



## **GOLF 2.0**

What started at the employer roundtable discussion at the 2009 PGA Annual Meeting in New Orleans has evolved to the new strategic direction of The PGA of America, known as Golf 2.0. It was at that meeting where the Association acknowledged the prolonged impact of the recession and the term “reset” was born. In 2010, the PGA hired the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) to gain the perspective of one of the world’s leading consumer research and consulting firms. Their findings, which included interviews with industry leaders, surveys of some 2,700 PGA members and employers, consumer focus groups, and more than 2,000 quantitative consumer studies, are the foundation of Golf 2.0.

The findings showed that, left unchanged, our industry might face 10 years of flat participation and revenues, but the opportunity exists to engage an interested and willing population of lapsed golfers referred to as “Latent Demand” to take up the game. The goal is to increase the number of golfers from the current 27 million to 40 million by the year 2020.

Other findings included:

- Currently, our “Core Market” comprises only 16% of American households.
- In addition to the 27 million golfers today, 90 million Americans have played in the past and express some interest in returning to the game.
- The next generation of golfers/customers requires new types of courting.
- Our current model of accessing the game does not embrace and welcome beginners or those unsure of protocol.
- Women are the influential customer, controlling 73% of household/discretionary income.

The research identifies three core “pillars” for opportunity and growth, comprised of nine specific target groups and 12 strategies to reach those target groups. The three pillars are:

- Nurturing and retaining core golfers
- Engaging lapsed golfers, including women, families, and seniors
- Reaching the 84% of households without a golfer, including the growing minority population

Over the next few months, you will be seeing information on this exciting and important Golf 2.0 strategic initiative, including PGA member education on how you can help ensure the health of the game and business of golf for the future.

## **STAFF TELEPHONE PROCEDURES**

My work frequently involves calling golf facilities, and I am always surprised by the differences in how various facilities answer the telephone and handle their phone procedures. I have heard everything from a curt “Hello” or “Pro Shop” to a more welcoming greeting of “Thank you for calling the ABC Golf Shop, this is John, how may I help you? One of the best is the well-known greeting at Pinehurst Resort – “It’s a beautiful day at Pinehurst, this is Mary, may I have your name please?”

Even though we live in a world of email and text communication, the phone answering techniques of a business can be a great indicator of their focus on customer service and attention to detail. Developing and implementing effective phone procedures is essential not only to your professional success but also to the success of your business, and if handled properly can immediately put the customer at ease and in a positive frame of mind.

Give your staff clear and consistent telephone procedures – what to say when they answer the phone, how to take messages, how long to keep a caller on hold, how to handle answering two lines, how to deal with a caller when there are customers waiting at the counter, etc.

It’s especially important to instruct your staff on how to respond to calls when you are unavailable. Having an employee tell the caller you are “not here,” “out playing,” or “gone for the day” is probably not what you want them to say. Provide your staff with standard responses such as “He/She is on the property but out of the office at the moment, may I help you or transfer you to his/her voice mail?” or “He/She is on the lesson tee, I’ll be happy to take a message and have them call you.” And rather than have random notes

taped all over your desk or the counter, give your staff an easy to use log for taking your messages, with the caller's name, number, time they called, and any pertinent information about what the call is about.

Exercise good etiquette and develop a regular routine for returning calls as soon as possible, preferably the same business day or early the next day for late calls. If you fail to return calls within a reasonable time, the caller may assume you either aren't working or don't care.

Finally, remember to put a smile on your voice – it can be seen through the phone.

I hope you are having a successful 2011 season. Please don't hesitate to contact me by phone or e-mail if you would like assistance with any PGA employment programs or services.

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