



The International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association is a not-for-profit trade association open to investor-owned and member-owned fitness, racquet, and athletic facilities. Associate memberships are available to manufacturers or suppliers of products and services of use to IHRSA members.

800-228-4772 USA & Canada  
617-951-0055 International  
617-951-0056 FAX  
ihrsa.org  
healthclubs.com  
E-mail: info@ihrsa.org

IHRSA Board of Directors

**Bill McBride: Chairperson**  
Club One  
415-477-3000

**Kay Yuspeh: Elite Sports Clubs**  
262-786-0880

**Richard Bilton: Companhia Athletica**  
+55 11-5188-2000

**Carol Nalevanko: DMB Sports Clubs**  
480-609-6979

**Brent Darden: TELOS Fitness Center**  
972-458-2582

**Scott Gillespie: Saco Sport & Fitness**  
207-284-5953

**Christian Pierar: De Fitness Organisatie**  
+32 9-232-5036

**Jasmin Kirstein: My Sportlady Fitness**  
+49 89-201-4248

**Robert Brewster: The Alaska Clubs**  
907-337-9550

**Molly Kemmer: MediFit**  
303-525-5392

**Mark Stevens: Houstonian Hotel, Club and Spa**  
713-685-6888

**Art Curtis: Ex-officio**  
Curtis Club Advisors  
203-314-9264

# Fix Your 'Broken Windows'

Last month, in this space, I described how opening a new club had reminded me of how important details are to a positive member experience and to the success of a club. The question I'd like to address now is, How can you effectively manage the staff responsible for those details?



**Bill McBride**  
IHRSA Chairperson

The sounds in a club, the scents ... the placement of amenities and toiletries ... how towels are folded and stacked ... how members are greeted ... the club procedures that are negotiable and those that aren't—these are just a few of the hundreds of “small things” that go into running a club well.

As I've indicated, being fully immersed, once again, in the launch of another Club One facility really got me thinking.

I was prompted, for instance, to consider how “macro” decisions made by management play out in a club every day on an individual basis. It's easy to mandate operating procedures from afar, but a lot harder to ensure efficient execution.

It doesn't happen easily. If my experience is any indication, it requires painstaking observation of what staffers are doing

at any given moment, and ongoing conversations with them about what's right and what isn't.

I know that sounds rather obvious, but, all too often, the obvious is taken for granted or overlooked.

If you, like me, have been distanced from club operations over the years, or if you're still involved, but have become locked into a fixed routine, I urge you to challenge yourself to rethink everything, paying close attention to those items that need to be fixed or changed.

Then, you need to correct, correct, correct—while, of course, providing staff with sincere, positive reinforcement in the process.

Consider publicist Michael Levine's book *Broken Windows, Broken Business*. In it, he suggests that, if one of a business' “broken windows” goes unfixed, then others will soon break too. Well-run companies pay careful attention to all of the details that serve the emotional needs of their customers.

So, when members make requests, offer suggestions, or lodge complaints—listen, pay attention, and respond. They may be alerting you to unnoticed broken windows, helping you and your staff to stay on top of those “hundreds of small things” before they can hurt your business.

It's the little stuff you don't see that can kill you. —

— Bill McBride, [Bill.McBride@ClubOne.com](mailto:Bill.McBride@ClubOne.com)