



# Membership Recruitment - Hosting an Open Day

February 2011

# Introduction



- **A Club Open Day is a fantastic way of attracting potential new members to your club from outside your traditional audience.**
- Our campaign evaluation from the past two years highlighted that 55% of clubs used an Open Day as part of their marketing campaign to attract new members.
- An Open Day gives you the opportunity to showcase your facilities, demonstrate your accessibility for new members, promote an open/welcoming environment and delivers face-to-face engagement with your customers.
- The following slides provide a guide to managing a successful Club Open Day.



# 1. Why Host an Open Day?

- Gives you an opportunity to promote the benefits of joining your golf club to a targeted audience.
- Allows you to engage immediately with your potential customers and offers direct face-to-face interaction.
- Demonstrates that your club is friendly, welcoming and open to new members, breaking down many negative perceptions of a golf clubs.
- Provides the opportunity for customers to 'touch, feel and sample' what your club has to offer (rather than just seeing it in words and pictures).
- Increases your presence and role in the local community.
- Creates a positive experience at the first point of contact.



## 2. Step-by-Step Guide

### 1. Plan

Audience	Objectives	Selling Points	Timetable/Budget	Internal Support
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### 2. Market

Targeting	Key Messages	Media Choice	Internal	Accessibility
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### 3. Deliver

Atmosphere	Facilities	Activities	Capture Info	Conversion
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### 4. Evaluate/Follow Up

Results	Follow Up	ROI	Next Time	Publicise
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## 3. Planning Your Open Day

- **Budget**
  - Planning and staging an Open Day will incur some costs establish and outline budget to include advertising, print and catering
- **Know Your Audience**
  - Identify your target audience – is there a particular age/gender and how far is your geographical reach
- **Set Objectives**
  - Set targets – how many new members would give you a good return on your investment; how much media coverage do you want to generate
- **Sell Your Strengths**
  - Research your current membership and ask them why they join the club and what are the key benefits they derive from being a member
  - Utilise your key assets e.g. imagery of the course, family atmosphere in the clubhouse, regular competitions, great food, a good junior section



## 3. Planning Your Open Day

- **Put a Timetable in Place**
  - Ensure you have enough time from now until the Open Day itself to plan, advertise and deliver your event
  - Take advantage of our national marketing campaign and Golf Awareness Week (11 – 17 April) to capitalise on awareness or coincide with the start of the golf season
  - Alternatively you can wait until the summer when your course is in peak condition and consider offering a trial 6- month membership from July or August
- **Internal Support**
  - Get all your committee involved or set up a sub-group to plan and manage the event
  - Agree the budget with your Finance Convenor
  - Involve other members as Club Ambassadors on the day and brief them on their role
  - Communicate the Open Day to your members so they know it is taking place and the course/clubhouse is set aside for your recruitment activities



## 4. Marketing your Open Day

- **Tell People Its Happening**
  - Your Open Day will only be a success if you tell your audience its happening!
  - Consider all the communication channels you have available to reach them
  - A poster in your own clubhouse isn't going to work...get your messages out to the wider community
  - Communicate the call to action – tell them the date, times and contact details for further information
- **What is your promotional hook or incentive?**
  - You should offer potential customers a compelling reason or incentive to come along to your Open Day
  - Consider some of the following options: No Joining Fee if you sign up on the day; 9 Holes of Golf and a bacon roll for £10; Win a Free Membership Prize Draw; Family Fun Day; Free Lesson with the Club Pro; Discounted family membership; Discounts for Groups of people joining on the day.
  - Have special offers that apply exclusively on the Open Day providing extra incentive to attend on the day e.g. No joining fee if you sign up at the Open Day



## 4. Marketing Your Open Day

- **Communication Channels**
  - Get costs for all your communication channels and prioritise within your budget
  - Consider the following options:
    - Local newspaper advertising and advertorial/editorial
    - Local radio advertising and news content
    - Local shops and partner organisations in your community
    - Door drop leaflets via your local post office, newspaper/magazine or ask members
    - Club website and e-bulletins
    - Existing members word of mouth communication to friends, family and work colleagues
    - Social networking sites – invite your younger members to help promote the event via Facebook and Twitter
  - Study our [Communication Channels Guide](#) for more detailed information to help you select the most appropriate method of communicating your Open Day



## 4. Marketing Your Open Day

- **Maximising your Marketing Materials**
  - Whether you are designing an advert, flyer or poster, ensure you communicate your key messages to sell your Open Day and sign off with a call to action to come along
  - Clearly communicate your promotional hook or incentive so your potential customers know what they can get on the day
  - Use good imagery of the clubhouse/course if you have it and remember to include your club's contact details, date and time of the Open Day
  - Ask around the club and committee if anyone has design/marketing experience – this will help you adopt a professional approach and may save you money
  - If you have space, provide an outline of the key benefits of joining your golf club within the marketing materials
  - If you are introducing new categories of membership, a new price structure or flexible payment options, ensure these are clearly communicated
  - Ensure all your marketing materials are consistent so your messages don't get confused



## 5. Delivering Your Open Day

- **Plan the Day**
  - It is vital that you develop a plan for the day to include a timetable, list of activities, assignment of staff to duties, block of tee-times and catering facilities
  - A positive customer experience will only be delivered if the day runs smoothly
  - Identify what activities your Open Day attendees can get involved with when they arrive e.g. a round or 9 holes of golf, welcome from the Pro or Captain, fun competitions, food and drinks
- **Activities**
  - Block off the course for potential customers wanting to play golf e.g. a round of golf for £10 and get your money back if you join on the day
  - Stableford or fun competition with prizes for the best scores
  - Free lesson or swing check from your Club pro (or leading players)
  - Putting or chipping challenge; nearest the pin; longest drive
  - Showcase your catering facilities – tea/coffee bacon rolls in the morning; buffet lunch in the afternoon; BBQ for good weather
  - Showcase your course – have a contingency plan for bad weather e.g. Photo slide show of the course; video footage or show golf on the TV
  - Include a presentation or welcome to highlight the key benefits of joining



## 5. Delivering Your Open Day

- **Provide Information and Capture Information**
  - Set up a check-in/welcome desk – ensure you have a friendly face to welcome guests, capture their data when they check in and provide them with an information pack on the day. Allocate their tee-time if a round of golf is involved and have someone to show them around the facilities.
  - Aim to capture name, address, e-mail address, age and phone number and a tick box to ensure you can provide follow-up information.
  - Ensure you have a good quality membership form and talk them through all your joining options.
  - Offer a feedback form so you can improve your Open Day for next year.
- **Atmosphere**
  - Ensure all members of staff, committee and volunteers are briefed to help generate a warm, friendly and 'open' atmosphere on the day
  - If you are targeting families, invite families of existing members to be there on the day to demonstrate you are a family oriented club
  - Check the basics! Open your doors, ensure the clubhouse is clean and tidy and the greenkeeper knows to have the course in as good condition as possible



## 6. Converting Customers

- **Don't have unrealistic expectations**
  - Not everyone who attends will sign up for membership on the day but you can ensure they leave with a positive experience of your club
  - Plan your follow-up communication to reach them within a week, either by e-mail, letter or phone call...strike while the iron is hot
  - Don't force a hard sell but leave them with all the information they need on joining the club and the associated benefits
- **For those who do join on the day**
  - Ensure your promises are delivered – make sure they obtain their incentive and provide a new members welcome pack
  - Follow up immediately – communicate via e-mail, letter or phone within the week to ensure everything meets their satisfaction



## 7. Evaluating Your Open Day

- **Feedback**
  - Gather feedback from attendees, members, committee and sub-group
  - Establish what elements worked, what elements need improvement, did your communication reach the right audiences, do we need more budget, do we need to plan more in advance?
- **Return on Investment**
  - How much did we spend versus how much revenue did we generate?
  - Did we raise the profile of the club in the community for future membership recruitment activity?
- **Publicise**
  - If successful, issue a press release or news story to your local newspapers
  - Communicate the success to your members via your newsletter
  - Tell the SGU...we want to hear about your success stories and follow up on our website as a news story, a case study and in national press



## Further Information

- A number of examples of case studies successfully delivered by clubs in Scotland are available on the SGU website. Click on the below links to access the examples

[\*\*Murcar Links Golf Club\*\*](#)

[\*\*Hirsel Golf Club\*\*](#)

[\*\*Lenzie Golf Club\*\*](#)

[\*\*Vale of Leven Golf Club\*\*](#)

- Contact Ross Duncan or Grant Cuthill at the Scottish Golf Union on 01334 466 477