make a recommendation to the Board on any needed changes or enhancements.
- Review current practices for staff recruitment, retention, and overall development/training/performance evaluation, and work with the Team to develop a plan for improvement in each area as appropriate.

MEMBER EXPERIENCE

- Evaluate and enhance the overall Thunderbird Country Club member experience. As part of this evaluation, pay close attention to the details that ensure a consistently successful member and staff experience — physical Club maintenance, standards and procedures, communication and responsiveness strategies, etc.
- Collaborate on membership recruitment and retention strategies
- Honor Thunderbird’s rich history and cultural significance
- Ensure modernization efforts respect the Club’s identity
- Curate experiences that reflect both legacy and contemporary expectations
- Act as an ambassador within the Rancho Mirage and Coachella Valley community

OPERATIONS

- Work collaboratively with the Board and management team to establish mutually agreed-upon key performance indicators, along with the essential data and metrics required to support informed strategic planning and effective operational oversight.

- Assess the depth, participation, and effectiveness of club programming through data analysis and member feedback, using these insights to recommend enhancements, optimize utilization, and, where appropriate, consolidate or streamline offerings to ensure alignment with member interests and operational efficiency.
- Examine the Club's financial standing, showcasing responsible fiscal management and accountability across both operating and capital budgets.
- Partner with golf professionals and course leadership to maintain elite playing conditions; elevate tournaments, member play, and golf programming to reflect top-tier club standards; ensure golf operations integrate seamlessly with the broader member experience

CAPITAL PROJECTS & INFRASTRUCTURE

- Lead planning and execution of capital projects, including clubhouse and course enhancements
- Develop multi-year capital plans aligned with strategic and financial priorities
- Coordinate architects, contractors, and consultants to ensure timely, on-budget delivery
- Balance preservation of iconic elements with thoughtful modernization as developed through the Thunderbird 75 long-range strategy plan

FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT

- Prepare and manage annual operating and capital budgets
- Ensure strong financial controls, forecasting, and reporting
- Optimize revenue streams while maintaining fiscal discipline
- Evaluate ROI on major initiatives

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Serve as a strategic collaborator with the Board, contributing to the formulation of short and long-term goals and objectives. Work together to chart a course for implementing strategic plan initiatives.

CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS

- 7-10 years of General Management experience in similar multi-dimensional, member-owned, high-quality, private clubs or luxury hospitality operations is preferred. However, industry "Rising Stars" in a premier club environment with an outstanding track record of success will also be considered.
- A proven businessperson from the club or hospitality industry with exceptional financial, budgeting, and business planning skills that have yielded verifiable results. In particular, the candidate must enjoy and embrace the challenge of strong fiscal management while also delivering the quality and range of services and innovative activities that enable the Club to attract and retain members and staff.
- A proven track record of fiscal management and the ability to navigate complex budgets.
- Strong general management skills with verifiable strengths in inspirational leadership, financial performance, "people" skills, and large-scale recreational amenity management.
- A record of impeccable integrity, along with the personal attributes of being a highly visible, charismatic, passionate professional, and having outstanding membership relations, including possessing an appropriate sense of humor and humility.
- Being known for positively mentoring and coaching department managers and employees, and demonstrating proven leadership skills in team building, employee motivation, and employee training programs. A proven track record of advancing employees in the industry is essential.
- A proven ability to collaborate with Boards and Committees, and a strong ability to work with the Board to further establish and implement clear roles, responsibilities, and overall metrics for sustainable success.
- A record of showing a high degree of initiative, innovation, and resourcefulness in directing the activities of a multi-faceted country club environment. Able to always demonstrate a consummately professional image to the staff and membership.
- Demonstrate strong organizational skills and an obsession with covering the details necessary to consistently achieve high levels of quality, satisfaction, and outstanding member experiences.

- A creative problem solver who approaches challenges with strategic thinking, and a solutions-oriented mindset. Anticipate issues before they arise, think beyond conventional approaches, and engage the team in developing thoughtful, practical solutions to enhance operations and elevate member experiences.

EDUCATIONAL AND CERTIFICATION QUALIFICATIONS

- A bachelor's degree is preferred, with a focus on Hospitality Management.
- Substantial private club or hospitality experience will be considered in lieu of the degree.
- Industry certifications such as CCM or CCE are encouraged but not required.

EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION

In compliance with federal law, all persons hired will be required to verify identity and eligibility to work in the United States and to complete the required employment eligibility verification form upon hire.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The salary is open and commensurate with qualifications and experience. The Club offers an excellent bonus and benefits package. Salary Range: \$400,000 - \$500,000.

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO APPLY

Please upload your resume and cover letter in the order listed using the link below. When prompted for them during the online application process, you should have your documents fully prepared to attach. Please be sure your image is not on your resume or cover letter; it should be used on your LinkedIn Profile.

Prepare a thoughtful cover letter addressed to **Mr. John Weaver, Club President, Thunderbird Country Club, and the search committee**. Clearly articulate your alignment with this role, why you want to be considered for this position at this stage of your career, and why TCC and the Rancho Mirage area will benefit you, your family, your career, and the Club if selected.

You must apply for this role as soon as possible, but no later than June 8, 2026. Candidate selections will occur later that month, with first interviews expected after the July 4th holiday and final interviews before the end of July. The new candidate should assume his/her role as soon as reasonably possible, Fall 2026.

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

"Last Name, First Name - Resume" &

"Last Name, First Name - Cover Letter – TCC"

(These documents MUST 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

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