



# **New Member Recruitment**

**March 2010**

# Content



- The following presentation is designed to give your Club some ideas on New Member Recruitment, which should be put into practice for Scottish Golf Awareness Week and throughout the season.
- This part of our Toolkit includes the following areas:
  - **Open Days**
  - **Member Referral Schemes**
  - **Local Advertising**
  - **Female Golfers**
  - **Student Membership**
  - **Pricing**
- Accompanying case studies are available at [www.scottishgolf.org](http://www.scottishgolf.org)

# Open Days



- Many clubs have successfully staged an '**Open Day**' to attract new members – a great opportunity for your club to attract golfers from outside your traditional audience.
- Having an Open Day portrays the right message to potential customers – it states that you are open for business and welcome new people through your door.
- You should offer golfers a compelling reason to visit your club on a given day or a choice of days, for example a complimentary or discounted round of golf – '**Try Before you Buy**'.
- Open Days should be advertised in your local area.

# Open Days



## TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL OPEN DAY:

- 1. Make people aware it is happening** – advertise in the local paper or on radio or distribute flyers to the local neighbourhoods.
- 2. Incentivise people to attend** – free or discounted round of golf; complimentary tea/coffee & bacon roll.
- 3. Special Offers** – sign up for membership on the day and receive 50% off the joining fee or 2 free lessons from your PGA pro.
- 4. Be Welcoming** – ensure you offer people a warm welcome; invite committee members or active members to meet and greet.
- 5. Follow Up** – data capture attendees and follow up with your latest membership offers, either via post or e-mail.

# Member Referral



- In the fitness industry, approximately 75% of new members are introduced to their club by existing members. What is the percentage at your club?
- Offering an incentive or reward to existing members represents a very small cost compared to the lifetime value of a new member – investing £100 could deliver £10,000 over the next 20 years.
- It also helps your club engage with its existing members and rewards them for their efforts – most club members will know someone who plays golf regularly but who hasn't joined a club.
- Your existing members will also talk up the benefits of joining the club and help spread word of mouth communication – they know that a full membership will be good for the club and help keep their own fees down.

# Member Referral



## TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MEMBER REFERRAL SCHEME:

- 1. Offer Your Members a Reward** – for example, £50 bar vouchers, £50 voucher for the Club Shop, £50 off membership fees for a year, free lessons with the Club Pro.
- 2. Promote the Scheme** – insert a flyers in your annual fees mailing, e-mail your members if you have an e-database, posters in the bar or locker rooms, issue flyers at the season's first medal.
- 3. Ask Members to Invite Guests** – set aside a day during the season where members can bring a guest (prospective member); treat them to a great day – round of golf and clubhouse hospitality.
- 4. Follow Up with New Members** – your newest members can also take part in the scheme – offer anyone who signs up the same benefit – they may just be your best referrals having had a positive experience.

# Local Advertising



- The majority of your target audience when actively marketing for new members will live in the local area therefore any advertising spend should be concentrated locally.
- Many local newspapers support their local golf club and most have a good relationship with you – they may cover your news and results or you may advertise with them.
- Some newspapers will offer free or contra advertising – perhaps in return for a round of golf to giveaway in a competition, or a meal at your clubhouse – low cost spend in return for high value advertising.
- Aim to build a good relationship with the local newspaper and negotiate preferential advertising or leaflet insert rates with them – you can offer to promote the local newspaper to your members in return.

# Local Advertising



## TIPS FOR LOCAL ADVERTISING:

- 1. Don't be scared to negotiate** – avoid settling for 'Rate Card' prices as very few advertisers will pay the full rates. You should get discounts for volume advertising or offer some promotion prizes in return for free or discounted advertising.
- 2. Get your advert designed** – use a specialist: we're not suggesting you use a big ad agency but investing in a local graphic designer or one of your members' with marketing skills can make a huge difference in the quality of your advert.
- 3. Focus on your key messages** – space may be at a premium so focus on your key message – either a special offer price or added value. Don't get bogged down in detail as you can provide detail at the enquiry stage.
- 4. Include a Call to Action** – sign off the advert with an e-mail address, phone number or an incentive to visit the club for more details.

# Banner Advertising



- Think of how much passing traffic goes past your clubhouse or course on a weekly basis? Are you advertising your membership to this passing traffic?
- As simple as it may seem, locating a Banner at the side of a road near your course, or on your course, advertising your club membership can attract the attention of hundreds or thousands of potential customers every week.
- They are relatively inexpensive to produce and if printed well can last a few years - many clubs have successfully adopted this strategy and have reaped the benefit of increased enquiries.
- Most digital printers or signage companies can have these produced for you, either using artwork you provide or asking them to design one for you.
- This will help get your message across, in combination with other parts of a marketing strategy.

# Banner Advertising



## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL BANNER ADVERTISING:

- 1. Keep the Message Simple** – the fewer words the better. People don't have much time to read your message so keep to the basics e.g. Your Golf Club - £500 a Year – Ask inside for details.
- 2. Make it Impactful** – use dark coloured fonts on a light background with large type. People will only see your banner at a glance so make sure it has quick impact.
- 3. Ask for Permission** – unless the banner is sited on your club's property you will have to ask for permission from the local council or landowner. You may also have to pay for using the space.
- 4. Have a Generic Message** – most banners are designed to last for 2-3 years so make sure your message is generic and time sensitive e.g. don't promote a special offer if it only lasts a month.

# Female Golfers



- Only 14% of golf club members in Scotland are female and this number is falling. Given that 50% of the population are female, girls and ladies are a relatively untapped target audience.
- There is evidence to suggest that girls and ladies are more inclined to get involved and join a golf club if there are girls/ladies only activity, perhaps with social aspects – something to consider when creating a package.
- A number of clubs have started Ladies group coaching or starter sessions for prospective female members and this gives you the opportunity of targeting groups of friends together.
- If you are targeting female golfers, ensure your club has a female-friendly policy and welcoming environment – many ladies are putt off by the perceived negative attitude of some clubs.

# Banner Advertising



## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL RECRUITMENT OF FEMALE GOLFERS:

- 1. Consider Other Marketing Channels** – target the areas where women in your local area are active e.g. women's supplement of your local paper; local hairdressers; local shops; local businesses where women in the workforce.
- 2. Women Only Golf days or Coaching** – offer opportunities for women, particularly if they are beginners, to take part in group coaching or fun, informal competitions with a social aspect added on.
- 3. Open Days for Women** – consider having an Open Day just for women, inviting existing female members to attend and present the benefits of membership. Promote Scotland's role models such as Catriona Matthew, Janice Moodie and Carly Booth.
- 4. Girls in Golf** – speak to your clubgolf Regional Manager about clubgolf's Girls in Golf campaign – whilst it targets youngsters, the same principles can be adopted for adult females.

# Overseas Membership



- Golf Clubs in Scotland are uniquely positioned to market membership to international golfers because of our position as 'The Home of Golf' and the large numbers of visitors who have played our courses.
- There are examples of clubs who have recruited overseas members on the back of a hugely positive experience of playing their course – whilst they may only return once every couple of years, they might join for life.
- The SGU have teamed up with VisitScotland to advertise Overseas Memberships on the 'Drive it Home' website – part of the Homecoming Scotland marketing campaign to attract more visitors with Scottish connections.
- You can also target visitor golfers who have played your course with a specially tailored membership package.

# Overseas Membership



## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL OVERSEAS MEMBERSHIP:

- 1. Create an Overseas Members Category** – this can be offered at a lower price given the frequency of an overseas member's play will be restricted.
- 2. Offer an Incentive** – why not team up with a local distillery and offer a bottle of whisky as an incentive? Or a Scotland-branded bag tag so they are proud to show it off in their home country.
- 3. Target Existing Visitors** – if you data capture your current visitors, you should follow up thanking them for their business and offering them a preferential Overseas Membership price.
- 4. SGU Golf Central** – tick the 'Overseas Membership' facility box on SGU Golf Central and your club will appear on the search lists from our 'Drive it Home' advertising.

# Student Membership



- With the huge increase in student numbers in Scotland over recent years there is a significant opportunity to market your membership to local students.
- Many new students coming to your local area may play golf and be forced to leave their home club – you can offer them the opportunity to keep a club membership going during their student years.
- Consider offering a reduced membership given the students may only live in the area on a temporary basis or consider no joining fee (which might put them off if they are only staying for 2 – 3 years).
- Your student category may restrict them to weekday play only, which would appeal given many students have free time during the week.

# Student Membership



## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL STUDENT MEMBERSHIP:

- 1. Market to the Student Population** – speak to the local Student Union about advertising in bars, Freshers' Week, student magazines or using student ambassadors
- 2. Tailor a Membership Category** – consider no joining fee; a mid price between junior and adult; restricted play for cheaper golf; special 3 or 4 year deal, depending on the length of their degree.
- 3. Offer this to Existing Junior Members** – a reduced price student membership category is a great way of retaining your existing juniors who may be considering student life – why not offer them a preferential student category to keep them on as members rather than losing them.
- 4. SGU Golf Central** – include your Student Membership Category on your Golf Central page – students are more likely to look for information on the web.

# Price Segmentation



- Price is a key factor in the decision-making process of joining a golf club and a key consideration of your club's marketing strategy.
- Many clubs have operated segmented pricing policy over the years however a number of clubs are now taking that a step further and introducing further price segments, or membership categories.
- This has been particularly focused on the 18 – 30 year-old age bracket – traditionally where clubs lose a lot of members due to lower income, becoming a student, moving away from the area, etc.
- By introducing various pricing steps, some clubs have successfully addressed this issue e.g. moving from junior to adult price by increasing the price by 10% each year for 10 years.

# Price Segmentation



## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL PRICE SEGMENTATION:

- 1. Avoid Disenfranchising your Existing Members** – whilst price segmentation is key, consider the impact it might have on your existing members – be careful how you implement new price categories.
- 2. Focus on the Younger Members** – most clubs introduce new pricing categories to target younger golfers who will graduate up to full membership or retain existing younger members.
- 3. Family Membership** – offering a family membership price is a great way of incentivising young families who want to play golf and spend time with their kids – why not offer a specific package?
- 4. Spread the Payments** – consider a monthly payment plan to spread the cost of payment, rather than asking for a lump sum up front. Many competitor business will offer this option (e.g. gyms).

# Academy Membership



- Clubs with suitable practice facilities may like to consider this category of membership. It can form an effective low-cost introduction to golf club life and form a stepping stone to full membership in the future.
- In return for a modest annual subscription, benefits could include:
- Introductory lessons from PGA professional
- Use of all practice facilities
- Discounted rate on range balls (if applicable)
- One rounds of golf on the course per quarter
- Use of clubhouse
- Opportunity to purchase the Scottish Golf Card
- Half-price joining fee when taking full membership
- Family packages available – good for adults and kids together

# Redundancy Clause



- In the current climate, prospective members may be put off joining a golf club for fear of redundancy. Equally, existing members may leave a club forever if they lose their job.
- Allowing members to suspend their membership if they lose their job for a certain period of time, with the option of rejoining when they find suitable new employment (within an agreed time frame).
- You may wish to offer them an alternative membership category during redundancy e.g. social membership with use of clubhouse, to retain them within the club environment and as a gesture of goodwill.
- This policy is one to carefully consider as unemployment figures in Scotland continue to rise.

# Other Considerations



## Check List of Other Considerations:

- Is your Dress Code a potential barrier for the type of new member you wish to attract?
- Does your club offer a welcoming environment to potential new members?
- Are your 'front of house' staff trained to welcome membership enquiries, either by phone, e-mail or face-to-face?
- Is your club taking advantage of free or cost effective marketing channels e.g. local paper coverage, your own members, your visitors' database, your committee members' businesses or shops?
- Does your club portray a family-friendly image or appeal to the younger generation?
- Is your club's website up-to-date with your current membership pricing and any special offers?
- Do you have a consumer friendly structured response to membership enquiries?

# Summary



## Scottish Golf Awareness Week, 10 – 18 April 2010

- The ideas contained within this document serve to give you a flavour of the type of activity your club can offer prospective members as part of your marketing strategy.
- Some of the ideas may work for you, some may not, however we suggest you consider these, and others, before embarking on your planned activity.
- We strongly recommend you develop an annual membership recruitment plan, whilst focusing much of your activity around the 'off-season' or membership renewal period – you want to give prospective members full value for their money if they do sign up.
- **Good luck with your campaign and be sure to tell us about your success stories!**