MARKETING YOUR CLUB

Reviewed August 2011

It is only over the past few years that the Private Members Club has started to look at ways of marketing itself whereas the Proprietary Club has in most cases always looked at ways of marketing its resources. Before setting out to do this at a Private Members Club it is important to find out if the members are not prepared to pay more for their subscriptions and so avoid having a large number of members and visitors over their course. The committee should try to ascertain the views of the members because far too often decisions are taken without taking into account the wishes of the membership. Most members want unlimited golf, cheap food and drink and not many want to pay the market price hence the need for visitors and societies. However just occasionally you may find a club in which the majority of members may take a different view so, if necessary, advise your committee to find out.

Some of the suggestions below could be used at either type of club and are worth looking into if your committee is looking for additional income.

1.   Find out if the members will not pay more
    - Survey of members
    - Extraordinary Meeting
    - Make sure you are getting full use by the existing membership

2.   Take note of what other clubs in area offer especially Proprietary clubs
    - Study golf press to see what other clubs in different areas offer
    - Do a survey on playing trends at your club – find out slack periods

3.   If answer to No.1 is no, then work out a strategy for increasing revenue.
    - Membership numbers and types
    - Five or six day members
    - Corporate members - local companies
    - Temporary members - holiday course perhaps offer weekly/monthly tickets

4.   Devise plan to obtain maximum numbers of casual visitors
    - Advertising - golf press/local press
    - Combine green fees with catering - all in charge for day
    - Encourage members to introduce guests

- Contact any local hotels - they will be pleased to offer golf in their brochures

5. Plan campaign to attract more societies
   - Write to current societies well in advance
   - Direct mailing - EGU list of approved societies
   - Mail shot to past societies offering competitive terms
   - Corporate/Company Golf Days - approach local companies

6. Has your club got any other facilities to offer?
   - Facilities for meetings/seminars/conference
   - Area suitable for driving range
   - Other sports - Tennis, Squash or Bowls.
   - Any buildings that could be converted into a Dormy House?
   - Land suitable to extend course or add short nine holes

7. When doing mail shots have suitable brochure printed
   - Plan well in advance, remember most societies plan in Autumn for next year
   - Include pictures of the course and clubhouse - worth getting done professionally

8. Use your Professional
   - Golf Clinics for Societies
   - Coaching session with video recordings of players swings

The above suggestions are only a few ideas that could if necessary be incorporated in your club and much will depend on the type of membership and club. What suits one club may well be frowned on at another. Always be looking around for ideas especially when you visit other clubs study the golf press and see what others are doing.

If the policy is to increase income by more visitors/societies try ensure that standards expected of your members are maintained by these persons and explain policy to members. Nothing is worse for visitors than to be treated unkindly by the members, especially after they have paid substantial sums for the day. Good course control and discipline are necessary and it may be advisable to employ a Starter and a Course Ranger to achieve this. Make sure the locker rooms are adequate for extra players and if necessary employ an attendant for busy days so that things like soap and towels are available, this also often helps with security.

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