

TIPS FOR RETENTION OF MEMBERSHIP & ATTRACTING MEMBERS

The Golf Course

- Where possible Provide the best possible playing conditions throughout the year and in particular avoid the use of temporary tees and greens during the winter period
- Where space allows provide practice areas, driving range and academy holes
- Ensure that there are sufficient distance markers and that hazards, out of bounds etc are clearly marked.
- Ensure that the course staff are familiar with golf etiquette and are courteous to members.
- A long-term course management plan should set out the commitment of the club to fund an agreed maintenance and development plan. At all costs avoid one-off type changes to the golf course, or a major redevelopment with little real benefit for members. Not all golf courses can be “championship” courses nor should the level of difficulty adversely impact on a player’s enjoyment of the course.
- Provide visitors and guests with a course planner as part of the green fee and ensure that there are sufficient routing indicators, distance markers and that hazards, out of bounds etc are clearly marked.

Reception and Clubhouse

- Members should always be made to feel welcome on arrival at the Club. Name recognition can be an important part of this process and all staff should be encouraged to meet and greet.
- Where possible, that the Club provides battery charging facilities and good storage facilities for clubs, caddy cars, buggies etc.
- Have a well located, presented and stocked Professional’s Shop with a provision for Competition Entry, where possible.
- Reception areas should be open and obvious, ideally not hidden behind glass panels.
- A key element in the clubhouse is the quality and standards of the changing rooms and its facilities.
- Bar and catering hours and menus should reflect changing patterns in terms of playing times and social activities.
- It is important is that the dress code is clearly stated and preferably in terms of what is considered suitable attire both on the course and in the clubhouse. The dress code should be updated from time to time.

- Ensure that your club website is up-to-date and user friendly.
- Automated Telephone Answering Service should be user friendly.
- Visitors and guests should always be made to feel welcome on arrival at the Club. Name recognition can be an important part of this process and all staff should be encouraged to meet and greet. Remember every visitor/ guest is a potential new member.

Playing Golf and Time Availability

- Maximise use of course facility, taking into account members' requirements:
 - Online tee time reservation.
 - Two tee starts
 - Two balls, three balls
 - Competitions over two days
- Time pressure has been reported as one of the most significant issues for younger (25-44) golfers in relation to club membership.
- Pace of play can be equally relevant during competition and non-competition days and clubs should develop policies to ensure that players do not suffer undue or unnecessary delays. Issues to be considered:
 - Course setup in terms of rough, hazards, length etc.
 - Over reliance on distance markers
 - Variations in course measurements - distance to the front or middle of greens
 - Lack of knowledge of etiquette and rules
 - Use of a course ranger with real authority
 - Play when ready, with the honour only on the first tee.
- Sufficient availability of tee times for golf outside competitions.
- Provide a variety of competitions for example:
 - Member and Guest/Semi-Opens
 - Family Competitions (Adult/Child) o Increased Mixed and Team Events
 - Singles, Fourball, Foursomes events over 9, 12, 15, 18 holes
- Reciprocal arrangements/Swap Days with other Affiliated Golf Clubs.
- Consider a more flexible or off-peak pricing to encourage visitor usage. A simplistic weekday or weekend approach may be restrictive.
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Social

- Organise golf events with an emphasis on the social aspect e.g. family groups, mixed team events, events for certain age categories etc.
- Arrange seminars on the Rules of Golf, Etiquette and the CONGU Unified Handicapping System.
- Family friendly facilities can be an important factor in the decision to remain a member of a Golf Club.
- To the extent that the social context remains important it is very much a golf related aspect where the social elements are intrinsically linked to the playing of golf.
- Is there space to introduce other sports facilities e.g. exercise room, tennis, bowling, pitch and putt, field sports etc.
- Arrange alternative social outlets e.g. concerts, choirs, bridge, card games, wine tasting, painting classes, cookery demonstrations, dance classes etc.
- Family friendly facilities can be an important factor in the decision to join a Golf Club.
- Potential members can be introduced to the club as for example 'transitional members' through a scheme of temporary membership i.e. three to six months or as a 'summer member' from April to September. It is important that Clubs provide a structured introductory programme during this transition period to include coaching, rules and etiquette.
- Develop arrangements with local gym, tennis, GAA, soccer or rugby clubs or other sports related facilities for the purpose of promoting golf membership.
- Arrange open invitation days to promote your facilities to non-club members.
- Arrange members guest days for prospective members.
- Beginners taster sessions aimed at target audience e.g. junior girls and boys.
- Open the Club's facilities (Bar, Catering etc) to all visitors.