



# Engaging with New Members

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# Introduction



## Engaging with your New Members

It's easy to take golf club membership for granted if you've been a member of a club for a long time, however joining a club for the first time requires an individual to overcome many hurdles. Family commitments, a busy lifestyle, financial commitments must all be taken into consideration, whilst lack of awareness of the 'membership process' can also prove off putting, particularly a newcomer.

The following few slides provide considerations and tips for clubs who are aiming to recruit new members this season.

# New Membership Literature



## Is your existing new membership literature out-of-date?

- Ensure that all communications to new or prospective members is modern, fresh, welcoming, easy to understand and inclusive of all the relevant information new members would need.
- Take time to refresh all your literature, from the membership application form itself to your new members' welcome letter and even a standard e-mail/letter response to membership enquiries.
- Ensure that you have a standardised process of dealing with membership enquiries and that all enquiries are followed up promptly.

# Overcoming the Barriers



## Are there any barriers in the way of prospective new members?

- Many clubs require new members to be proposed by existing members. Is this really necessary? Do your competitors in other industries share this policy? What if the person is new to the area?
- How straightforward is your new membership application process? Are your application forms easy to access, either in your clubhouse or via your website? Is the process explained clearly to your prospects?
- Put yourself in the shoes of a prospective new member with no connections to this club and aim to remove as many of the perceived barriers you can think of!

# Promote Payment Options



## Are all your available payment options clearly stated?

- If you have a variety of payment options, please ensure these are communicated clearly to both prospective and existing members. Do not assume they will automatically know just because you have them on the club notice board.
- In the current climate, more and more clubs are offering more flexible payment options, from spreading over 4 – 12 months to collecting money throughout the year on your bar cards.
- When affordability becomes an issue, it is vital that your members know they aren't required to pay all their membership fees up front, if you offer such a facility.

# Support Your New Members



## Does your club do enough to integrate your new members?

- We often take members for granted and assume they know 'how to be a member' or the 'membership process' – the opposite is often the case where new members are concerned.
- Make your new members feel welcome! You can stage new members evenings, pair them up with a 'club buddy', provide them with a new member information pack or have a guided tour of the facilities.
- You should introduce new members to key people within the club (pro, secretary, captain, head barman). The more interaction a customer has with the brand, the more 'brand loyal' they become!

# Playing Opportunities



## Are your new members aware of when they can play?

- Many clubs tend to focus their energy on those golfers who play competitive golf in medals, however we shouldn't assume all new members will be competitive golfers.
- It is vital that you communicate all levels of playing opportunities to new members – they may only be interested in bounce games and social golf, so make sure they know these opportunities exist if you have availability during weekends or midweek evenings.
- It will help a new member plan their playing schedule and hopefully determine that they will have the time to get value from their membership.

# Non-Golf Offerings



## It's not just a golf course, its a club...

- Most golf clubs offer a variety of other benefits which can appeal to new members – a great place to eat, a venue to watch the football/rugby, social functions and somewhere to meet new people.
- With people generally having less time to play golf, its important you focus on promoting the other aspects of your club to new members.
- For example, your club may be the perfect place to take the family for Sunday lunch, or a great bar to watch the football in – increasing the frequency of your members' visits will ensure they feel like they are getting better value for money for their membership.

# New Member Welcome Pack



## Make your new members feel welcome...

- It is important to communicate well to new members – first impressions count! A simple welcome letter from the captain and a brief members' pack can make a huge difference.
- Think of the welcome pack you get in a hotel room – room service, food menus, opening hours of leisure facilities, contact details etc. You can replicate this for your club, with a golfing twist.
- Also consider – how I go about playing in a medal (when do starting sheets go up, do I have to pre-book a tee-time), how many members' guest rounds do I get, how can I book a lesson or a meal, can I sign my friends into the clubhouse, SGU rules & etiquette pocket guide...

# Summary



## Good recruiting leads to increased retention!

- Recruiting a new member, whether they have been a member of a golf club before or brand new to the game, is the most difficult challenge – retaining them should be easier but don't take it for granted.
- The golf club is within the customer service industry so your members should be treated as they would expect in other areas of the industry – think of the best examples of customer service and take the best bits for your golf club.
- Creating a good impression early in the customer life cycle gives you the platform to build a loyal customer – a little early investment can lead to a lifetime of revenue!