Find Your Inner Foodie
F&B Partnerships Pump up Profits

Getting the Holiday Spirit
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When The Snow Flies
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Find Your Inner Foodie
Unique food and beverage partnerships are drawing non-golfers to the course and pumping up the profits in the process.

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"Rain Bird has been a huge help for dialing in our system. They made it a much easier transition during the restoration."

Stephen Rabideau, CGCS | Director of Golf Courses, Winged Foot Golf Club
The Case for Diversity

In today’s America, it’s hard to escape the topic of how demographics are changing. I’m always thinking about how these greater societal, economic and political issues – specifically changing demographics – relate to golf. I think there are two ways to look at the prospect of diversity and inclusion in the golf industry: passionately or dispassionately. When I say dispassionately, I mean looking through the spectrum of cold facts and numbers. The passionate perspective may derive from feelings of right and wrong or justice and injustice, and it might be more about what to do about it. Whichever path you choose, I believe there is a strong case to be made for extending the invitation to audiences that traditionally have been left out or left behind by our industry.

If you take the dispassionate approach, you could sympathize with the position that marketing consultant Andrew Wood takes in his advice to social media audience: going after “ghetto kids” this world is a waste of time. Instead, he proclaims course operators should invite back the bread-and-butter demographic (middle-aged white guys) who have money to spend and their old clubs hanging up in the garage. Because, well, young minority boys and girls aren’t going to give your business a game-changing lift next quarter or next year. If you look at the facts, he’s not wrong about the short-term. The pause is too far to achieve transformative and widespread change overnight. Nevertheless, I think at the local level, one could see change pretty quickly with the right approach. Yet, if you look at the facts of where demographics are going in America, it won’t even be one generation until there are more non-white than white people. It’s our job as association leaders to get this right, and several organizations are doing very good work. We should do well to remember the opposite of exclusion is inclusion, and by inclusion I do not mean the door to your business is open to anyone who may want to pay for a tee time. It’s about getting out of your comfort zone and going into the world to seek out women and ethnic minorities, and literally invite them to come.

Knowing small business owners and operators as I do, it’s not always practical to think about more than 20 or 30 years from now. You’re rightfully concerned with how the business will do next week or next month. It may not always seem practical to spend time, energy and money on diversity, when the “pay off” may not be seen for a very long time. But I believe inviting the “old guys” back to the course, who gave up the game 10 years ago, and reaching out to the underrepresented gender and ethnicities are not mutually exclusive.

I’m reminded of that old saying, “Save money like you’re going to live forever, but buy insurance like you may die today.” It’s possible to simultaneously take care of today AND look out for the future. It’s our job as association leaders, who run organizations that presumably will exist in perpetuity, to look at the next quarter and the next half-century. Ignoring the diverse future would be passionately, dispassionately and irresponsibly wrong.

When faced with the opportunity to invest time, energy and money to create a more inclusive reality in golf, we should look at the facts and listen to the better angels of our nature.

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As we prepare to close out the year with the November/December issue of Golf Business magazine, we’re well underway in planning for a very special 2020.

Following its publish date in 1915, next year will be Golf Business magazine’s 25th anniversary. And with that silver anniversary milestone, we have some new features in store for our readers.

In each issue throughout 2020, Golf Business will take a look back at stories in past issues, and revisit the people, trends, business issues or controversies featured. This will be an opportunity to review the road the golf industry has taken and prepare the path ahead and the game of the future.

Two new features will join our regular lineup for 2020.

For a look at the increasing importance of the food and beverage industry’s impact on golf course operations, we’ll talk with those people who have found success and share their tips and “secret sauce” in What’s Cooking.

As the golf market retail changes with more focus on technology as well as fashion and equipment, along with focus into performance gear and supplements, we will be sharing the inside story from golf shop operators implementing the latest trends in Shop Talk.

Special reports on the Golf Business magazine calendar include Labor & Staffing, Food & Beverage, Women in Golf, Finance and the third annual Technology Issue. We will continue to tell the tales of golf course operators who have made an impact, and how their readers can take a page from their books, while stretching our wings with the Golf Business podcast and future digital products.

As we prepare for this special 25th anniversary year, we also want to hear from readers about what they’d like to see. Send your thoughts to bgifford@ngcoa.org.

Golf Business magazine looks forward to seeing what the future holds for all of us.

Correction

In the October 2019 issue of Golf Business, in the cover story titled “Survival Tactics,” the name of Andrew Peterson of the Municipal Golf Association of San Antonio, also known as the Alamo City Golf Trail, was misspelled.

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A View From the Industry

By Boots Gifford

Editor in Chief

Golf Business magazine

25 Years and Counting

National Golf Course Owners Association

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2019 Water Rule Repealed, What’s Next?

In Sept 12, the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Army published a final rule to repeal the 2015 Clean Water Rule: Definition of “Waters of the United States.” In its official public notice, EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler stated, “Today’s Step 1 action fulfills a key promise of President Trump and sets the stage for Step 2 - a new WOTUS definition that will provide greater regulatory certainty for farmers, landowners, home builders, and developers nationwide.” During his comments, Assistant Secretary of the Army of Civil Work added, “The final rule repeals the 2015 Rule and restores the previous regulatory regime exactly how it existed prior to finalization of the 2015 Rule.”

The next step in the two-step process intended to review and revise the definition of “Waters of the United States” consistent with the Executive Order signed on Feb. 28, 2017, “Restoring the Rule of Law, Federalism and Economic Growth by the Reviewing the ‘Waters of the United States’” federally regulated under the Act. On Feb. 14, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of the Army (Army) proposed a revised definition of “Waters of the United States,” which would delineate the scope of federal regulatory authority under the Clean Water Act in a clear and understandable way. The golf industry supports the CWA, opposed the 2015 rules and supports efforts by the EPA and the Corps to replace it with a rule that both protects the principles of cooperative federalism and enables industry: responsible parties to proactively apply sound science practices to their land management activities that protect the environment without impacting business, jobs and communities. Our industry has long-standing support through university-based agronomic and environmental research that has developed best management practices for design, construction and golf course management.

On April 15, NGCOA along with GCSGA, PGA, CMAA, NCA, AGSRA and GCGBA under the We Are Golf banner, shared our comments with the administration supporting the proposed rule. We shared our belief that golf courses are designed as a water conveyance system in order to best manage surface water flow from stormwater, flood or irrigation flow through either natural or man-made conveyances. These waters are conveyed, stored, and/or utilized for irrigation or filtering purposes. They also are designed to collect runoff from adjacent properties for flood control and pollution prevention. Courses use this runoff as an irrigation source as well. They also use reclaimed water to help water purveyors manage excess recycled water. The course irrigates with this water providing filtration and an economical solution for disposal of reclaimed water.

Water will remain a critical issue for our industry. Many, especially in the media, have the perception that this new policy is being developed to benefit our president’s golf course properties. This issue is much greater than the few courses he owns. But hopefully, during this process, we have educated many on the benefits our industry provides in protecting our waters and the greater environment. We encourage members to help share this message within our communities. We support sound environmental management policies but they must be clear and support the needs of both the business community and the public.

It is expected that a new WOTUS Rule will be finalized before the end of the year. Until then owners and operators across the United States have a common regulation to follow, the Clean Water Act.

A View From the Industry

By Boots Gifford

Editor in Chief

Golf Business magazine

2019

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ngcoa.ca/conference

2020

January 20-22
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January 21-24
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Convention Center
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May 5-6
National Golf Day
Washington, D.C.
wearegolf.org/national-golf-day/

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2019 GOLF BUSINESS® NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2019 11 GOLFBUSINESS.COM 10
(Tee) Time is Money

The old adage has always been that time is money. Time is one of the most valuable commodities, largely because we all have a finite amount of it. The same can be said of golf courses. In fact, it’s probably a bit hackneyed now to reiterate that your tee times have actual value in a dollar amount – real money.

As such, we’ve constantly advocated that golf courses analyze the opportunity costs associated with any barter agreement, where the actual value you give (in tee times) and receive in return (software and services) may not be equitable.

Aside from the equitability factors, which we have discussed ad nauseam, lay the questions around taxability of barter sales and transactions. Which party bears the responsibility of reporting the sales data?

Back in the early part of 2017, we sought to tackle this question and provide the industry with an in-depth analysis of the tax obligations each party has when entering into a barter agreement. After spending a good bit of time – and money – we were left only more perplexed. Largely because no state or federal tax authority had even broached the issue.

That changed on Sept. 16, when the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts’ three-year audit of an online tee time agency resulted in an administrative law judge finding that the OTTA was not entitled to a sales tax waiver on reservation fees because those taxes were never assessed.

Additionally, the court found the barter transactions made by the OTTA are taxable as data processing services. The OTTA did not collect any sales tax on the reservation fees from the barter transactions that took place during the audit period (April 1, 2011 to September 30, 2014).

There’s certainly a lot to unpack in this 11-page opinion. But rest assured we are working diligently to help you understand exactly what this means for you and your facility.

Two things have always worried me about this.

If the industry as a whole is unsure about the tax obligations for those entering into barter transactions, how will tax authorities view this?

Even if golf courses have an obligation to report some of the barter sales data, realistically, how can they? The major OTTAs aren’t going to disclose full and transparent barter sales data (number of times sold and rate at which each sold). It’d be too much like the right thing to do. And it would allow for courses to more easily determine whether a barter agreement is sensible for their facility.

And the actual dollar amount in green fees the OTTA charged golfers was indeed the tax basis for which the auditor found barter transactions as taxable data processing. The result: a $1 million assessment liability for the OTTA and a 10 percent penalty for late filing periods and interest.

In Texas, taxable items include services, and here the court identified a golf green fee as a taxable amusement service (sale price of an amusement service includes fee charged for admission – in this case, green fees).

Every state is different and you need to find out what the relevant law is in your state. But one statement in the court’s opinion should stick with all of us:

“The business records petitioner provided were scant and did not establish details about what golf courses received in the barter transaction. Based on the evidence presented, it does not appear that petitioner gave any thought to sales tax consideration when it was characterizing the revenue at issue.”

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In golf, it’s important to choose your partner carefully.

By Jared Williams
Managing Director
GOLF USA TEE TIME COALITION

Coalition Concerns

By Jared Williams
Managing Director
GOLF USA TEE TIME COALITION

Rounds Played

August 2019

Data percentage compared to same period last year.

---

Pacific

0%

Mountain

0%

West North Central

3%

East North Central

7%

South Central

-3%

South Atlantic

0%

Mid Atlantic

12%

New England

9%

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It doesn’t matter what kind of golf course you run, NGCOA is for you.

Getting Into the Holiday Spirit

Eat, drink & be merry — and how about a little golf, too?

This is the time of year to think about ways in which the holiday season can and should overlap with your golf operation. The motivation for doing so could be add-on revenue, member appreciation, community outreach, a charitable event or just a feel-good opportunity to celebrate with those around you.

Sherea Malcolm
Member Specialist

Reynolds Lake Oconee held a holiday sale, logging no less than $59,000 in sales over a three-day period.

By Xxxxxx

THE START
NEWS & VIEWS TO PROPEL YOUR BUSINESS

Reynolds Lake Oconee
held a holiday sale, logging no less than $59,000 in sales over a three-day period.

By David Gould

NGCOA

It doesn’t matter what kind of golf course you run, NGCOA is for you.
A public facility in Lopatcong, New Jersey, called The Architects Golf Club, they get a real jump on the season by hosting a Thanksgiving Day dinner with a full-field golf tournament preceding it. The idea is based on the traditional Thanksgiving dinner served in the facility’s manorial clubhouse. Since people need something to do in the early part of the day besides watching high school football, an 8 a.m. shotgun tournament was added, priced at $49 per player. Tumout is weather-dependent, but in the Northeast it’s surprising how often fine weather comes along for Turkey Day.

The great thing about holiday planning for golf courses and clubs is the “accordion” factor — you can go all out with black-tie, 10-course dinners on New Year’s or simply do a special merchandise event in the golf shop for December. You can go it alone or you can connect with others in the golf community to organize a bigger event. In Myrtle Beach, where golf operations team up to do all sorts of things, they use their combined resources to promote golf plus holiday fun in the region. On the myrtlebeachgolf.com website there’s a push every year to sell golf packages as Christmas gifts, with detailed plans for how to ring in your visit. No opportunity is missed to tout Shadetree’s Christmas Wonderland, an iconic Grand Strand show of lights, music and other Yuletide enjoyment.

Part of finding holiday opportunities for your golf business is tracking the changeable consumer habits around shopping and celebrating. The line of thought at Williamsburg (Virginia) Golf Club is that Black Friday mall-crawling — though eagerly awaited by many — isn’t something its members are keen on. Instead they and their guests are invited for an 8:30 a.m. breakfast, a 10 a.m. shotgun tournament and a sale in the golf shop offering the greatest merchandise discounts of the year.

If there’s concern about staffing and control and worked in teams to run the registers, work the gift-wrap stations and restock product on the sale tables, freshly baked cookies and hot chocolate accompanied by Christmas music got shoppers in the mood — many of them having waited in line 30 minutes before the sale began on opening day. More than 1,000 shoppers completed transactions. From a revenue standpoint, the sale was a grand success, logging no less than $59,000 in sales over a three-day period.

If your resources are considerably more limited, a merchandising dive into the holiday season can be small-scale but still creative, just check the bulk golf ball wholesaling websites and you’ll find endless seasonal logos including Santa Claus, snowmen, Hanukkah dreidels, menorahs and probably the Three Wise Men looking for one more to make a foursome.

It’s a proven connection between the arrival of the New Year and lessons, range plans, clinics and the like. Golfers who are improvement-oriented or generally frustrated act a lot like those folks looking to “get back to the gym” — they adopt a this-is-my-year mindset and are extremely open to suggestion when it comes to teaching and training. All the big academies market New-Year, new-you lessons and practice packages — no reason not to try it yourself.
November and December can be perfect golf months in many parts of the country. But a lot of areas in the Southeast, Southwest and Midwest deal with frost delays, even on days that warm into beautiful afternoons.

What do you do operationally to be proactive on days when you anticipate frost?

Carr Crowe: Because of the way our course is laid out, we really can’t go with shotgun starts on those days. But we know frost days are coming. Throughout most of November and December, we get frost almost every morning when it’s not overcast, so we pay close attention to the forecast and don’t book tee times before about 10 a.m. There’s just no reason to book a time when you know you likely can’t get people out. They might have other time commitments where pushing them back is not an option. We’d rather leave those times open and then, if it looks like the weather will be better and we can get them out earlier, we’ll open up some times between 9:30 and 10:00, last minute, and work back from there.

Jeff Williams: The best practice is to communicate early and often, which we do. When someone books at a time that we think will probably be affected by frost, we let them know, up front, that there is a good possibility of a frost delay and that, if that happens, those times will be pushed back. We’ve found that people are very understanding as long as you are up front and in constant communication with them.

What do you do with the players who do show up on days when you have a longer frost delay than expected?

Crow: Obviously, if there’s frost, it’s cold. So we do things like offer some free coffee to people who are delayed and we make sure there are plenty of food options for them. We also might offer a 20 percent discount on all outerwear that morning as a gesture of goodwill, to let them know that we understand their frustration.

Williams: We make sure there is food and coffee and all the things that players want. But we also educate people on why we can’t open with frost. Most people don’t realize that if the ground itself is frozen you really can’t hurt it, but frost freezes the blades of grass. If you step on them, they’ll shatter and die. Once you explain that to people and let them know what the plan is for getting them out as soon as possible, we find that they’re very understanding.

By Steve Eubanks

GPS Guides Golf Gift Giving

When it comes to great technological advances for the game of golf, arguably one of the most popular innovations of the 21st century was the introduction of GPS-powered technology. Indeed, when the satellite-based Global Positioning System was pioneered by ProLink Inc. founder and CEO Douglas Lecker 25 years ago and subsequently adopted by golf-car manufacturers EZ-GO, the everyday golf course experience changed forever.

At least for those owners and players who saw value in these cutting edge cars. Today, of course, many of the industry’s golf-car GPS features some type of GPS-powered technology. And modern-day golfers can’t seem to live without their GPS yardage markers.

When Lecker was featured 17 years ago in a New York Times article, the former Boeing engineer, Arizona entrepreneur said once GPS technology became less expensive and more widely available in the mid-1990s, he realized its pinpoint accuracy was a natural fit for a gaming game like golf. At the time, Lecker envisioned golf cars one day delivering stock quotes, business news and having other business and consumer-oriented benefits.

To be sure, that day has arrived with golfers getting a lot more out of those ubiquitous roof mounted screens than just distances for their next shot.

In fact, GPS has become so popular that the number of gadgets offering this type of precision technology is seemingly endless thanks to the advances that now allow GPS to be integrated in things that can fit on the wrist or in palm of one’s hand.

In honor of the holiday gift-giving season, here are a couple of GPS-powered devices helping golfers at all levels drill down the ultimate in distance measurement and swing data statistics.

SkyCaddie SX500 - This new GPS handheld, made by Ridgefield, Mississippi-based Sky-Golf, is becoming one of the most trusted rangefinders in the game after Englishman David Shacklady touted the hand-held, 5-inch, full HD touch screen device after his victory last September at the SunTrust Tour Sanford Invitational. It was actually the third win on the UK pro tour this year by golfers using the device pre-loaded with more than 35,000 of SkyGolf’s “ground-verified, error-corrected maps for unmatched accuracy.”

One of the newer innovative features of the SX500’s powerful processor is “Dynamic HoleVue”, which automatically re-orientates the entire golf hole from your position to the green as you progress from the tee. So, by leveraging SkyCad-die’s patented IntelliGreen technology, golfers can now see the entire hole from their point-of-view to quickly acquire distances to avoid interfering hazards to plot the best strategy for every shot.

Garmin Approach S40 - This stylish stainless-steel GPS golf smart watch pretended with 41,000 plus international courses not only looks the part and off the course, but also delivers some compelling features. Not the least of which is a color display built with a higher resolution so the device is sunlit readable in high glare situations and streamlined to present all relevant information right when you need it.

For instance, the Approach S40 automatically records each shot along the fairway and records distances for post-game analysis on Garmin Connect. Other newer features: The watch will automatically update courses you frequently play when synced with Garmin Connect; monitor steps and sleeping, with dedicated modes for running and cycling; and sync with smartphones to allow notifications for incoming calls or texts.

To give the brand more cachet, Garmin International Inc., a unit of publicly traded Garmin Ltd., announced last August a new partnership with Hall of Fame golfer Greg Norman to be a global brand ambassador. “Having used many different products over the years, I can say with conviction that Garmin offers the most precise and advanced GPS technology for the course and has truly helped me improve my game,” Norman said. “I wear my Garmin Forerunner watch almost every day. It’s sleek, lightweight and water resistant, so it can go everywhere I go – from the golf course to the boat and beyond.”

Scott Kauffman is a golf business writer and the managing director of the John Deere Group, and a regular technology columnist for GolfBusiness. You can contact him with tips or news at scott@kauffmangroup.com.
Rain Bird has partnered with NGCOA to offer a four-part video series on the "4 T's of Water Conservation." You can view all of the videos on the NGCOA's page at YouTube.com.

If you missed this feature from the October issue of Golf Business magazine, check online at golfbusiness.com to learn about how munis are making changes.

What’s Hot In My Shop

Jim Schouller Jr. • PGA Head Golf Professional
Abenaqui Country Club • Rye Beach, New Hampshire

Sunfish Custom Headcovers
Using the state logo combined with the club logo has appealed to a broader audience. Also, the perceived value of the Sunfish brand has helped increase margins.

Stache Mugs
Being able to customize the artwork on the insulated mugs has helped keep the inventory fresh and exciting. I was able to take a picture of our entrance sign with the Atlantic Ocean in the background and Stache Mugs was able to make a high-quality mug with that image. Stache has low minimums and allows us to be flexible and creative.

Imperial Headwear
Showing state pride and the club logo have provided new fashions in headwear. We still sell the simple, understated classic hat, but also now have some broader choices. Just as fancy print shirts have been hot, fancy print hats will continue that trend.

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Aerate, Amend and Play Right Away!

Water Works

Rain Bird has partnered with NGCOA to offer a four-part video series on the "4 T's of Water Conservation." You can view all of the videos on the NGCOA’s page at YouTube.com.

Register Now

Golf Business Conference 2020 is co-locating with the PGA Show in Orlando, Florida. Registration is now open at golfbusinessconference.com.

Survival Tactics

If you missed this feature from the October issue of Golf Business magazine, check online at golfbusiness.com to learn about how munis are making changes.

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More Not Necessarily Merrier

Regent Golf Values Relationships Over Growth

“Look, growth is a heck of a drug.”

- TIM DUNLAP

By Steve Eubanks

By Steve Eubanks
“Our business is not transactional, it’s relational.”

- TIM DUNLAP

But every high has its crash, every party its hangover. And while you might gain all the trappings of being an industry giant when you grow to a certain scale, you lose the thing your clients and partners need and value most. You lose your relationships.

That’s why a relatively new partnership called Regent Golf in Georgia is taking the opposite approach in its growth strategy.

“Our business is not transactional, it’s relational,” said Tim Dunlap, who, along with Steve Paris, formed Regent Golf as a boutique firm with a specific niche.

According to Paris, “We are going to be very selective about the kinds of clients we do and do not do business with, for example we shouldn’t be butting heads with companies like Troon on properties that are next to Starwood Hotels. That’s not who we are. We’re very good at that. But our goal has been to have 50 clubs. “

“We’re not going to do that. Our ideal strategy and long-term growth. And they don’t want to be part of that again.

“We really like the 14-club rule,” Dunlap said, referencing the Rule of Golf as analogous to Regent’s rules governing effective golf management.

“Look, growth is a tick of a drug,” Dunlap said. “But with a small number of clubs and a select group of club owners, our time and attention can be devoted to developing and maintaining those relationships. Three-year management agreements where you’re in and out, that’s not relational. That’s strictly a transaction. …The brand we’re building isn’t our brand; it’s the brands of the owners whose legacies we’re invested in protecting. That’s what we care about.

“Other management companies are using cookie cutters. They bring in the same systems one club after another, whether or not the next club needs that same cookie. That’s a growth strategy but not a long-term operational strategy. That’s not a strategy that’s good for the owners; not a strategy that’s good for the relationship they have with their members and not a good strategy for us as a management company.”

Regent has two courses under management – one club in California (owned by a woman who inherited the property from her father) that was on the verge of closing but is now thriving – and the second in North Carolina where Regent has taken over from one of the largest management companies in the industry. Two more are expected to be online by the end of the year.

But Paris and Dunlap are in no rush. Lasting relationships take time.

Steve Eubanks is an Atlanta-based freelance writer and New York Times bestselling author.
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Winter Haven Seeks Success on Road Less Traveled

BY STEVE EUBANKS

Great golf isn’t always enough, especially once the pavement ends, literally. When most of the country thinks of Florida they either imagine beachfront condos, tower upon gleaming tower from Jacksonville to Miami, or Disney World and other assorted attractions. The idea that a golf course capable of hosting a Florida State Open, one of the larger Symetra Tour events and a couple of mini-tours could be so remote that the road narrows to one lane of sand and shale before you get there seems farfetched.

But that’s what it’s like to visit the Country Club of Winter Haven on a lonely stretch of the Sunshine State between Orlando and Tampa, south of nowhere and miles from the nearest Burger King. The course is a gem with a long history. It dates back to the 1920s when the area, as the name suggests, was a winter haven for wealthy northerners who needed a quiet place to escape, close enough to the golf coast to keep civilization in reach but far enough away to still have panthers, bears and alligators longer than Cadillacs.

As golf exploded in more populated areas of the state, Country Club of Winter Haven needed a facelift. In 2011, Bill Bergin redesigned the course to rave reviews. “We’re incredibly lucky to have such a classic piece of private club expertise to ensure Winter Haven is well-positioned to meet the needs of our members,” Steve Eubanks, the company’s CEO Steve Skinner said. “We look forward to working with the members and staff to elevate the experience and introduce a new generation of members to everything the club has to offer.”

Places like Streamsong can get away with being remote. There are a hotel, multiple courses and topography that makes you think of a hundred places other than Florida. But with the exception of Streamsong, Bandon Dunes and Sand Valley, the “Field of Dreams” adage rarely works in golf. If you build it, they won’t always come. Country Club of Winter Haven is a perfect example.

According to club president Mike Mahalak, “Through this new partnership, we will be tapping into Kemper Sports’ private club expertise to ensure Winter Haven is well-positioned to meet the needs of our members.”

Winter Haven has brought in Kemper Sports to market the club as something other than a great golf course with little around.

“We’re excited to welcome the Country Club of Winter Haven to the Kemper Sports family,” the company’s CEO Steve Skinner said. “We look forward to working with the members and staff to elevate the experience and introduce a new generation of members to everything the club has to offer.”

Third-party tee-time companies suck you in with attractive offers of technology and tee-sheet management, website construction, even social media engagement. For an owner who is worried about the tees being tamped on his prime land, he is an enticing proposition. They will handle everything. All the outfit wants in return is a few tee times, marginal ones in off-peak hours that would probably sit unused anyway, for that, they promise you the world.

And before you know it, you’re stuck. You’ve lost control of your tee sheet; lost control of your rate; lost control of your margins, your income and your messaging. Your course and your brand are worth what a third-party facilitator in a far-distant place says it’s worth.

In the meantime, your expenses are piling up for insurance, chemicals, fertilizer, equipment, capital improvements—increase at an unyielding pace.

That’s the trap we see every day,” said Todd Brown, who, along with the brother, John, formed Brown Golf Management in 2011. “Owners lose control of their revenue, in essence giving control of their rate to another party while keeping the responsibility for their expenses that just go up and up.

The Browns stepped into the management and ownership business in 2011. In eight years they have acquired, leased or signed management agreements with 20 facilities encompassing 28 courses in seven states, a remarkable growth curve built on one simple principle: “We take back control of revenue and we use technology to grow that revenue,” Brown said.

So many, the technology seems space-age; even though it is becoming more common by the day. Players can book and pay for tee times with their Alexa devices. Player profiles are automatically uploaded and specialized merchandise offers are tested to players before they arrive for their times. You can request and receive tee times via text or email. And you have reciprocity with no up-charges to any Brown-managed facility in the country.

“If you’re a member of one of our clubs you can travel to some of our destination locations and play,” Brown said. “It’s about $45 in season and out of season, it’s like $35. We don’t charge you an arm and a leg. We have properties in Pinehurst, Orlando, Jacksonville, Hilton Head, and you can go play those courses with ease if you’re taking a trip with your family.”

The Browns’ timing was perfect. Golf was still reeling in 2011. It was a buyer’s market and they were ready to buy. “We had a fortunate start,” Todd Brown said. “We got hooked up with a capital investor. One thing led to another. We bought a few courses, leased a few and managed some. Do that and before you know it, you’re pretty sizable. But we put a lot of assets into getting our message out there.”

The message is simple: Anything a third-party discounter tells you they can do, Brown can do better, in house, so that control remains within the club.

“Ours is different,” Brown said. “Our optimum club is semi-private where, when we come in, they do a minimum of $1.5 million in revenue but they need more direction and control over that revenue,” Brown said. “Those are things that we’ve done really well. Then you control the expenses. So many of the properties we see today the expenses have morphed out of control while the owners no longer have 100% control of their revenue.”

The Browns own or lease 60 percent of the clubs in their portfolio. The rest are third-party management contracts. Some, like Tanglewood in North Carolina, are partial management and consulting contracts, but those are rarities. The company’s differentiating philosophy is capturing data and controlling revenue. Partly, Brown thinks, “It’s about execution.”

“Even a company my size, I’m able to buy things at the same pricing discount as someone who has 200 clubs,” Brown said. “You reach a cap with purchasing discounts, so that adding more clubs doesn’t give you incrementally greater savings. There aren’t any excess discounts, but with 28 properties, you can still visit every one of them every year. If I had 200, I couldn’t see them or have a personal impact on them every year.”

Still, Brown hopes to get to 5 or 10 clubs in the coming years. There are certainly that many owners who have lost control of their revenue—frogs slowly boiling, with only one way out.

“It is a sad fact of the business,” Brown said. “Third party tee time operators sell your times for less than you could command on your own. We take back control of the revenue while providing personalized service. It’s worked pretty well so far.”
here are various reasons why people want to own golf courses. Some high-net worth individuals simply do it for the prestige. Other people invest in courses because the unique nature of these leisure real estate assets represent sound business strategies for both short- and long-term situations.

For Joni and Ted Smith, who purchased struggling Milledgeville County Club three years ago in central Georgia, it was personal. Not because they have a certain affinity to the game or business. It was personal because the Smiths are from the area and they happened to be members of the club going back to the 1980s.

**Community Investment**

Milledgeville Country Club’s legacy lives on

By Scott Kauffman
"It was just being good business stewards here in Milledgeville and helping our community grow."

-JONI SMITH

Interestingly, Ted Smith, 63, doesn’t even play golf. According to Ted’s wife, Joni Smith, her husband’s passion is deep-sea fishing. Yet, it was still a major investment that just had to be made because they couldn’t let this historic property go out of business in their proud, modest town that once served as the capital of Georgia from 1804-1816.

To be sure, the Smiths have always been longtime benefactors to the local Milledgeville-Baldwin County community, having closed on philanthropic land deals over the years to help local churches and schools. Now it was time to save another local institution that opened in 1957 and once had 600 members in its heyday.

"It was just being good business stewards here in Milledgeville and helping our community grow," Joni Smith, 59, explains. "When we saw the club just taking such a nosedive... to attract businesses, we feel like this is one of the integral parts of having a successful community. To have a private club, a restaurant and golf course.

"So, we bought it, knowing we weren’t going to make our monetary investment back. But the investment we were making in the community, that’s what we did it for. We just wanted the club to be able to support itself and pay its own bills."

The Smiths by no means are making a small fortune in their latest venture, but the club operated in the black in its first year of operations after closing for a year and being completely transformed and rebranded operations after closing for a year and being completely transformed and rebranded.

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And it helped that the Smiths delivered the “world-class private club experience at Milledgeville prices.” For instance, the Club at Lake Sinclair’s initiation fee for a full-golf membership is just $900, $550 for a social membership – just a fraction of the cost for a similar private club membership at nearby Reynolds Plantation.

Another significant factor in the club’s early success was the unique decision to outsource the club’s entire food and beverage operations to local restaurateur Jason Medders and highlight – for the first time – the natural beauty and recreational potential of Lake Sinclair. Medders, who operated the highly popular Aubri Lane’s Restaurant for 10-plus years in a more intimate downtown Milledgeville location, also is exceeding his wildest expectations under the same signature brand named after his daughter and son, respectively.

In the first two years of operations at the club, Medders, who also controls all catered club events to members and non-members, is close to almost doubling his business after evolving from a fine-dining experience to one that is now described as “casual elegance” where patrons can come several times a week and not feel like they’re “breaking the bank,” as Joni Smith describes it.

“We always wanted to grow our business and we felt like we had maximized our location downtown because it was such a small footprint,” says Medders, who moved back to Milledgeville with his family in 2008 after working in Atlanta. “When Ted and Joni purchased the club and approached us with the idea about moving, this was the larger footprint we’d been looking for and a good opportunity to expand our business. We also loved it being on the lake.”

Medders, a self-described person person, also enjoys the “larger more diverse group of people he now gets to serve, not to mention a much larger food and beverage footprint that encompasses a 140-seat signature restaurant, main bar with four large-screen televisions, members only lounge, private dining room called The Wine Room, outdoor covered porch and a ballroom with capacity for 250 guests.

All of the unique hospitality spaces come with sweeping scenic views of Lake Sinclair and the lake front course, and future plans are in the works for a “tiki-style, cabana pool bar/kitchen situation” at the pool, which Medders says should further enhance the member experience “in a positive way.”

“When I first came up with the concept of Aubri Lane’s, something to offer people the type of food and atmosphere Atlanta restaurants provide, it was a restaurant I always wanted to be on the lake,” Medders adds. “So being able to be out here on the water and maximize business out here in the summer was something we were always looking for.”

And it also was something nearly 400 other Milledgeville-Baldwin County resident members were looking for in a place they now call their new private club.
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Skidaway transforms for more inclusive demographic

WHEN THE LANDINGS CLUB WAS REIMAGINED IN THE EARLY 1970S ON SKIDAWAY ISLAND, GEORGIA, THE ORIGINAL PLAN CAME TO LIFE ACROSS A PRIVATE COMMUNITY OF Upscale homes situated among 27 holes of Arnold Palmer-designed golf in the pristine maritime forest 12 miles from Savannah.

Today, The Landings still holds the distinction of being one of the largest single-site, master-planned golf communities in America, but it’s certainly become a lot more than just golf. Indeed, fueled by family-friendly dining and aquatic facilities, according to Freund. The club is reaping huge dividends at the come-as-you-are Franklin Creek campus that debuted in December 2018 and featured The Landings’ first fast-casual dining venue, The Deck, and various aquatic amenities designed for members of all ages. It was a vast upgrade from the previous venue featuring a nondescript poolside snack bar and nearby café for tennis members.

When it was initially proposed, members rejected the concept of one dining outlet serving all community constituents. After further design consultations with the board and a second attempt at selling the members on the vision of something more in tune with food and beverage trends at many clubs today, not to mention society as a whole, The Landings membership bought into the new plan spearheaded by Atlanta-based Kuo Diedrich Chi Architects.

According to Freund, the club is reaping huge dividends at the come-as-you-are Franklin Creek campus, with revenues likely doubling the original $1.5 million forecast. Meanwhile, the club’s new Marshwood clubhouse now under renovation also will be designed for multi-generational use with a more “sophisticated resort-style setting” in both the top-notch aquatic and wellness facilities, and a host of other family and lifestyle-centric amenities one would expect at world-class resorts.

“I was fortunate that I came to The Landings with no club experience except from a user’s perspective,” says Freund, who previously worked for Marriott’s Ritz-Carlton brand among other hoteliers. “I came from hotels and resorts, so I think I looked at the club with fresh eyes. What I saw is we had four full-service clubhouses and restaurants with a similar identity.

“They were all serving a pasta and a steak, and piece of fish and a burger. But there was nothing to distinguish them from one another. I thought that was crazy because what I witnessed was members might come once a week (to eat), but the rest of the week they were streaming off the island to go to restaurants with identity (in nearby Savannah).”

“As we were thinking about the development of this new clubhouse we had to think about the changes in our membership,” Freund notes. “When the community was coming out of the ground (in the early ’70s) it was oriented largely to northeastern retirees, but now we’re a multi-generational community with nearly 800 children who are an integral part and vibe of our club. So, when we looked at the facility and the new amenities being designed … it needed to be inviting and embracing. With an edge of timelessless without being overly formal. A place that’s welcoming and warm to all generations of members.”

Executive Director Steven Freund and team overseeing the Skidaway makeover.

© 2019 Photos by The Landings Club

GOLFBUSINESS.COM 35
Kingsway Embarks on Next Leg of Its Journey

BY SCOTT KAUFFMAN

Once the new Sunseeker Charlotte Harbor opens near its new sister resort, both leisure properties mark an important step in Allegiant’s evolution as a travel company, offering customers more opportunity for leisure experiences.

“Kingsway Country Club is a special place to many members of the community, and we are pleased and honored to be able to grow its presence,” said Richins. “Allegiant has always viewed our communities as part of our extended family, and that philosophy continues with the development of Sunseeker Charlotte Harbor. We look forward to providing members and guests a one-of-a-kind golf experience and premier event site that builds on Kingsway’s storied history and tradition.”

If anybody can deliver this new Sunseeker-branded hospitality experience it is Richins, a former senior vice president of MGM Resorts International who oversaw $2 billion in annual revenue across 13 Las Vegas Strip properties prior to being hired by Allegiant.

According to Allegiant, Kingsway is expected to close for its major transformation in April 2020 and be ready for golfers eight months later under the new Sunseeker Resorts brand. Golf architect Kipp Schulties was picked to lead the course renovation. A veteran of more than 60 course design projects, Schulties is perhaps best known for his work on Boca Raton Resort & Club and Quail Lodge Resort & Club, two highly acclaimed 27 resorts in South Florida and northern California, respective. Over the past two decades, Schulties and partners have redesigned dozens of high-profile clubs in South Florida, many of which were originally designed by the game’s best-known architects.

Kingsway’s renovation is slated to include all components of club operations, including full redesign and refurbishment of the par-72 course with replacement of all turfgrass, irrigation and drainage systems; and expansion and enhancements to the club’s driving range, putting, chipping and bunker practice areas. Allegiant also plans to relocate maintenance facilities to improve the playability of the course. Equally as important for the new look will be the reimagined 18,000-square-foot clubhouse, restaurant and event facilities, so all of the hospitality spaces match the upscale sister Sunseeker Resort being designed along the nearby harbor.

“Kingsway Country Club holds a special place in the community, and this renovation will build on its legacy by transforming it into one of the top-tier golf destinations in the country,” said Micah Richins, executive vice president and chief operating officer, Sunseeker Resorts. “With an extraordinary golf course coupled with premier event and dining space, the new club will be an incredible asset to the area, and for the guests joining us at Sunseeker Resort Charlotte Harbor.”

Established in 1976, Kingsway was originally designed by Ron Garl. The club was last renovated in 2005 due to damage caused by Hurricane Charley. Once the new Sunseeker Resorts branded course reopens and Kingsway Country Club is expected to be the only carrier.

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Scouting locations for a tavern restaurant he planned to open, Barry Bonner settled on the chalet-style clubhouse at Hillcrest Golf & Country Club in Graettinger, Iowa, population 800. Five years later, Bonner operates a profitable enterprise called Birdie’s Burgers and Brews. It draws diners from a 20-mile radius and actually serves more non-golfers than golfers. Looking to open a second Birdie’s, he is negotiating with yet another public golf facility.

“"The plan was to get word-of-mouth advertising working for us in both directions," says Bonner. "Golfers would tell diners about the restaurant and diners would tell their golfing friends what a nice course Hillcrest is—and that’s exactly how it’s gone."
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A

x Bonner tells it, golf memberships are up, the facility is packed on weekends and his city says they want to make the numbers work here, “says Miller. “But the public golf environment is attractive, as long as you make non-golfers feel welcome, which we do.”

Beck’s Prime, a beloved burgers-and-shakes emporium at Memorial Park Golf Course in Houston, is another example of this arrangement. So is Noonan’s Sports Bar & Grill, located at the Golf Course at Heather Ridge in Aurora, Colorado. Noonan’s is an event–buzzy hangout where comedy nights, karaoke, trivia and UFC fight–night parties play to a packed house.

To some people the model for win–wins of this type is Eddlemon’s barbecue at Prairie Lakes Golf Course in the Metroplex city of Grand Prairie, Texas. The smoking–meat artistry of Johnny and Joe Eddlemon was known far and wide when Grand Prairie entered the brothers to relocate to the course some dozen years ago.

“They are a significant moral to this story, concerning foot traffic onto golf properties and the invisible barrier that used to keep non-golfers away,” says Miller. “But the public golf environment is attractive, as long as you make non-golfers feel welcome, which we do.”

The city of Edina, owner of the award–winning course, wanted a food and beverage operation strong enough to complement its golf amenity. Lancer, which serves age operation strong enough to complement its golf amenity. Lancer, which serves America via its Lancer Catering subsidiary, which employs Miller and selectively chooses golf facilities as its landlords.

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“We closed our restaurant in town and signed a non-compete with the city,” says Eddlemon, “but we’re able to cater off-site, which is about 60 percent of our business. But non-golfers and the invisible barrier that used to keep non-golfers away, even if they don’t play golf. We even get golfers from a course down the street coming here for lunch after they finish 18.”

There’s a significant moral to this story, concerning foot traffic onto golf properties and the invisible barrier that used to keep non-golfers away. The city even hired a master bricklayer from the island of Tonga to build us a smoker,” recalls Johnny Eddlemon, who fuels his mythical smoker exclusively with pecan wood and sells his famous BBQ brisket sandwich to golfers – at the turn or in the grillroom – for just $5.50.

“We closed our restaurant in town and signed a non-compete with the city,” says Eddlemon, “but we’re able to cater off-site, which is about 60 percent of our business. We get customers coming to us from all over, even if they don’t play golf. We even get golfers from a course down the street coming here for lunch after they finish 18.”

At the same time, the “entertainment” trend that’s so big these days in the restaurant industry shines quite a spotlight on golf. The obvious examples are Topgolf and DriveShack, but simulator-only venues like Betsy’s Indoor Golf & Sports Grill also prove the appeal of eat plus play experiences that are golf themed. Datassential, a research firm covering the food industry, found nearly 60 percent of surveyed consumers expressing interest in visiting an “entertainment” venue – 30 percent said they had done so already. About 40 percent of those surveyed said they were interested in visiting a so-called arcade bar or a bowling restaurant, while 26 percent said they wanted to visit a golf–formatted dining venue.

Restaurants like Birdie’s, Teddy River and Eddlemon’s aren’t tricked out with arcade games and rock–climbing walls, but they do provide great views, a sports atmosphere and a built–in society of sociable people who have a strong fondness for the facility – the golfers.

As Miller put it simply, “The golf environment is attractive,” if you can add a simulator, an after–dinner putting contest or some other golf “touch,” then all the better.

According to one of the industry’s most respected multi course operators, “you have to bring a brand and a personality to your facility if you want to get the most out of it.” So says M.G. Orender, president of the

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It was obvious we’d need non-golfers to make the numbers work here.”

—Marques Miller
Expectations once were that golf courses and clubs in colder climates would be shuttered during the winter, with no reason for players and members to be on property. In recent years, though, some facilities have been offering an abundance of off-season activities in order to retain the interest of families and preserve revenue streams.

**Differentiate your Club**

Provide electric vehicle charging stations as a premium amenity to your members.

**When the Snow Flies**

Winter Activities Keep Families Engaged Year-Round

By Sally J. Sportsman
“T

he feeling here is that if members want to come for lunch or dinner, they should be able to, any time of year,” says Ron Ireland, general manager and COO of Pelham Country Club. “We encourage them.”

Contrary to its name, Saratoga Golf & Polo Club, in Saratoga Springs, New York, says that if members don’t offer polo and never did. Before the Great Polo Club, founded in 1896, doesn’t offer

“Another New York club, Siwanoy Country Club in Bronxville, is known for its “Siwanoy Snobirds.” Founded in 1901, the club has the oldest continuing winter golf in the country, according to David Cecil, general manager and COO.

“Siwanoy Snobirds are a casual group of golfers who play in all weather conditions, including during the winter months.” Ireland says. This approach is beneficial for retaining membership, according to Ireland, as there are multiple other private clubs in the vicinity, some of which have limited winter events.

At Pelham Country Club, a private club in Pelham Manor, New York, four bowling lanes in the pub are popular with families, especially for children. Parties are available on weekends, bowling is complimentary but restricted to certain times during pub hours.

“We do a lot of events in the winter, including trivia nights,” Ireland says. “We started them a couple of years ago, and we’ve been surprised at their success.”

A disc jockey is hired to run the trivia games, which are held in the dining room on Friday nights and are attended by 50 or 60 members. Questions are posted on the big-screen television and prizes are awarded. No entry fee is charged, but attendees often dine before, during or after the games, producing food and beverage revenue for the club.

“Other winter activities for Saratoga Springs families include ice skating on an 80 x 30-foot rink located between the 9th green and the clubhouse, with a patio and outdoor fireplace; tailgate parties during football season; gingerbread houses for children to decorate in November; breakfast with Santa in December; and a family New Year’s Eve party; a winter fest in January; and a St. Patrick’s Day golf tournament, no matter the weather. “Our goal is to keep members coming all year long, and to break even during the winter months,” Ireland says.

“This approach is beneficial for retaining membership, according to Ireland, as there are multiple other private clubs in the vicinity, some of which have limited winter events. “At Pelham Country Club, a private club in Pelham Manor, New York, four bowling lanes in the pub are popular with families, especially for children. Parties are available on weekends, bowling is complimentary but restricted to certain times during pub hours.”

“Our club never really closes” says Timothy W. Cole, general manager and COO of Pelham Country Club. The fitness center is open all year long, and except during December, when the greens are out of commission, members and their guests can play golf any time. Tennis and paddle programs run year-round, with two indoor-bubbled tennis courts.

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It makes sense that in the offseason golf should cost less, and in the high season golf should cost more.

By Alexandre Lavoie

Making connections

Memberships: How to Generate More Signings and Revenue

Your members represent a critical core segment of your customers. Every year you can rely on most of them to repurchase their memberships and keep coming back to enjoy your golf course and clubhouse.

There are a number of strategies that you can apply to get the most out of your memberships. Here are some ways you can introduce better, more appropriate memberships that appeal to the right market at your golf course.

GOLF COURSE MEMBERSHIP STYLES TO CONSIDER

1. Subscription Style Memberships. This strategy is currently being rolled out by some of the nation’s biggest and best operators with some great results. Typically, these memberships allow the purchase of a month-long membership that renews automatically, much like a gym pass. Players can opt-out whenever they want and are not obligated to pay for a year-long membership for access.

2. Monthly payment memberships. If you don’t think the idea of a gym membership-style subscription will work at your golf course, but still want to try out a monthly payment model, you may want to consider introducing yeartlong memberships with monthly payments. These memberships reduce the upfront costs that come with standard memberships and instead charge players on a month-to-month basis.

3. Flex Pay Memberships. Taking the monthly payment model a little bit further means looking at how the value of a round at your golf course fluctuates from month to month. It makes sense that in the offseason, golf should cost less, and in the high season, golf should cost more. Flex pay memberships offer members the option to pay less in the offseason and more in the high season.

4. Group Memberships. Golf is a sport that people enjoy playing with their friends. Almost no one joins a club without knowing someone who will be there often and want to play with them. Offering two-for-one memberships or grouped memberships allows groups of friends to join and play with one another.

You may generate less money from the initial sign up, but adding these groups guarantees lots of play on your course, and over time these players will buy gear and visit your restaurant. The goal is to get a small group hooked on your operation, and they will keep coming back to play with one another and enjoy each other’s company.

NEED TO GENERATE MORE MEMBERSHIP REVENUE?

Generating more membership revenue is an excellent way to build reliable customers who consistently spend money at your operation. There are many strategies you can put in place to squeeze additional revenue out of these very loyal customers. Here are a few to consider:

1. No Initiation Fees. If you are struggling to attract new members but still charge an initiation fee, you really need to rethink this one. Why create an extra barrier to generating a long-term, loyal customer? If you don’t want to lose that revenue, raise the price of the membership over the lifetime of the new customer, but don’t create an immediate barrier on the first day the new customer signs.

2. VIP Pricing. To premium members, you may want to consider offering special discounts in the restaurant and pro shop. Giving a specific percentage off or providing exclusive deals are handy for making your membership feel special while encouraging patrons to part with their cash.

3. Incentivize referrals. Leverage your current loyal customers by getting them to spread the word about your course with a membership referral program. Incentivize your members to refer their friends with free cart passes, VIP perks or gift cards when they successfully generate a signing with a referral.

IMPLEMENTING A BETTER MEMBERSHIP STRATEGY WITH TECHNOLOGY

Here’s what you should be looking for to help implement these strategies.

1. Subscription Billing. If you want to implement monthly billing or gym-style memberships, you’ll need a management platform that can support automatic, monthly billing.

2. Restaurant and Pro Shop POS integrations. Having the ability to consolidate house accounts and member profiles from all sides of the operation is critical for effectively managing member spending and house accounts.

3. Robust Package Management. If you want to implement packaged memberships, you’ll need a system that can easily track packages. Ideally, the software you use should allow you to place the appropriate restrictions on any package you sell, such as the times and days of the week the package can be used, or whether rounds can be shared to different players.

4. Customer Loyalty and Referral Software. To incentivize referrals, you need customer loyalty software that offers a referral component. These programs allow you to track referrals easily, so customers are sure to be rewarded for successful referrals, and so that referring customers at the point of sale is easy.

Alex Lavoie is the marketing manager at Chronogolf. You can find an extended version of this article at blog.chronogolf.com.
Golf Ball Company Joins Growing Entertainment Market

By Steve Eubanks

OnCore Golf, a Buffalo, New York-based golf ball company that patented the first hollow metal-core golf ball, has just announced its entrance into the widening world of golf entertainment. OnCore Buffalo will be a $30 million entertainment complex along the Buffalo River that, if the artist renderings are accurate, bears a remarkable resemblance to TopGolf.

The big difference will be the other sports options the company plans to offer, including virtual base running culture.

“We’re very excited to be able to bring this kind of golf and sports entertainment experience to an urban setting,” the result of engineering and technology innovations that have been years in the making,” said OnCore Golf co-founder Keith Blakely. “In doing so, we hope to elevate interest in golf among a broad demographic and to enable partnerships with organizations with similar goals.”

The facility, which will be located on seven acres of Kelly Island on the river (about half the footprint of a standard going forward), will be housed there at no charge.

The projected opening date is mid-2021, but OnCore already has plans for future facilities in cities like Knoxville, Tennessee; Columbus, Ohio; Pittsburgh; Las Vegas; Phoenix; New York; Denver and Washington, D.C. With a smaller footprint, they can conceivably get closer to the heart of towns than their competitors (although seven acres in Washington is still a big ask).

“We feel that this facility is going to be one of a kind and a revolutionary standard going forward,” Blakely said. “It allows us to build in urban centers rather than far outside city centers.”

At GBC19, what was the key message you hope the audience took away with them?

I hope the audience enjoyed our time together and learned that there is something more powerful than independence, and that is INTERDEPENDENCE. Asking others for help and offering to help those around them is valuable to all.

After your presentations, you spent a lot of time visiting with the attendees during the receptions and other gatherings. What did most people want to ask about?

Most people wanted to talk about blind golf, and how I am able to compete as a blind golfer. They were also very interested in learning how their golf courses could better accommodate blind golfers.

You also participated on a panel discussion about golf course accessibility under the American Disabilities Act. What do you think is the biggest misconception golf course owners have about accessibility issues?

My impression is that golf course owners think that they need to make a lot of changes to make their course more accessible, but I believe that even minor adjustments can improve the experience for disabled golfers.

You travel around the world speaking and competing. What do you think is one of the biggest issues facing golf course owners today?

Changing the overall perception of golf. I have traveled around the world as an experienced golf, and they often assume it isn’t a game for them. I’m thankful that I grew up playing the game and have always had a positive perception of golf, unlike many.

What was the most important take-away for you personally after attending the Golf Business Conference?

That golf course owners care about the game. They have passionate about keeping the wonderful game we love growing and as an avid golfer, I really appreciated “seeing” that.
Bar Harbor Golf Course
Trenton, ME
18-hole open membership golf course on 180 acres on scenic Frenchman Bay in Bar Harbor. Clubhouse, two equipment storage buildings and golf cart convey. Contact Story Stiffield, LandWest, Inc., 217-276-3840, story@landwest.com.

Cleveland Country Club
Shelby, NC
Just 40 minutes west of Charlotte, private, 3000 championship
yards, 18 holes. Contact Brett at Miller Management Associates, brett@mmagolf.com, 828-775-7765.

Creekside Plantation Golf Course
Smyrna, TN

Hazelden Country Club
Stow, OH
HISTORIC! 18 holes built in 1970, country setting, 100 Acres, 18,500 Clubhouse, Restaurant/ Bar, Apartment and house on property, turn-key opportunity $950,000. mikey@hazeldencountryclub.com 216-276-7771.

Linville Falls Golf Club
Linville, NC
BACK ON THE MARKET! Championship 18 hole layout designed by Lee Trevino. Functional pro shop, grill, attached cart shed, driving range, Bent greens Bermuda fairways, with highway frontage on 221 to the tourist destinations of Boone, Banner Elk and Blowing Rock. OWNER FINANCING AVAILABLE, along with the tourist destinations of Boone, Banner Elk and Blowing Rock. OWNER FINANCING AVAILABLE, $719,000. Contact Brett Miller at Miller Management Associates, brett@mmagolf.com, 828-775-7765.

Mount Concord Golf Club & Condos
Burnsville, NC
LEGENDARY! MOUNT MITCHELL GOLF CLUB & CONDOS. One owner (almost 50 years) and first time on the market. The stunning mountain classic sits at the foot of the largest peak in the eastern US and has the beautiful Toe River trout stream flowing beside it and just off the Blue Ridge Parkway. Bent greens and fairways, this championship course has always been in the rankings and on everyone’s must play list. Clubhouse, restaurant, bar, grill, meeting room, 10 condos building site. Owner Financing Available. Call for more information. $3,900,000. Miller Management Associates, Inc., Brett D. Miller, brett@mmagolf.com, 828-775-7765.

Waynesville Inn Spa & Resort
Waynesville, NC
NEW LISTING: The historic 1929 Waynesville Inn Resort and Spa. Located in the Blue Ridge Mountains just outside of Asheville, NC. It’s this historic, 27 hole Donald Ross (first nine player friendly course with 119 yards, 2 meetings rooms, 2 restaurants, outdoor pavilion tent, spa and more. This facility has hosted Presidents, professionals, celebrities and guests from across the world. 144 gently acres that have water, ocean, parenthesis as commercial, so endless development possibilities. Additional acreage available. Producer funds and CA required for private showing. $10,000,000. Miller Management Associates, Inc., Contact Brett at 828-775-7765 or brett@mmagolf.com.
“How did we do last month?”

Answering this question can be a painstaking process. You pull reports and crunch numbers — but this still won’t give you the full picture.

Benchmark (Formerly The ORCA Report) is the only way to know your golf course’s true performance. In one screen, see the numbers that matter most — your rounds, revenue, occupancy and booking mix — and how they stack up to your competition and market.

Benchmark is a quick and easy way to check the health of your business. Easily see if your numbers are up or down, compared to previous months, based on historical data from your course, your competition and the market.

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Special NGCOA rate now available.
REGISTER TODAY for Golf Business Conference 2020
Located at the PGA Merchandise Show
January 20-22 at the Orange County Convention Center, Orlando

The Golf Business Conference (GBC) is the largest annual meeting of golf course owners and operators, and beginning this year will be located at the 2020 PGA Merchandise Show. GBC welcomes owners and operators of golf courses of every size and type to register now for this valuable and meaningful event, now in its 40th year.

GBC20 will be held at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando from January 20-22 (overlapping the PGA Merchandise Show, January 21-24). Your GBC20 full conference pass will include all GBC20 education and networking activities, PLUS full admission to the 2020 PGA Merchandise Show’s extensive and impressive exhibition hall where approximately 1,000 leading golf companies and brands will take up nearly one million square feet of interactive exhibit, product demonstration and industry presentation space.

As in years past, Golf Business Conference will cast a bright spotlight on education and networking: multiple tracks comprised of 15+ expertly-led education sessions over 2 days; a pre-conference Master Class; the annual Yamaha Golf Outing; and the annual Celebration & Awards Dinner where NGCOA recognizes the most outstanding members and industry professionals of the past year. See the agenda and register today at golfbusinessconference.com.

All GBC20 education sessions will be eligible for continuing education units (CEUs) for Professional Golfers Association (PGA), Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA), Club Management Association of America (CMAA), and Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA).

GBC20 Sponsors as of October 2019

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If you’re interested in sponsoring, please contact Mike Ketterman, NGCOA’s Director of Corporate Partnerships, at mketterman@ngcoa.org or call (843) 471-2718

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Why not save as much money as you can on business services your golf course and staff needs every day?

NGCOA’s Smart Buy Marketplace purchasing program saves members money on industry-leading products and services... it’s that simple. You’ll get discounted rates, rebates and value-added packages not available anywhere else. Visit ngcoa.org/smartbuy to discover how you can save on products and services your course needs every day.

SMART BUY SPOTLIGHT

Insurance Services

AFFILIATE EVENTS

Ohio Golf Course Owners Association
Buckeye Golf Association Annual Conference
November 4-5
Embassy Suites/Muirfield Golf Club
Dublin, OH
Contact Ken Gentner at kgentner@buckeyegolf.com or 614-563-5551

Midwest Golf Course Owners Association
23rd Annual Conference and Trade Show
November 19
Bracken’s Crossing Golf Club
Lakeville, MN
Contact Curt Walker at mwgcoa@aol.com or 952-854-7272

New England Golf Course Owners Association
Annual Meeting and Conference
November 21-22
The International
Bolton, MA
Contact Elaine Gebhardt at egebhardt@negcoa.org or 774-430-9031

National Golf Day 2020
We Are Golf Initiative
May 6, 2020
Capitol Hill, Washington, DC

If you have questions, or would like to join other NGCOA members at this critical event, please email Ronnie Miles, NGCOA’s Director of Advocacy at rmiles@ngcoa.org.
Here is a sample of recent discussions; reply to these, or post your own for
"Trading Post" where members can buy and sell used equipment
• Advocacy Issues & Alerts
• Supplier Community for NGCOA’s Corporate Members
• Accelerate (General) Community for all NGCOA members

Did you know there are Accelerate Members-Only Communities you can join, based on your interests, needs and engagement with NGCOA? Visit accelerate.ngcoa.org to read more about and add to the discussion of critical issues in golf business.

We switched merchant card processors after changing POS providers… we had one day’s merchant deposits held for several days… inquiring if

We are preparing to remodel our clubhouse to accommodate simula-
tors. Please advise on any lessons you’ve learned from construction/

Has anyone else been approached by GolfNow about their new G1 POS system? It looks good on the surface, but we really have a sour taste left

Credit card processor holding funds

We switched merchant card processors after changing POS providers… we had one day’s merchant deposits held for several days… inquiring if others have encountered this?

NEW! 4-Part Video Addresses One of Golf’s Top Issues

Ask 100 people in golf what the top, long-term issue facing the industry is, and the number one answer will be Water—the cost of it, the competition for it, the hard scrutiny endured by those who use the most of it.

Focusing specifically on a golf course irrigation system, there are four vital areas of efficiency that can dramatically cut water usage: Tuning, Timing, Transporting and Technology. Watch Rain Bird’s 4-part video series to learn how to address each one of these areas.

View the first in the series at: http://bit.ly/WaterConservationTuning

What are Other NGCOA Members Talking About on Accelerate?

Feeling Imprisoned by Your Back Office?

Cumbersome administrative duties often mean you spend too much time in the office—and maybe, spend too much money. Struggling with timesheets, insurance and more leaves you less time to interact with customers and grow your business. NGCOA now partners with industry-leading companies who can not only save you lots of money, but reduce the administrative time, effort and errors—so you can spend more time building your golf business.

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NGCOA members get significant discounts, rebates and value-added packages from hundreds of the most recognized names and reputable, industry-leading companies. Many of these companies offer exclusive deals not available anywhere else.

**Smart Buy Marketplace**

- **Golf Cars & Utility Vehicles**: Members converting from a competitor receive $50 per car for purchase or lease. Members renewing their fleet receive a free registration for Golf Business Conference or ReCon.
- **Golf Simulators**: 5% discount off MSRP.
- **Human Resources & Payroll**: Up to 50% on HR and payroll costs.
- **401(k) Program**: Effective and competitive 401(k) plan benefit for NGCOA member courses’ employees.
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- **Performance Reporting & Benchmarking**: 30%-50% discount on all reporting packages.
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- **Customer Experience Solution**: Free survey tool and 55% off Players 1st’s top-tier Combined Package.
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- **Flood Protection Solutions**: Flood Risk Assessments are performed on Golf Courses to identify specific risks and sources up to a 100 and 500 year storm. Assessments also calculate historical data, land characteristics, and drainage study.
- **Flood Sensory Systems**: Can be placed on golf courses to protect certain areas of the course that are affected. The Flood Sensory System will alert you with live feed via e-mail or text of rising water levels.
- **Pre-Owned Turf Equipment**: Discounts on leased pricing plus 120-day extended warranty (normally 90 days).

**Available Products & Services**

- Flood Risk Assessment
- Flood Sensory Systems
- Water-Filled Flood Barriers
- Customized Flood Panels for Retention Walls or for Vulnerable Areas (The Club House)

**At Flood Risk America, our vision is to establish a trusting relationship with our clients, while protecting their investments and allowing golf course owners to exhibit the best flood protection measures on their bunkers and greens, thus opening up a new era to the golf industry.**

The Team at Flood Risk America
Driving it long in the game of golf is a huge advantage. So too is having a procurement partner that provides comprehensive purchasing solutions to help drive your club’s overall success.

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