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# The Times They Are A-Changin’

**IF YOUR TIME TO YOU IS WORTH SAVIN’  
THEN YOU BETTER START SWIMMIN’  
OR YOU’LL SINK LIKE A STONE  
FOR THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’.**

That’s the iconic song – *The Times They Are a-Changin’* – written by Bob Dylan and released as the title track of his 1964 album by the same title. The song ranked No. 59 on Rolling Stone’s 2004 list of the 500 greatest songs of all time (Wikipedia).

Unquestionably, this eerie tune spins a compelling warning that nothing stays the same, change is inevitable, *and...*

Over the years I’ve written numerous articles urging private clubs to increase their attention to technology as a significant factor in club operations and member satisfaction.

Some have made great strides in furthering their adoption of a wide variety of important technologies. However, as the most recent survey by the NCA-HFTP Technology Task Force reveals, the private club industry as a whole remains painfully behind the times in virtually every significant area of technology.

**CHANGE IS UPON US**

One bright spot in the survey was a significant increase in club-employed IT personnel. About a quarter of the clubs surveyed now employ a part or full-time IT professional – with the balance outsourcing their technology support services to third party companies. But just as clubs seem to be embracing the concept of employing IT professionals, *along comes father time to shake up the IT environment.*

Traditionally a “club IT professional” has been a person specializing in computer network administration and maintenance, equipment purchasing and support, desktop software support, and “all things technical” that were generally beyond the grasp of the club’s accounting and administrative personnel.

These are tech specialists with certifications and training in a variety of networking and equipment venues, who are indispensable to a club’s network operations.

But in today’s private club environment, are these the only “technical” skills a typical club needs to have available?

Let’s think a little about the technologies that are currently making a big splash with private clubs, including:

- Interactive websites
- Online reservations
- E-marketing/E-communications
- Social networking
- Business intelligence and data mining

Interesting... Not much to do with network administration, or equipment support. But a lot to do with powerful software applications that reach out to members - and reach deep into the club’s database. Is this what traditional IT folks are trained for?

*A new job title: Communications and Database Manager:* To manage the new software applications flooding into private clubs, a completely different skill set is needed.

Currently, most clubs are spreading these responsibilities across several existing employees in an effort to get the work done.

But those employees are plenty busy with their “real jobs” and are neither qualified nor readily available for the substantial work associated with the new responsibilities.

A part or full-time club employee who is professionally qualified and dedicated to the job offers a better solution. (see job description on opposite page) shows a complete job description that we put together recently for a club wanting to recruit just such an individual.

The responsibilities and skill set of this new position are quite different from a traditional IT professional. The new focus is on application software, not hardware and operating systems.

It’s on member communications, not equipment maintenance. On business intelligence and data mining, not network troubleshooting.

Traditional IT professionals are not trained, nor are they generally qualified, to provide the needed skill set. And in case you were thinking that the person currently creating the club's newsletter might be a candidate, think again. This is a job for a true professional trained in relational database management and electronic communications.

***What about the traditional IT responsibilities?*** For most private clubs, these routine duties can be outsourced to a local, well-qualified support services provider. Of course, larger clubs that already sport a significant IT staff would simply add the new position to that existing team.

Note that this is not an "either-or" proposition. The traditional IT duties and responsibilities are not significantly reduced by the addition of a communications and database manager position. And the new position should not be saddled with traditional IT duties.

With significant new software applications come commensurate responsibilities.

Bob Dylan's prophetic song hits the nail on the head...

***There's a battle outside  
And it is ragin'  
It'll soon shake your windows  
And rattle your walls  
For the times they are a-changin'.***

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## **JOB DESCRIPTION: COMMUNICATIONS AND DATABASE MANAGER**

Manage and maintain a vibrant club web site; manage and produce compelling member and public electronic/print communications; produce business intelligence and data mining queries and reporting, using the club's management software solutions and other analytical tools.

**Responsibilities and expectations** include the following.  
Other duties may be assigned.

### **Job Duties**

- Maintain website content (provided by staff members and self-generated).
- Assure that website content is timely, comprehensive, accurate, appropriate and attractive.
- Use the available website design tools to keep the site appearance fresh and compelling.
- Use the available E-communications tools to create campaigns for a variety of member events and activities.
- Utilize the club management database to generate E-communications to members and the public.
- Utilize publishing tools to create print publications as needed.
- Utilize the club management ad hoc reporting and business intelligence and data mining tools to generate requested queries and reporting from the club's relational database.
- Utilize other analytical tools, such as MS Excel, to enhance the output from the club management solutions.
- Interface with outside vendors as needed to best utilize their tools.

### **Expectations**

- Provide quality service to staff, the member board of directors and member committees.
- Promote a high standard of excellence.
- Evaluate present electronic communications and database operations and develop new ideas for the future.

### **Qualifications**

#### **Education**

- Bachelor's degree (B.A. or B.S.) in communications and/or database management from a four-year college or university, preferred.
- Five to seven years related experience required.

#### **Experience/Skills**

- Extensive, hands-on experience in all facets of "packaged" web site solutions administration and management, including page design and brand consistency, navigation, content management and generation, photo gallery management, etc.
- Extensive, hands-on experience in generating compelling web site content.
- Extensive, hands-on experience with relational database queries, report design, graphical output and reporting.
- Extensive, hands-on experience with E-communications and E-marketing campaigns including concept, design, execution and analysis of target effectiveness (opens, click-throughs, actions).
- Proficient with Microsoft Office 2007/2010 applications: Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Publisher.
- Proficient with digital camera technologies.
- Excellent communication, presentation, documentation and project management skills.
- Ability to manage multiple projects and job assignments.