GENERAL MANAGER PROFILE:
WOMAN'S ATHLETIC CLUB OF CHICAGO
CHICAGO, IL

GENERAL MANAGER OPPORTUNITY AT THE WOMAN'S ATHLETIC CLUB OF CHICAGO

A rare opportunity awaits an accomplished, sophisticated, and inspiring leader to serve as General Manager of the Woman's Athletic Club of Chicago. Situated on iconic North Michigan Avenue, this distinguished private club brings together rich history, gracious hospitality, and a vibrant community of women. Its beautiful surroundings, enduring traditions, and blend of athletics, wellness, dining, cultural experiences, social programming, children's activities, and personal connection hold a special place in the lives of members and their families.

The Club seeks a visible and approachable leader who will elevate the member experience. Working in partnership with the Board, the next General Manager will lead meaningful improvements in service and operations, strengthen systems, processes, and procedures, and establish consistent standards and accountability across departments. This is an exceptional opportunity for a leader with sound business acumen and a commitment to developing and empowering people.

As steward of a landmark property with retail space in the heart of Chicago's Magnificent Mile, the General Manager also carries a meaningful civic responsibility: preserving the character and beauty of one of the world's most celebrated avenues, ensuring the Club's public-facing presence creates a welcoming and vibrant streetscape, and representing the Club as an engaged partner in the neighborhood and the city's cultural life.

ABOUT THE WOMAN'S ATHLETIC CLUB OF CHICAGO

Founded in 1898, the Woman's Athletic Club of Chicago is a vibrant Club rooted in rich traditions, fostering social connections, intellectual, cultural, and professional enrichment, and wellness for modern women in all stages of life.

The Club holds the distinction of being the first athletic club for women in the United States. Established by Mrs. Philip D. Armour and 63 founding members, the Club created a place for women to pursue athletics, build friendships, and engage in cultural and intellectual life. From its earliest years, programming embraced music, literature, and current events alongside fitness and recreation, establishing a tradition of connection and enrichment that continues today.

Located at the corner of North Michigan Avenue and Ontario Street, the Club's present landmark home opened in April 1929. The clubhouse reflects the elegance and character of its era while also creating an environment that is very much in the present. Distinctive gathering spaces, artwork, antiques, and decorative details, many contributed by generations of members create a setting rich in history and personal significance. The Club purchased the land beneath its clubhouse in 1986, an important milestone in its stewardship of this vibrant property.

WOMAN'S ATHLETIC CLUB OF CHICAGO WEBSITE: www.wacchicago.com

GENERAL MANAGER – POSITION OVERVIEW

The General Manager must possess strong operational and financial expertise, with the ability to lead meaningful improvements throughout the Woman's Athletic Club. Proficiency in club technology and data analysis is essential to strengthen systems, processes, and procedures, improve efficiency, and measure member participation and satisfaction. Financial responsibilities require demonstrated success in budgeting, cost management, revenue development, reserve planning, as well as capital planning and investment, supported by timely and transparent reporting to the Board.

The General Manager will bring strong communication skills, emotional intelligence, and genuine enthusiasm for the Club's members and its team. This leader must listen thoughtfully, build trust, and translate plans into action with sound judgment and consistent follow-through.

This role requires the ability to assess and develop an accountable leadership team with an emphasis on member service. Club policies must be applied fairly, consistently, and diplomatically, with the support of the Board.

Excellent candidates will demonstrate success in elevating food and beverage quality, spa services, programming, and the overall member experience. Attention to detail must extend to service delivery, décor, housekeeping, and the maintenance and preservation of the historic clubhouse. Experience with preventive maintenance and commercial tenant relationships is highly desirable. Above all, the next General Manager must bring the vision and decisiveness to advance the Club while respecting its distinctive culture and traditions.

INITIAL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES OF THE NEW GENERAL MANAGER

- Establish alignment with the Board: Develop a shared understanding of the Board's priorities, expectations, and the respective responsibilities of governance and management. Translate that alignment into a focused action plan with clear goals, timelines, and measures of success, supported by open communication and regular progress updates.
- Listen, learn, and act: Build relationships with the members and team members; learn the culture of the Club. Establish a focused action plan for the first hundred days with the Board to support and strengthen the culture of the Club in the short term and in the future.
- Strengthen team leadership and culture: Assess the organizational structure and talent, clarify responsibilities, and develop an empowered team that embraces collaboration, service, and accountability.
- Improve operational consistency: Strengthen systems, processes, and procedures, supported by effective technology, training, and communication across departments.
- Elevate the member experience: Prioritize improvements in food and beverage quality and service while ensuring athletics, wellness, spa services, and programming remain engaging and responsive to member expectations.
- Advance financial sustainability: Strengthen budgeting, cost management, revenue opportunities, and reserve planning, with transparent reporting that supports informed Board decisions.
- Protect and enhance the historic clubhouse: Establish disciplined preventive maintenance and a prioritized capital plan that preserves the property's character while improving its functionality and member enjoyment.

CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS

- A minimum of 5–7 years of progressive leadership experience, preferably in luxury hospitality or private club management, with a demonstrated ability to deliver consistent service standards and operational excellence.
- Candidates must demonstrate strong financial acumen, organizational and leadership skills, emotional intelligence, proven ability to develop and lead high-performing teams, and the experience to translate vision into action.
- An understanding of private club culture, member relations, and personalized service is essential.

EDUCATIONAL AND CERTIFICATION QUALIFICATIONS

- A bachelor's degree is required; a focus on Hospitality Management or a related field is preferred.

EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION

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

SALARY AND BENEFITS

Salary is open and commensurate with qualifications and experience. The club offers an excellent bonus and benefits package, including association membership. Salary Range: $250,000 - $350,000

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 the **Woman's Athletic Club of Chicago Search Committee/Ms. Ela Lewis, Club President**.

Clearly articulate your alignment with this role, why you want to be considered for this position at this stage of your career, and why the Woman's Athletic Club of Chicago and the Chicago, IL 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 Monday, November 30, 2026. Candidate selections will occur early December, with the first Interviews expected in January 2027 and the second interviews a short time later. The successful candidate should assume their role as soon as possible.

IMPORTANT: Save your resume and letter in the following manner:
"Last Name, First Name - Resume" &
"Last Name, First Name - Cover Letter - Woman's Athletic Club of Chicago"
(These documents should 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 Alice Stevens: alice@kkandw.com

LEAD SEARCH EXECUTIVE
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CANDIDATE APPLICATION AND SECURITY NOTICE
KK&W is the exclusive search firm for this position. Candidates are encouraged to apply directly via the official position profile on the KK&W website.

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