



# SUCCESSFULLY MARKETING YOUR GOLF COURSE

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Introduction

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Market Research

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Putting Research Into Action

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The Marketing Budget

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Important Marketing Narratives  
for the Golf Course Owner

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Appendix

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Acknowledgements

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**National Golf Course Owners Association**

## **SUCCESSFULLY MARKETING YOUR GOLF COURSE**

**A Marketing Manual for the Golf Course Owner**

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Published by:  
National Golf Course Owners Association  
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# Introduction



A golf course developer generally begins the development venture with a promising piece of acreage and visions of a future prosperous golf operation. Those who made their visions a reality will credit much of their success to the effective management of their marketing and sales efforts. Academicians clearly differentiate between the marketing and sales functions. Philip Kotler of Northwestern University, author of *Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning, Implementation and Control*, says, “Marketers are involved with the whole process, from identifying market needs and wants, targeting market segments, producing attractive and satisfying offerings, and winning local customers. Salespeople think more short term, are involved in face to face selling with the customers and their primary objective is to meet the sales quota for that period.”

Whereas most large corporations have the luxury of separate marketing and sales executives, the golf course owner must often play the role of both the marketer and salesperson for the golf course. Regardless of whether they are wearing the hat of the marketer or the salesperson, they will need to incorporate these principal components in their marketing and sales process:

- Basic market research
- Identifying target markets
- Positioning and pricing the offering
- Determining the most effective and affordable means of communicating to that target audience
- Devising a marketing plan
- Implementing and tracking the effectiveness of the marketing plan.

This manual is intended to guide the golf course owner through that entire process and includes the following:

- **The Essential First Step - Market Research**

This section provides the theory and simple “how-to’s” of the market research that should be done prior to the development of a golf course and on an ongoing basis once the course becomes operational. This research will be instrumental in making decisions on the overall concept and marketing plan for the golf course.

- **Putting Research Into Action**

Once the market research has been analyzed and the target markets identified, the golf course owner must decide on the most effective and affordable means of reaching that audience. Media options are presented in this section and the “pro’s and con’s” of each are discussed including newspaper, yellow pages, cable, outdoor, and others. This section also includes detailed information about implementation of a public relations campaign, including special promotions, press releases, press kits, and fact sheets. Also, included in this section is the most recent survey done by the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA), which researched the percentage of revenues golf course owners spent on various advertising functions.



- **Important Marketing Narratives for the Golf Course Owner**

This final section includes four case studies: a detailed marketing and public relations campaign proposed by an advertising agency for an 18 hole golf course, a case study of a very successful 18 hole course using marketing methods very effectively, a narrative which details how a potential new golf course owner can position a golf course to maximize revenue potential and best serve the market identified, and a case study containing several examples of successful marketing and promotions activities implemented by golf course owners.

It is the intent and hope of the National Golf Course Owners Association that those who read this manual will not only find the material informative, but instrumental in making their visions of a profitable and prosperous golf course a reality.



## Notes



# Market Research



## The Bricks and Mortar for the Golf Course Owner

**B**uilding a new golf course development is a very expensive and potentially risky venture. A developer can make the expenditure a wise investment and hedge most major risks by doing some very simple, yet detailed homework in the form of market research. Regardless of the concept of the golf course - public fee, semi-private, private or resort - a comprehensive market study should be the very first step taken by the owner in the development process.

Such a study is not only essential in the earliest of planning stages for a new golf course, it should also serve as a baseline study to be updated on an annual basis as the course is built and becomes operational. Armed with the knowledge such a study can provide, golf course owners can make informed and effective day-to-day and long-term business decisions. For instance, an owner of a public fee course knows income is improved by increasing numbers of rounds played on the course and/or by increasing the fees generated on a per-round basis. Staying on top of competitive data or prices being charged by other courses will help an owner charge the optimum price for the course rounds, given its location, market, and playability in relation to the other courses.

An owner of a semi-private course which offers both memberships and public fee play competes with both private courses and public fee courses. These owners must be aware of pricing, promotion or facility changes for both kinds of competition. The challenge for the owner is to increase membership revenue and generate more public fee rounds. Data obtained by the owner through an annual market study like the one outlined in this section can assist with marketing decisions, help to discover untapped new markets, and aid in greater penetration of existing markets.

Found on the following pages are the guidelines and theory behind the information gathered in a comprehensive market study. To facilitate the process for the researcher, also included are work sheets that can be used in the data collection process. The market study outlined in this section pertains to golf courses in general.



## Basic Market Study Information Necessary for all Golf Course Owners

Today we have new insights and new tools to help us understand and deal with slow play. These insights and tools coupled with a “team building” approach to management and training have brought new hope for course owners and managers to cure the game of this age-old problem. *But the solutions require a “new vision” on the part of owners and managers*, and a willingness to look at things differently. Those courses willing to take on the challenge are realizing tangible rewards in the form of an improved reputation and increased demand for their course, increased revenues, higher customer satisfaction and improved staff morale.

### A. Economic Data on the Market Area

Perhaps a golf course owner’s worst nightmare is to build a new golf course or operate an existing course in the midst of a residential area in which home sales are declining and homeowners are moving to other parts of the city. Factors which can influence the decline of a community or the migration of large segments of the population to other parts of the city can include the following:

- The movement of a major corporation from one part of a city to another, creating a longer “commute time” for employees. Corporate executives may consider relocating closer to the new location for convenience’s sake.
- The emergence of rural “growth corridors” in a city prompted by the construction of sizable new residential developments, attracting those seeking newer, more modern houses.
- The opening of major new thoroughfares which decrease commute time and “open up” previously undeveloped areas.

Such trends in a market place can have a profound impact on new or existing golf courses. Economic data can help predict these trends by providing “big picture” information. This data provides a “macro” rather than a “micro” look at the market place. It is usually very general in nature and can be obtained through sources like the Chamber of Commerce, a local economic development board, or a city mayor’s office. Much of the information will be available in print form, either through city brochures or annual reports. It can also be gathered in interviews with professionals representing the area Chamber of Commerce, the local Realtors Association, or the president of a major area bank.



## B. Site Analysis

In objectively analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of a potential or existing site, the following should be considered:

- \* Ease of Access

*One of the greatest advantages a new golf course can have is to be conveniently located near a major thoroughfare.* Not only does that contribute to golf course accessibility, but easy visibility creates greater awareness of the course and makes for inexpensive advertising. Traffic pattern reports are significant to a course study and are readily available through the same kinds of demographic services that will be discussed below.

- \* Proximity to Residential Areas and Downtown Core

Analyze the distance from the golf course site to primary residential areas, as well as from the downtown core as a point of reference. The distance can be measured in miles, drive time, or both.

- \* Topography of Site's Terrain

A description of the site itself should include any interesting or unusual aspects about the property such as the presence of ponds, streams, trees, or foliage. Whether the property is flat or has some rolling terrain should be mentioned as well.

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### EXAMPLE OF SITE DATA

#### The Stonegate Country Club

The Stonegate Country Club and residential development is located on 536 acres of land in Dallas County, forty-five miles northwest of downtown Dallas. The site is conveniently located off Highway 544, just north of the North Dallas Tollway.

The Stonegate golf course was opened in February 1992 and the design of the course has taken advantage of the beautiful rolling terrain found in this northern part of the city of Dallas. There are a number of man-made ponds on the course and the architect designed the course to take advantage of the trees and foliage originally found on the property.

The Stonegate housing development surrounds the golf course and consists of 300 single family lots, 150 of which have already been sold and 80 homes ranging in price from \$200,000 to \$450,000 have been built. Lot sales have averaged 12 per month in the first full year of home sales. Independent realtors consulted believe the property can maintain such sales velocity through sellout. Within a five-mile radius of the site there are four other major residential developments with approximately 3,500 homes ranging in price from \$150,000 to \$1 million. None of the other developments have golf courses or any other recreational amenities for the residents.



### C. Demographics

While there are a number of major demographic services that provide reports to consumers, most of them are based on the most recent census data and are updated on an annual or even more frequent basis. Reports can be ordered by simply calling the service and giving them the geographical area to be researched. Geographical data provided the demographic service by the customer requesting the reports, can be in a number of forms. *The researcher should choose the form which best defines the parameters of the market area.* For instance, the geographical data can be ordered using the following entities:

- A radius around the site location for as little as one-half mile or as much as fifty miles
- Zip coded areas
- Census tracts
- If an area is bounded by a body of water, a map can be sent to the service and precise boundaries can be searched, deleting the non-populated areas.

While the perimeters of every primary target market area will vary based on various factors (location of competition, convenience to residential areas, etc.), there has been research done to determine the most frequently traveled distances by golfers to the courses they play. The National Golf Foundation (NGF) in a 1994 study called "Golf Consumer Profile" found that golfers will travel approximately

- *12.4 miles or 18.6 minutes one way to get to the course they most frequently play*
- *26.8 miles or 36.3 minutes one way to a good course they would regularly play*
- *48.5 miles or 61.7 minutes one way to get to a good course that they occasionally play.*

It is therefore recommended that if a researcher has not yet defined a "primary market area", the best way to begin is by researching the 12.4 mile radius surrounding the site historically proven to be a convenient drive distance for the majority of the golfers.

Once a demographic report is obtained, the following are the facts pertinent to golf course markets within the report:

#### Population

The population statistics identify the density of residents within the target market area. Good signs are positive historic growth and positive projected future growth

#### Households

Because the population statistics above reflect total population regardless of age, it is always helpful to look at total number of households. Not only is the present number of households important, but the historic and future projected growth rate are also pertinent and should be consistent with the historic and future growth statistics found in "Population" above.



### Households by Income

In looking at the household income levels, again it is beneficial to refer to some of the most recent research done. In its 1995 study entitled, "Golf Participation in the United States" the NGF determined that the average "Core Golfer" (defined as "Individuals aged 18 years or older who played at least 8 rounds of golf in 1994") is 45 years old and has a household income of \$58,100. The average household income for the Beginning Golfer Population, according to the NGF study, was \$52,000

Therefore in looking at the demographic report, the most important income level is that of household incomes of \$50,000+ in considering primary target market for golfers

In that same study the NGF found that the "national participation rate for golfers over the age of 12" to be 11.4 percent, with a variation from region to region within the United States.

Applying the average participation rate (or a more precise regional rate that can be obtained through the NGF study mentioned above) to the population figures of those who are twelve years of age or older, will produce an estimate of the potential number of golfers within the market.

Golf course owners can also order a standard traffic volume map from demographic services. Such a report is essential in analyzing primary traffic flow in and around a golf course site. The information can be used for optimal signage positioning as well as for determining primary entrances to property.

Samples of both the demographic report and the traffic volume map, along with a more detailed analysis of each is found in the NGCOA manual, *Essentials of Market Research for the Golf Course Owner* available through the NGCOA.

### D. Competitive Study

Once the demographics of the target area have been determined, an in-depth competitive study should be done to determine information on all public, semi-private, private, and resort courses within the area. Information on municipally owned public fee courses is available through the offices of the municipality and are a matter of public record. The researcher should visit all golf facilities to get an idea of the age and quality of the clubhouse and the facilities offered. Play the golf course, if possible. Unfortunately, management at many of the privately owned courses may not wish to divulge much of the pertinent information required below. Playing the private courses to gather the information first-hand may also prove difficult unless the researcher knows a member of the club. If the data is not readily available from a site visit, the researcher can contact the golf course manager directly and tell them a competitive study is being done. Offer to share the data collected in the competitive study in exchange for information on the course.



The following is an outline of the data that should be collected for the various kinds of courses:

- **Public Fee Courses**  
Pricing on greens fees including seasonal and time-of-day price differences if offered. If different, include fees for senior and junior golfers as well. Make note as to what the cart fee is and if it is included in the quoted green fees. Note the caddie fees, if available. Ask the head golf professional for the total amount of 18 hole rounds played on the course annually.
- **Semi-Private Courses**  
Obtain the same information listed above for the public fee courses as well as the types of membership the course offers. These may be annual memberships, where an annual fee is paid and the member pays no greens fees, only cart fees when he plays. The memberships may involve a one-time "initiation fee" and monthly dues rather than an annual fee. Ask what member privileges include. These vary from course to course but usually include membership in a men's or women's golf association (if they have one), maintenance of the member's handicap, and the ability to reserve tee times in advance of the general public.
- **Private Courses**  
Data gathered on a private golf course should include the number of members and membership pricing for all categories of memberships. Private clubs usually request a one-time initiation fee which may be refunded or transferred when the member resigns. In addition, there may also be a stock purchase required that will give the member voting rights. The stock is usually sold or transferred upon member resignation. Members are also required to pay either monthly or annual dues. Make note of any additional mandatory fees the members must pay (food and beverage minimums, assessments, capital improvement fees).

If possible, information should be obtained on how many rounds are played annually on the course and if golf outings are accepted by the private course.

- **Resort Courses**  
Resort courses vary widely as to the type of play offered. The primary revenue generator for most resorts is room revenue and the ancillary expenditures (food, meeting room usage, pro shop expenditures, etc.) that the guests generate. Therefore most resorts give top priority to resort guests and make certain they can get tee times. Resorts generally have two types of guests that have different playing patterns: the corporate or meeting guest who meets in the mornings and has afternoon tee times and the social or vacationing guest who usually plays on the weekends. Most resorts generate additional revenue by offering memberships and/or allowing public fee play to take up the unused tee times.

The type of information gathered for the resort courses can include the same information that would be gathered for a public fee or semi-private course, depending upon the resort's golf offering.



- Other general information to be gathered for each course researched
- Notes should be taken on the food and beverage concept offered (snack bar vs. full dining room) and menus should be obtained for price comparison. Using either the luncheon or dinner menus (or both), compare the price of a fish, chicken, and beef entree item. This will provide a look at the low-to-high price range among the food and beverage operations of the courses researched.
- Outing package information (usually includes greens fees, cart fees, and a Pro's fee) should be gathered and some estimate the number of outings the course hosts.

### **E. Interviews and/or Focus Groups**

The interview portion of the market study will be the most revealing and informative part of the study. A researcher looking into the possibility of a new golf course may discover the location, the demographic report and the lack of existing competition in an area all point to a potentially good market for a new club. In talking to a real estate broker he may then discover that there are plans for a new development including a golf course within close proximity of the researcher's site that could prove to be formidable competition. When it comes to interviewing prospective or existing golfers for a golf course, *keep in mind that the highest form of flattery is to ask someone their opinion.* The researcher will find that no compensation is necessary or expected - business people understand the necessity of research for success. Most professionals want new and existing businesses to prosper, for prosperity breeds success for others.

Professionals that should be on the researcher's interview list:

- \* Bankers
- \* Chamber executives
- \* Other developers
- \* Local hotel managers
- \* Residential real estate brokers
- \* Local corporate executives
- \* City Officials
- \* Area golf professionals

Most importantly, interview a wide variety of golfers representing a mixture of ages, caliber of play, length of time in playing the game, household income, and executive status.



While some of the questions pertinent to the professionals listed above were mentioned in the “Economic Data” section earlier in this manual, other questions and issues that should be explored with those interviewed (depending upon profession and/or area of expertise or interest) include:

- Does the individual play golf? If so, how often and on what courses?
- Which course is played most frequently and why?
- How are area courses perceived in the area in terms of playability of the course, quality of the facility, service, and attitude of the staff?
- Does the individual perceive a need for a new golf course in the area? If so, why? If not, why not?
- Does the individual have any suggestions for any unmet needs or expectations of area golfers in terms of a new golf course (i.e., more extensive golf instructional programs, availability of caddies)?
- Can the individual think of any others that should be interviewed that would be particularly knowledgeable or opinionated on the need or lack of need for a new golf course?

Interviews can be done on a one-on-one basis or in a focus group format. Details on how to organize and implement focus groups are found in the “Focus Group” section of this manual. It should be understood that some of the professionals interviewed will be those whose time is valuable. *Offering to take them to breakfast or lunch in exchange for their time is an offer few can turn down.* The same is recommended for the focus group format. People do break for lunch and those focus groups that are scheduled around a breakfast or luncheon scenario are often the best attended, particularly when the participants are promised they will be kept no longer than an hour to an hour and a half.



## Notes



## Putting Research Into Action



## Properly Positioning the Golf Course

Once the market research is complete, the golf course owner has factual data which provides:

- The profile of the prospective golfers within the target market
  - The geographic radius of both the primary and secondary markets for the golf course
- The types of competitive facilities these golfers are now playing
- Specific "likes and dislikes" of the golfers discovered in the interviewing or focus group process.
- Financial information on competitive facilities.

The owner must then decide how to "position" his or her golf course to optimize the opportunities within the market place. This position should be spelled out very clearly and concisely in a positioning statement that will serve as a "steering mechanism", guiding the marketing and advertising efforts.

Example of a "positioning statement" drafted from market study facts:

Mr. Smith discovers from his market research for Stonebrook Golf Club that

- The total household population within a twelve mile radius is 60,000.
- 28%, or 16,800, of the households within this market area have household incomes between \$50,000 and \$75,000.
- 14%, or 8,400, of the households have incomes of \$75,000 and greater.
- The competitive study shows there is one upscale country club which has an initiation fee of \$10,000 and dues of \$250 per month. The only other golfing alternative is a municipal course which charges \$15 every day of the week and is very difficult to get onto.

Mr. Smith is certain a mid-range course will capture those who can't quite afford the country club, but wish to play golf on a less crowded course than the municipal course. He also found in the interviewing portion of the study that many families want to participate in programs such as junior golfing programs, tournaments, womens' golfing groups, etc. His positioning statement reads like this:

"Stonebrook Golf Club will be a fine quality golf club appealing to those golfers who want country club quality facilities, services, and programs at public fee course prices."



## Designing the Marketing Program

In the example above, Mr. Smith used his research to design a positioning statement that would assist him in creating the image of his golf course in the minds of the consumers. He wants them to believe that while they will not have to pay an initiation fee or be obligated for monthly dues, they can feel as though they are a member of a private club and enjoy comparable facilities and services. Now Mr. Smith needs to put together a marketing program that will effectively send that message to his target market.

Mr. Smith's marketing program needs to incorporate three primary components:

- Advertising
- Database Marketing
- Public Relations

## Advertising

In a recent survey sent to its members, the NGCOA asked how much golf course owners typically spend on advertising as a percentage of their annual revenues, and where they spend their advertising dollars. Responses are found in Exhibit A found on page 58 of this manual, but in general, the survey revealed the following:

- The golf course owners who responded spent an average of 2.6% of their total annual revenue on advertising
- Translated into dollars, the median annual advertising budget for those interviewed was \$24,600
- The dollars were primarily spent in the local newspaper, on direct mail, and in yellow page advertising.

The survey indicates, however, that golf course owners use several advertising avenues to "get their message" to their target market.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of their marketing dollars, Northwestern University's Philip Kotler, the author of *Marketing Management: Analysis, Thinning Implementation and Control*, advises there are five "M's" to be considered before putting together an advertising program:

- Deciding the mission of the marketing program
- Determining how much money can be spent on the program
- Choosing what message is to be conveyed
- Discovering what media best delivers the message
- Designing a means of measurement for the program

Most golf course owners agree on the mission of their advertising campaign - to generate golf rounds by appealing to the golfers in the target market. Put in simple terms, the overall marketing program is intended to drive "trial" and "frequency." They want to get the golfers to try the golf course and to return often (and bring their friends).



The message conveyed in the advertising will vary by group of golfers targeted, season of the year, or even by time of day during which the owner wishes to increase usage.

In order to knowledgeably decide on what media should be used, owners should consider the “pro’s and con’s” of what’s available:

- **Newspaper**

As the NGCOA survey revealed, most owners see their advertising dollars as being well spent in the local newspaper. The lead time involved for placing an ad in a daily paper is minimal, with most newspapers requiring print-ready ads anywhere from five to seven days prior to the targeted print date. The ad will typically reach those living within the target market. The dollar amount spent, depending upon the size of the market and the circulation of the paper, is relatively inexpensive compared to other media advertising like radio or television. Newspaper advertising can be very effective, providing a few simple rules are followed.

C.J. McDaniel, senior vice president of marketing for Club Corporation of America, is involved in advertising planning for more than 30 public fee and semiprivate courses. McDaniel suggests there are five critical ingredients to an effective newspaper ad:

- The ad should visually express golf through the use of golf-related graphics or photographs
- The ad should make an offer: price pulls
- The ad should appear in parts of the paper most widely read by the target audience, i.e., the sports pages or the business news
- The ad should always include the club name, address and phone number
- There should always be a call to action which causes the golfer to bring the ad in to take advantage of the special

In Exhibit B on page 61 of this manual, McDaniel gives an example of a well designed newspaper ad. The success of the ad can easily be measured by the number of ads redeemed.

There are several advantages to newspaper advertising. The lead time in getting the ad to the newspaper office is five to seven days prior to the targeted print time, allowing for quick reaction time. So, the golf course owner who wishes to generate additional play through an ad printed in one week’s paper, need only get the ad to the paper the previous week for print. Also, newspapers provide good coverage of the local market. One disadvantage of a newspaper ad is that it is a one-shot method of communication that must be repeated in successive newspapers for broader response. To remedy that, the golf course owner can purchase several days or weeks worth of space, often at a lower price per ad than the cost of running one individual ad. Another disadvantage is that it is mostly a black and white medium that cannot appeal to the senses as can radio and television.



Cost for placement of newspaper ads is determined by the size of the ad, size of the market, and the circulation figures of the newspaper. Golf course owners should invest in ads that best reach their specific market. For instance, rather than advertising in the *Dallas Morning News*, a golf course owner in Plano, Texas, a suburb of Dallas, may look into advertising in the Plano suburban edition of the *Dallas Morning News*. While the larger edition reaches a great number of potential golfers, the suburban section costs less because of a smaller circulation, and goes to those potential golfers most likely to play the course - those within the immediate market area of the golf course.

Newspaper ads are usually given to the paper in "print ready" form which can be screened contact prints (veloxes), or camera-ready art, or negatives. Golf course owners can receive recommendations from newspaper offices on how to design ads. Advertising agencies can also be used to design the newspaper ads, recommend the best placement within the newspaper, and suggest the most effective frequency for running the ad.

- **Yellow Pages**

The NGCOA golf course owner survey indicated that the second greatest expenditure by those surveyed was advertising in the yellow pages. Many consider it "year round" advertising, with the median expenditure by those interviewed being \$1,033 annually on yellow page ads. While an actual ad in the yellow pages may cost the golf course owner more than a simple listing (costs vary widely depending upon the size of the market) an ad provides the owner an opportunity to entice the browser by providing additional information beyond just a listing.

In designing an effective ad for the yellow pages, much of McDaniel's criteria above for a newspaper ad also applies. The ad:

- Should include photographs or graphics that are eye-catching and golf-related
- Should include the name, address, and phone number of the course
- Should give some indication of location in proximity to downtown, a major landmark, or well-known area of the city

A yellow page ad can bring in first time golfers who may be visitors to, or new residents of the city. Convenience of location or ease in finding the course can be a deciding factor on what course they choose to play.

Yellow pages as an advertising medium have the advantage of being a year-round advertising means. Unlike daily or weekly newspapers, people keep their yellow pages for year-round reference. The disadvantage is that, like newspapers, it is only a black and white medium. Also, the audience must specifically be looking for the information rather than being exposed to it through browsing.



- **Direct Mail and Database Marketing**

Direct mail pieces can be as simple as a post card or as extensive as a personalized letter to an individual that includes a four color brochure. The piece can be mailed to prospective golfers found on a list of income-qualified residents in a selected zip coded area. These lists can be purchased through advertising agencies or a number of other sources found in the yellow pages. These lists should only be purchased by newly opened courses, as the most effective list for existing courses will be the one compiled by the golf course itself of those that have visited the course at least once. Every golf course owner should be accumulating a database of players and should be marketing to this database.

In this day of easy and relatively inexpensive computer technology, golf course owners simply can't afford not to do a good job of database marketing. Using a personal computer, the golf course owner can begin from the very first day of operation to gather names, addresses, and other pertinent information on golfers who play the course. Who better to market to than a golfer who already knows where the course is and how it plays!

Gordon Law of HadelLaw, a media management firm in Dallas, says database marketing provides:

- A better understanding of who the customer is through segmentation and targeting. The information gathered can provide insights as to the age of the player, where he lives (zip code), how frequently he plays the course, and the time of day or day of the week he most often plays. The data can be manipulated or sorted by those categories (zip code, gender, etc.). This data is valuable in assisting the owner in targeting certain age groups in geographical areas of the market, and in guiding decision-making for future marketing campaigns.
- It allows for measurement of the effectiveness of direct mail advertising and promotions, providing tracking systems are built into the promotions. Examples are cards or ads that are to be redeemed for the special offering, etc. Once those cards or ads that were sent via direct mail are redeemed, the owner can track the number of golfers in the course's database that actually responded.

The pro's and con's of database marketing are similar to those of direct mail in general. They both have the distinct advertising advantage of sending a specific message to a very specific target audience. The disadvantages are postage costs, and the time and expense involved in personalizing the piece, which is key to increasing response. But with computers, this disadvantage is largely non-existent.



Two large challenges of database marketing are finding innovative ways to encourage the golfer to give the data needed and then creatively using the data to communicate to the database of golfers. Each golf course owner must determine what information is important. It is recommended they begin by designing a card (no larger than the size of a post card so as not to be too intimidating to the golfer filling it out) asking the following basic information:

- Name
- Address (both home and work), including city, state and zip code
- Occupation and company name
- Other courses they frequently play

Some innovative ways of getting the information from the golfers include:

- Have a drawing for a golf bag or a weekend round of golf for four from among those who fill out the information cards.
- Offer everyone who fills out the information card a golf ball.
- Tell them they will be put on a mailing list and will be mailed information on specials being run at the golf course.
- Offer everyone who fills out the card a "membership" which includes receipt of a monthly newsletter, a handicap service, and invitations to play in the tournaments held at the course.
- Set up a "frequent player" program in which those who fill out the information get a card similar to the membership card mentioned above. Rewards would be given as the golfer plays certain numbers of rounds, such as a complimentary cart fee after the golfer plays five rounds or a weekend round of golf after the golfer plays ten rounds.

Some creative ways to utilize the information while gathering it:

- Periodic mailings or newsletters: monthly would be best, depending upon the affordability. Simple desktop publishing software can enable the owner to do a classy one page (front and back) newsletter updating the golfers on specials in the pro shop, tournaments being hosted and more importantly, upcoming discounts or specials being offered.
- Direct mail flyers on seasonal specials to encourage golf rounds through pricing incentives when the course needs business.
- Analyze the zip codes the course is pulling from and do targeted mailings to residents in those areas.



- **Golf Planners, Golf Guide Books, and Golf Passbooks**

The fourth most widely used means of advertising among the owners who participated in the NGCOA survey was golf books. These can be either golf planners, golf guide books or golf passbooks. Hank Johnson, former Executive Director of the Low Country Golf Course Owners Association in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, explains the difference:

“Golf planners are produced to represent and sell areas like Hilton Head to distant markets or potential visitors to the Island to help them plan vacations in advance. Golf guides are for local golfers as well as visitors to the area and give locals and tourists greater details about the courses than golf planners, outlining where they are and how to get there. Golf passbooks are printed by groups like the Low Country Golf Course Owners Association in a limited number. They are sold to local golfers to raise marketing dollars (and dollars for local charities in the case of the Low Country Golf Course Owners Association).”

Golf planners are often put together by local chambers of commerce or convention and visitors bureaus covering a resort area. They are often mailed to potential golfers or vacationers who responded to advertising done by the resort area and are considering a trip to the area. The golf planners contain information on golf and lodging and exciting attractions offered by the vacation area. They promote places to stay and play golf, making it easier for the golfer to plan a vacation.

Golf guides are targeted to local golfers, as well as visitors to an area, and give more specific details than do golf planners. They are generally provided to vacationers once they reach the location, and are intended to help them plan their vacation activities. Contents include information on the area’s golf courses, such as yardage, number of holes, amenities, where they are located, and instructions on how to get there.

Golf passbooks are put together and marketed to local golfers and frequent visitors to an area. They often provide discounts, coupons or deals. If someone in a local area is creating a passbook, he or she will often contact all of the golf courses to invite them to participate. These passbooks drive “trial” as well as increase “frequency” as all golfers are looking for price savings.

Twenty-two golf course owners that are members of the Low Country Golf Course Owners Association jointly publish an annual golf passbook. Johnson says the books are printed to offer \$800 in golf savings for the golf buyer and are sold for \$110 by the participating golf courses. The number of books sold is limited to 1,000 and the courses all take advance orders from previous year’s purchasers.

The golf book is intended to drive golf rounds when the courses need the traffic: after 11:00 a.m. in December and January and after 12:00 noon in February through November, excluding the high season months of March, April and October. The golf courses print an additional 1,000 copies, some of which are donated to area charities through a charity committee.



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- **Destination Marketing**

Just as the Hilton Head golf course owners pool their advertising dollars and marketing efforts, so too have the golf courses in the Myrtle Beach area. To facilitate this, a non-profit trade association of 86 golf courses and 96 accommodations encompassing a 60 mile area from Georgetown, South Carolina, to Southport, North Carolina, called "Myrtle Beach Golf Holiday" was formed in 1967. The primary mission of the association was to market the area as a major golf destination. The association's efforts involve special marketing programs for the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Advertisements promoting Myrtle Beach area golf vacations are featured in major golf publications worldwide. Toll free numbers are offered for inquiries from more than twelve foreign countries. Callers are sent free vacation planners with golf package rates for all members' accommodations, members' golf schools, recommended restaurants, and other travel tips. The association's marketing efforts have translated into hundreds of thousands of annual golf visitors from around the world resulting in more than 3.9 million golf rounds being played on the "Grand Strand" courses every year.

The Myrtle Beach example of destination marketing underscores what can be accomplished when golf courses, restaurants, lodging, and other area attractions pool not only marketing dollars but marketing energies as well. Advertising a message about a destination rather than one golf course, restaurant, hotel or even a singular tourist attraction sends the message of multiple opportunities for visitors or tourists going to the advertised destination. Every entity involved benefits from a stronger message advertising multiple facilities and attractions that communicates to and attracts a larger market.

- **Radio**

Radio advertising, depending upon the size of the market, can be very effective in reaching the target market, providing the owner knows which radio stations are listened to by the golfers. Vince Alfonso of Alfonso Creative Golf Enterprises, Inc., has done marketing consulting for golf courses for more than twenty years. He suggests an innovative way of finding out what radio stations golfers are tuning into. Mr. Alfonso's method of "roadblocking" works best for those golf courses in smaller markets with a limited number of radio stations. Here's how it works:

- The golf course owner requests the same time slot (for example 7:08 a.m.) on all of the predominant stations in the area each day for five days of one week.
- Golfers playing the course doing the advertising are surveyed during the week to discover whether they heard the commercial, and if so, on what station.
- By the fifth day, the survey should reveal the station most frequently listened to by those golfers currently playing the course. Having determined popularity of local stations among golfers already playing the course, the owner also now knows what station he should use to reach other golfers listening to the station that haven't as yet played the course. Such an experiment will demonstrate to the owner which radio station provides the greatest exposure to the golfing market for the radio advertising dollars spent.



While Mr. Alfonso emphasizes such surveying can be very effective, it is mainly affordable in small markets where there are not a lot of radio stations and where the whole test would cost no more than \$1,500 for the radio spots.

An advantage of radio advertising is that it provides an audio presentation that can be much more effective than print because it directly broadcasts the message to the audience. If the listener is tuned into the station, he hears it. With a newspaper ad, it can be passed over if the reader is drawn to another part of the newspaper's page or if the reader chooses not to read that section of the paper in which it is printed. However, a one-shot radio spot can be more expensive in comparison to newspaper advertising (depending on the newspaper and radio station used). Also, the average thirty-second radio spot is short-lived and may need to be repeated multiple times to really catch a listener's attention.

- **Cable Television**

With the emergence of major national cable television networks, more golf courses are finding cable television as a very effective and affordable means of advertising. Of the twelve forms of advertising used by those surveyed in the NGCOA marketing survey, cable ranked sixth in order of expenditure.

Trent Kelly, an account executive with TCI Media Services in Dallas, Texas, says that cable advertising has many more advantages than other media in that it "reaches out and touches the audience." A golf course owner can have a thirty second commercial produced for as little as \$500. Once produced, area cable advertising professionals can provide the golf course owner with detailed and extensive data on what networks (ESPN, CNN, Comedy Central, etc.) are most frequently watched and when by individuals having the greatest propensity to golf. In research pulled on the Dallas area golfers, the TCI Media Services showed some of the most frequently watched networks by golfers are ESPN, Comedy Central, and Headline News. Kelly points out that cable advertising in and of itself has a qualified market as viewers pay a premium price for cable viewing and tend to be an upscale group.

In discussing advertising rates, Kelly says they are based on the number of viewers watching the network chosen. One other factor which determines cost is how favorably the show is rated in the "Nielsen ratings," a measurement of a program's viewing audience on both national and local levels.

Cable television offers a great deal of flexibility in that the advertiser can choose a specific network like ESPN or a cluster of networks on which to advertise. They can also choose very specific geographic "zones" in which they wish to advertise, covering anywhere from a one mile radius to a one hundred mile radius around their golf course.



Sample rate sheets and a zone map were provided by TCI Media Services in Exhibit C on page 62 of this manual. As outlined above, there are multiple variables that factor into the rate cost of a thirty second commercial on cable. The rate sheets reflect that a thirty second commercial shown on CNN, prime time, and in all Dallas/Fort Worth area zones would run \$451 per "spot" or thirty second commercial. This same commercial on a local broadcast affiliate during prime time could cost as much as \$4,000 per spot.

Kelly also advises that television is an image-building medium first and foremost, and is designed to work over time. To effectively use cable, golf course owners should consider running about two spots per night per network, five nights per week for three months. According to the rate sheets in Exhibit C, a golf course owner in Plano or Richardson, Texas, wishing to advertise his or her course in one zone and only on ESPN (\$36 per spot in prime time), twice per night for five nights over a twelve week period would invest \$4,320 on cable television advertising.

While cable advertising is more expensive than the other advertising media discussed, the advantages are that it offers flexibility in the message in that the golf course owner can speak directly to the market and show the beauty of the golf course and facilities. It offers the sophistication of detailed research in targeting the golfing audience, the networks they are watching, and when they are watching them. It is the ultimate media in building image and creating awareness by using the power of sight, sound, and emotion.

- **Outdoor Advertising**

Outdoor advertising can either be in the form of signage the golf course owner has had made to display on or near the course, or billboard advertising where the owner rents billboard space near the course or on a thoroughfare where the target market travels.

- Billboards

Billboard advertising can be very effective if placed on highly trafficked thoroughfares in the target market areas. Production costs for the painted bulletins used on the billboard are often included in the monthly rental charge. Billboard rentals can run as low as \$2,000 per month in small markets to as high as \$25,000 per month in markets like metropolitan Chicago. Message preparation for the billboard ad can be done in two forms. The least expensive is to paint the message onto the billboard. The more expensive form of billboard advertising uses "vinyls" or ads with color pictures reprinted onto vinyl sheets that are simply placed on the billboards. The cost of the vinyl preparation itself can be upwards of \$2,000 or more, depending upon the photographs or graphics used.



### Signage

If a golf course owner is going to go to the expense of having signage made for display along roadside areas, it is wise to investigate local regulations or ordinances that govern and impose restrictions on outdoor advertising along public thoroughfares.

Outdoor advertising's advantage is that it offers the ability to reach a large population, depending upon the volume of traffic that goes by the billboard. It also offers repeat exposure to those who may pass it frequently on a daily basis. The disadvantage of this advertising medium is that unlike direct mail and some of the other advertising options discussed above, there is no audience selectivity or targeted audience marketing.

### • **Media Specialists**

Golf course owners considering the media forms mentioned above in their marketing plans may choose to explore the services of professional media management firms or advertising agencies. Gordon Law of HadelLaw, quoted earlier in the Database Marketing section of this manual, said that specialty firms or agencies can benefit the small golf course owner in the following ways:

- Advising the owner on various media buying options in the market which will allow the owner the most cost-effective coverage
- Media agencies may be able to provide media buys much less expensively because they are buying for multiple clients and/or they may have established beneficial relationships with media in the marketplace
- While agencies and/or management firms have their fees, often those fees are minimal in comparison to the savings and advertising results they can provide the golf course owner

When asked how he might recommend that a golf course owner select an agency, Law suggests seeking out those agencies that are currently running ad campaigns in the marketplace that have "caught the owner's eye" or have been particularly creative or impressive in their use of the media. He also suggests getting a recommendation from other advertisers and golf course owners in the marketplace as to what agencies they have used or have impressed them.

### • **Internet Marketing**

Many golf course owners will ask, "Why advertise on the Internet?" In a recent article in the *Dallas Morning News*, the Internet was compared to the telephone answering machine. The article pointed out that once upon a time few people had answering machines, now people get annoyed if there isn't a device to answer the phone when there is no one at home. The Internet will soon be as commonplace as answering machines, and as critical to businesses as fax machines have become. Many people use the Internet for planning vacations and even booking their airline, hotel and even tee time reservations. If golf course owners are going to compete, shouldn't they explore and be familiar with a source of advertising their competitors may already be using?



The InBusiness section of America Online, Inc. is a great source of information on how to set up a web page and use it to promote a golf club. Any subscriber to America Online can simply access InBusiness through their services menu. Costs vary on setting up a web page depending upon the Internet service provider. Internet service providers offer various incentives to setting up your web page with them: for example, America OnLine allows customers to have a web page for no additional cost over the monthly charges. Others may provide services such as tracking the number of viewers of the page, and answering inquiries made to the web site. Monthly charges may be higher for many of these and there may be an initial start up fee.

Design of the web page can be done by the enterprising golf course owner in-house or can be outsourced to professionals who list their services on the Internet. Web page effectiveness not only depends upon the design of the page, but the ability of the interested "web surfers" to find it. InBusiness recommends registering the web site with all of the online "search engines" which Internet subscribers use to help them "surf the 'net" or find areas of interest.

The web page should never be allowed to stagnate. To be effective, it should constantly be updated with new information on the golf course. Golf course owners can use their web page to communicate information on location, facilities, special programs offered, varying seasonal green fees, etc.

There are numerous benefits to using Internet advertising. It is relatively inexpensive and can provide as much or little information as the golf course owner wants to communicate. One disadvantage of the Internet is that it is still relatively new to a large portion of the population. However, the latest subscriber statistics show it is catching on like wildfire, with a rapidly accelerating acceptance rate and usage around the world.



- **Public Relations**

Public relations is marketing done with two primary objectives: to create awareness of the golf course in the community and to give it a positive image. Good public relations involves the owner, the golf pro, and the manager getting to know the media personalities like sportscasters from the newspaper, radio, and television stations, and establishing mutually beneficial relationships. It also means the club staff should join and support local civic and charitable organizations including the Lions Club, the Rotary, and the local chamber of commerce. Special events marketing is one form of public relations.

- Special Events Marketing

- Special events marketing can begin with hosting some of the civic and charitable events that help support the organizations and charities mentioned above. This type of marketing also involves having a variety of functions at the golf course. While there is a wide variety of events that can be hosted, most golf courses should include some of the following in their planned annual calendar of special events:

- An anniversary party  
Every course has an opening anniversary once a year and it should not pass by without some sort of fanfare. This can range from a full blown month of events planned to celebrate, to one jam-packed Saturday when there is a major tournament planned and refreshments are served to all who participate. Major anniversary years such as the fifth, tenth, fifteenth, twentieth, etc., should be highlighted to get as much mileage and publicity as possible
  - Celebrity events  
"Celebrities" can range from local television personalities to city officials such as the mayor to sports figures and other high profile individuals. For these events, plan "shoot-outs," celebrity challenges or "play with the pro" events. Such publicity advertises that these kinds of personalities frequent the course
  - Charitable events  
All courses should host one or more charitable event as it sends a positive message to the community and indicates that the course supports and gives back to those that contribute to its success. Target charities in which the course may be able to get local dignitaries or sports figures to help with the success of the event. Many course owners are concerned with losing large sums of money by hosting charity events. However, hosting charity events does not mean that they must be done for free. Usually all profits over cost are donated to the charity involved



- Environmental programs  
Golf course owners should be major players in environmental programs to preserve the natural beauty of the land. There are environmental recognition or certification programs that can help the owner "do the right thing" and gain publicity for the course. One such program is the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP) for Golf Courses created by the Audubon Society of New York. Other programs golf course owners can get involved with include the National Awards for Environmental Sustainability and the Environmental Steward Award. Look for opportunities to spearhead these programs and advertise your proud participation in them
- Tournaments and play days  
Target some of the fastest growing groups of golfers, women and juniors, and advertise the offering of programs specifically for them. Such public relations programs signify the course is "user friendly" to these groups and will therefore attract this growing segment of future golfers

Specific examples of an excellent annual special events marketing campaign are found on page 38 of the "Marketing Narratives" section of this manual. Edelman, a very successful advertising agency, has provided a sample marketing plan which includes a calendarized, twelve month action plan for an 18 hole golf course. It should be noted that the primary task of Edelman throughout the plan was not only to assist in planning and implementing the scheduled events, but to prepare and circulate press releases to local and regional media so as to get press coverage. Done properly, public relations and special events marketing can generate a great deal of unpaid media coverage. Getting good press coverage is accomplished through establishing the press relationships mentioned above and by providing well-written press releases. In addition, the fourth narrative in this manual contains several examples of marketing/promotions ideas

#### Press Releases

As the above information about public relations and special events suggests, establishing a good relationship with writers, editors, and reporters in the sports arena of the local media is a good first step in getting press coverage for the golf course. An important second step is communicating to them the activities of the golf course, and requesting that they print the information if space permits. Communicating this information is best done in the form of a press release.

Generally, a press release is a typed fact sheet stating the details of the event or activity in a clear, accurate, and concise manner. Many editors or sports writers request that press releases simply state the "five W's" of the activity - who, what, when, where and why. In most instances, they will then take these facts and rewrite the press release, converting it into their own style of reporting. An effective press release is one in which the event, tournament or other circumstance is outlined by day, date, location, number of people attending, special people attending, reason for event, results of event,



tournament, etc. It is recommended that if the golf pro or manager knows the individual at the newspaper, radio station or television station, that they precede sending or faxing the press release with a phone call to the individual letting him or her know it is coming. Also, always be sure to call the reporter back to provide more details if needed.

Many golf course owners or golf professionals believe that only press releases on major events get coverage. That is not necessarily true. It is recommended that press releases be sent to local papers and radio stations concerning everything from demo days, tournaments, and clinics to anything that involves significant activity at the golf course. Owners and golf professionals will be surprised at how frequently the media is looking for "filler" for slow news days.

Exhibit D on page 66 of this manual, is a sample of a press release written to announce Cliff Rampy's election as president of the board of directors of the NGCOA. The five "w's" outlined in the press release are as follows:

**Who:**

Cliff Rampy, owner and operator of Treeline Golf Club in Tomball Texas.

**What:**

Has been elected to serve as the President of the NGCOA for 1996.

**When and where:**

At the Association's 14th Annual Conference in Palm Springs, CA.

**Why:**

"...Rampy's goals for the NGCOA are to build the Association's membership and maintain and create positive environments..."

The press release was distributed by the NGCOA offices to the local newspapers and included the name and phone number of an NGCOA executive that could be contacted for additional details.

Press Conferences

Press conferences allow the golf course owner to get "up close and personal" with the members of the press. Press conferences go one step beyond press releases in that they are formal, scheduled presentations where representatives from the local newspaper, radio, and television stations are invited by phone call or letter from a golf course representative to come to the golf course at a scheduled time for an announcement or meeting with a celebrity, dignitary, etc. Press conferences are usually scheduled for events such as charitable tournaments, celebrity shoot-outs, or any other kind of high profile event the club wishes to publicize. A prepared statement should be read by the golf course owner or representative and there should be an opportunity for questions from the press. The press conference may also include a press golf tournament and/or lunch to entice local press to cover the event. The club should also have press kits with fact sheets to distribute to the press.



### Press Kits

Press kits are essentially information packages about the golf course. The first written piece of information in the press kit should be a fact sheet listing all of the basic information on the golf course including:

- The name of the individual or corporation that owns the golf course
- The date the course was opened
- The acreage of the entire facility and its location in relation to downtown or some other well-known area of the city. A small map might also be included
- The yardage, number of holes, and name of the designer of the course
- Description of the signature hole(s). It may also offer some descriptive information on number of holes with water, details on the terrain, and any other unique or special aspects of the course
- Details on other facilities such as the clubhouse, driving range, teaching facility, private party rooms, and outing capabilities
- A contact name and phone number for additional information

The press kit might also contain brochures on the golf course, a scorecard, information on seasonal rates, and any other pertinent information that might be available on the course. All of this printed matter should be assembled into a simple, yet professional looking folder for distribution during press conferences or as an enclosure if press releases are being sent for the first time to an area publication or media source.

### • **Other Advertising Tools**

#### Photographs

Golf course owners can consider their signature holes as a real advertising tool. Photos of signature holes can become as familiar a sight to the golfers as the course's logo. Mike Klemme of GOLFOTO, Inc., describes a course's signature hole as one "which has the most dramatic light, the most rocks, water and trees, the best golf shot, the landscape which most typifies the area and is normally the most expensive to build." Photographs of the signature hole used on the course's scorecard, yardage book, bag tag, post cards, and posters can be very effective marketing pieces. These items can not only serve as advertising tools getting the word out about the course, but they can also generate revenue as pro shop merchandise.



### Brochures

The golf course owner may also consider a golf course brochure to serve as an image piece, providing beautiful pictures of the golf course and information about the course's amenities. The brochure should include the following:

- Attractive photography
- A description of the course, including the designer, yardage, and number of sets of tees
- A listing of greens fees and cart fees
- Outing packages that are available
- Private party rooms or areas for private functions that can be reserved for groups
- A small map on the back side with directions, the mailing address, the web site home page address if the course has one, the phone number, and the name of the golf professional or club manager for individuals to call for additional information
- Any unique historical features the course possesses

Because many golf courses are within or near major housing developments, such brochures could be co-operational efforts with residential developers. Golf course vendors: food and beverage, pro shop, equipment, etc., may also contribute to the brochure printing to have their names mentioned or have small ads included.

While golf course owners can develop brochures in-house, this is another task that can be outsourced to printers who offer design services or to full service advertising agencies. Brochures can be very useful marketing tools, used not only in direct mail pieces, but as "take aways" given to those inquiring about outings, and other private group functions that could be hosted at the facility.



## The Marketing Budget



Once the golf course owner has done the research on who and where the golfing market is for the golf course and then explored all the advertising opportunities available to communicate to that market, the next step is to put together a logical, cost-effective marketing budget. Only then can the golf course owner put together the right marketing plan. The following are the decisions that must go into assembling that budget:

- How much money to allocate for the marketing budget
- Where to spend the money allocated
- How to measure the effectiveness of the money spent

### **How Much to Spend?**

As the NGCOA survey of its members pointed out, golf course owners spend on average 2.6% of their annual gross revenues. Interviews with other marketing professionals in the golf business indicated that expenditures range anywhere from 1.5% to 5%, depending upon the revenues of the course and the stage of development. Many golf courses in the development or newly opened stages have to spend more to introduce the course the first year.

### **Where to Spend the Money Allocated?**

The median annual marketing budget for the polled group of NGCOA owners was \$24,600, with the individual median dollar expenditures being broken out as the survey shows in Exhibit A on page 58 of this manual. Because of the differences in markets, profile of players, and kinds of media available in various geographic areas, this survey should serve only as a general outline as to what advertising and media opportunities can be considered for marketing budgets. It is suggested that once the golf course owner completes the research stage of the golf course market place covered in the market research section of this manual, that the advertising options be analyzed in detail as well. The attached list in Exhibit E on page 67 should serve as a guideline for the questions to ask when calling to get advertising information from the newspaper, radio station, yellow pages, etc., and the format that will help in planning.

### **How to Measure the Effectiveness of the Money Spent?**

#### **The "CPM" Factor**

One measure of the effectiveness of advertising is to analyze the "cost per thousand persons reached" or "CPM" of the advertising means. Let's apply this term to some of the advertising media discussed in this manual. If one ad in the *Dallas Morning News* sports section costs \$1,000 to run and the newspaper has a circulation of 100,000, the cost per 1,000 readers is \$10. If a major golf resort took out a full page, four color ad in *Newsweek* with an estimated readership of two million at a cost of \$65,000, the cost of exposing this ad to 1,000 people is \$32.50. In order to analyze the CPM for each advertising means considered, the golf course owner must know the number of people the medium will reach: For example, the circulation of the newspaper or yellow pages, the traffic that will pass by the billboard or dedicated sign, and the number of listeners or viewers of radio or cable television.



It should be noted that the cost per thousand persons reached or CPM measure is only one variable to be considered in the effectiveness of an advertising medium. The quality of the market reached in relation to the golf course is another very important consideration. Taking an example from cable television discussed on page 24 of this manual, the CPM of advertising on ESPN in the zone for Garland, Texas, would be much less for the same time period than in the zone for Plano, Texas. However, the Garland golfers have other golfing choices which are more convenient than the golf club in Plano and is not really considered a good potential market for the Plano golf club. So while the CPM may be less in that zone, so too is the potential within that zone to produce golfers for the Plano golf course.

## Tracking

**W**henver possible, it is recommended that the advertising means used have some sort of tracking capability. For instance, newspaper ads, yellow page ads, and golf books may require the golfer to bring the ad to the pro shop to receive whatever special offering the ad promotes. Outdoor advertising, cable, and radio are not as easy to track as these are more “image” creating media. These media still generate traffic, but over a longer period of time.

In evaluating the effectiveness of those advertisements that require the golfer to bring in the ad, begin by keeping track of the number of ads redeemed. The golf shop staff should be trained to ask the golfer if it was his or her first time to visit the course. This answer should be recorded on the ad. The owner should then calculate how many of the golfers using the ads were new golfers to the course or simply repeat golfers familiar with the course who saw the ad and wanted to save on their next round. It is recommended that a good advertising campaign should generate new golfers for the course and encourage previous golfers to return. Each campaign should be recorded as to how many new golfers were generated, past golfers encouraged to return, and overall numbers of rounds generated. In the case of newspaper ads that run for a limited period of time, the total rounds generated for the promotion period should be compared to a “typical” week when no promotions were being run to see what “incremental” new business was generated for the dollars spent on the advertisement.

An example of a cost-effective advertising campaign using newspaper ads follows: A golf course spends \$50 per ad for five weekdays. Tracking indicated that fifty more rounds at \$25 per round were generated that week over the prior week when no ads were being run. For a cost of \$250, \$1,250 in incremental new revenue was generated. Additional benefits measured by the tracking system in place found that 35 of the 50 were “repeat” golfers and 15 of the rounds generated were new golfers to the course. The ad not only generated revenue, but encouraged repeat as well as new business to the course.

Owners should record the results of the various ads used whenever possible for comparison purposes as well. They may find that one ad has a message that “pulls” or generates more returned offers than other ads.



Golf course owners have to scrutinize results and the return on investment generated for the course through each advertising means tried, either in new rounds generated, outing business produced, merchandise sold, or just heightened awareness of the course in the community. Owners will then become their own “marketing authorities” on how much, where and when they should spend their marketing dollars.



## Important Marketing Narratives for the Golf Course Owner



## **I. Sample Marketing Plan for a Golf Club**

In order to best illustrate the use of public relations and special events marketing, Edelman has provided a comprehensive marketing plan for an 18 hole golf course. The plan includes a monthly outline of events planned around holidays, seasons and special events that can both generate traffic and create awareness for a golf course.

## **II. Details on a Club Effectively Using Marketing**

This case study examines the success story of Fox Hills Country Club in Plymouth, Michigan. The owners in this story attribute much of their success to staying in touch with their golfers and providing good customer service. This is done through the use of customer satisfaction surveys.

## **III. Report on Choices Often Faced By Golf Course Developers**

This case study deals with the question a new golf course owner often faces: Should the new course be public, semi-private or private? The study outlines factors to consider and consequences of the decision the golf course owner must ultimately make.

## **IV. Marketing/Promotions Ideas for the Golf Course Owner**

This case study provides several marketing/promotions ideas that golf course owners have actually used at their courses. These ideas can be modified to fit many different types of courses.

# **I. Marketing Plan for XYZ Golf Club By: Edelman**

The following marketing plan was done for an 18-hole, upscale public fee course in the San Diego area proposed by Edelman to a prospective new owner looking to acquire the course. Edelman based the plan on a straightforward and comprehensive four-part strategy of advertising, on-site promotions, public relations, and events/programming.

The objectives of the plan were to:

- 1) build a great deal of general awareness within the facility's market area
- 2) stimulate trial (sample) visits to the facility
- 3) foster repeat use and customer loyalty by striving to exceed expectations at every opportunity

Edelman suggested the following tactics be used toward fulfillment of the marketing objectives for the XYZ Golf Club. The plan very thoroughly and extensively laid out all of the advertising and public relations options for the golf course owner of the XYZ Golf Club. After Edelman presented the extensive plan, the golf course owner then worked with Edelman to implement those parts of the overall campaign the golf course owner felt would be most effective for the golf club.



### **I. Advertising (to create awareness and trial)**

- Place compelling ads in the *Blade-Citizen*, *Times Advocate* and *Vista Press* newspapers to encourage play from the core customer segment - those residing near the facility and, thus most likely to provide consistent repeat business
- Place ads in the bi-monthly *Golf San Diego* magazine that will promote play during off-peak times (primarily 12-4 p.m. on weekdays; 1-4 p.m. weekends)
- Periodically place ads in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* and other neighborhood community newspapers to promote play from surrounding areas
- Produce a hotel rack brochure highlighting XYZ Golf Club as a "must play" for visiting golfers. Target area hotels and visitors' centers
- Place ads in telephone directories in areas surrounding the golf course (San Diego, Escondido, Vista, Oceanside, etc.)
- Place a listing and ads encouraging play from outside the Southern California area in:
  - National Golfers Association newsletter
  - *Golf International Magazine*
  - Club 19 newsletter
  - Golf Access brochure
  - Area Chambers of Commerce
- Produce and distribute a direct mail piece encouraging repeat visits by those who register during the grand opening

### **II. On-site Promotions (to encourage repeat business)**

- Distribute discount coupons via direct mail, point-of-sale, and local businesses which offer savings on greens fees, cart fees and merchandise
- Distribute flyers or one-page advertisements with details on XYZ Club, through a variety of outlets which advertise promotions during the year
- Display merchandise sale tables in the golf pro shop to enhance the "good value" aspects of playing at XYZ Golf Club

### **III. Comprehensive Public Relations (to create awareness and trial; to encourage repeat business)**

- Strategically place press releases which chronicle the purchase of the course, ground breaking, building of the clubhouse, naming of a pro/manager, programming, etc.
- Extend frequent golfing invitations to local media to promote good will, create quality relationships, and keep XYZ Golf Club "top-of-mind" for any general golf stories they might write
- Through personal contact, heighten awareness with media that the XYZ pros are local "golf experts" and available for comment on golf-related stories
- Capitalize on excellent rapport that exists with several local media contacts to obtain feature stories on XYZ Golf Club



#### IV. Events/Programming (to create awareness and trial; to encourage repeat business)

- Create and promote strong junior golf programs and women's clinics to capitalize on growing interest and awareness with the local community and golf industry, such as:
  - "Mother's Day Out" - Team up with local churches, etc., to provide day care for children while mothers play golf or attend a clinic
  - "Mother/Child, Father/Child" golf tournaments or clinics
  - Family Day" - Offer special discounts for families golfing together, or the parents can golf and the children attend a half-day/full-day clinic
  - "Summer School" - Offer week-long golf clinics for juniors during the summer
  - "Christmas Swing" - Offer Christmas vacation clinics
- Actively solicit local charity golf events, with the goal of adopting one major annual event to be decided by determining the charity that best fits the marketing goals of the course.
- Sponsor "Demo Days" to showcase manufacturers so that players can test the newest equipment in a low-pressure environment.
- To celebrate a six-month anniversary, create a joint promotion with a local area business, such as a car dealer, and stage a month-long contest based on longest drive or closest to the pin. Could also co-op with a radio station for publicity.
- Assign a tournament sales person to aggressively sell tournaments and outings to San Diego area companies, charitable organizations chambers of commerce, churches, restaurants and bars. The sales person will be under the direct supervision of the pro/manager and subject to extensive reporting and reviewing systems.
- Develop a "stay-and-play package" with a local hotel. Support with advertising and public relations in broader Southern California area.
- Develop and promote six-month and one-year anniversary specials.
- Develop and promote seasonal/holiday events, such as:
  - July 4: Everyone who wears red, white and blue receives discounted greens fees
  - Halloween: Everyone dressed in a costume receives discounted greens fees. Have a "Best Costume" contest for children
  - Thanksgiving: Bring canned items for (X) charity and receive discounted greens fees
  - Promote the fact that practice facility and course are host to area high school golf team



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## Marketing Schedule for XYZ Golf Club

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### MARCH

#### Activity / Cost

##### I. Public Relations / \$2,000\*\*

- A. Draft and distribute national release announcing new owner's involvement with XYZ Golf Club, facility description, key organizations involved in development, forecasted opening date and all other pertinent information.
- B. Draft and distribute local release on XYZ Golf Club purchase (with local modifications) to:
  - All local newspapers
  - All local radio stations
  - All local television stations
  - All sports related media
  - All civic organizations which publish a newspaper or newsletter
- C. Draft and distribute "Pro/Manager selected" release on background and accomplishments of selected manager, "golf-related" quote from new manager, highlights of property and forecasted opening date.
- D. Attempt to place profile article in two local papers (Escondido, Vista, Oceanside) on progress of golf course and projected opening.
- E. Draft and distribute release on opening tournament and association with local charity.

### APRIL

#### Activity / Cost

##### I. Public relations / \$2,000

- A. Draft and distribute local release on opening activities and pricing.
- B. Host a "media day" for all local golf journalists (print & electronic) to play course.
- C. Attempt to place articles in remaining local newspapers on XYZ Golf Club (pre-or post-opening) and attempt to obtain on-site coverage by at least one local TV sportscaster.
- D. Draft and distribute release on successful opening tournament/charity event.

\*\*Retainer fee for agency's time spent in implementing all recommended activities.

### MAY

#### Activity / Cost

##### I. Public Relations / \$2,000

- A. Draft and distribute "programming review" release on all services and programming at the facility to include men's and women's golf associations, golf leagues, outings & tournaments capabilities, range facilities, range card programs, lesson programs, etc.
- B. Draft and distribute "stay-and-play" release to regional newspaper travel editors and national golf magazines supporting summer travel.
- C. Draft and distribute press release announcing summer activities/clinics schedule and costs for children and juniors.
- D. Draft and distribute a press release announcing a special Mother's day promotion.



## JUNE

### Activity / Cost

#### I. Public Relations / \$2,000

- A. Draft and place "golf tips" article by XYZ Golf Club pro in local paper. Attempt to schedule on a regular basis.
- B. To support summer scheduling, host another "Media Day" to demonstrate XYZ golf Club golf clinics, i.e., morning clinic, afternoon play.
- C. Draft and distribute press release on Fourth of July activities/specials.
- D. Draft and distribute first quarter "performance" press release on course activity and highlights.
- E. Draft and distribute a press release announcing a special Father's Day promotion.

## JULY

### Activity / Cost

#### I. Public Relations / \$2,000

- A. Draft and distribute course facility update, i.e., new clubhouse, etc.
- B. Draft and place monthly "golf tips" by XYZ Golf Club pro.
- C. Distribute course information and encourage visits from greater Southern California regional media. Emphasize "stay-and-play" hotel relationship. Invite them in for a scheduled weekend of play.

## AUGUST

### Activity / Cost

#### I. Public Relations / \$2,000

- A. Develop special events/pricing surrounding six-month anniversary.
- B. Draft and distribute press release regarding upcoming six-month anniversary of opening.
- C. Draft and place monthly "golf tips" by XYZ Golf Club pro.
- D. Draft and distribute Labor Day Weekend activities/rates release.

## SEPTEMBER

### Activity / Cost

#### I. Public Relations / \$2,000

- A. Support six-month anniversary with appropriate distribution of press releases.
- B. Invite media out for a special day of play to encourage coverage of six-month anniversary.
- C. Support month-long longest drive/closest to the pin contest with car dealership (or other).
- D. Draft and place monthly "golf tips" by XYZ Golf Club pro.

## OCTOBER

### Activity / Cost

#### I. Public Relations / \$1,500

- A. Draft and distribute second-quarter "performance" press release.
- B. Draft and place monthly "golf tips" by XYZ Golf Club pro.
- C. Draft and distribute press release on XYZ Golf Club's corporate/group outing opportunities. How to schedule, why they work, how to raise money for a charity, etc.



## NOVEMBER

### Activity / Cost

#### I. Public Relations / \$1,500

- A. Draft and distribute Christmas vacations “stay-and-play” press release to regional travel media.
- B. Draft and place monthly “golf tips” by XYZ Golf Club’s pro.
- C. Draft and distribute a local area press release on Thanksgiving rates and scheduling.

## DECEMBER

### Activity / Cost

#### I. Public Relations / \$1,500

- A. Draft and place monthly “golf tips” by XYZ Golf Club pro.
- B. Draft and distribute local press release regarding Christmas vacation activities, i.e., clinics, etc.
- C. Draft and distribute press release encouraging purchase of course play certificates or merchandise certificates for Christmas gift giving.
- D. Golf shop Christmas sale.

## MAY-DECEMBER

### Activity / Cost

#### Advertising / \$3,000/mo.

Design and place weekly coupons and special event ads as scheduled in local newspapers, telephone directories, scorecards, magazines, etc. Design and print all support collateral.

### EXAMPLES

- A. In May – design and place opening ads in the following newspapers:

*Bernardo News*  
*Escondido Times Advocate*  
*North County Entertainer*  
*Oceanside Blade-Citizen*  
*Poway News Chieftain*  
*Ramona Sentinel*  
*San Diego Business Journal*  
*San Diego Daily Transcript*  
*San Diego Executive Magazine*  
*San Diego Magazine*  
*San Diego Tribune*  
*San Diego Union*  
*San Marcos News Reporter*  
*Vista Press*

- B. In June - Continue print media scheduling. Also place fill-in ads (as needed) on demographically targeted local radio (radio may take larger role if station is secured as opening tournament co-sponsor).



## II. Marketing and Customer Service On Top

**K**athy Aznavorian and Sandy Mily insist that their marketing strategy is really a “fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants” approach based on simple solutions and intuition. But the success of Fox Hills Country Club in Plymouth, Michigan proves that the two sisters are nothing short of marketing wizards.

Kathy and Sandy took over the operation of Fox Hills in 1974 when the severely neglected 18-hole course was struggling to attract customers. Fox Hills was purchased by their parents, Estelle Dul and the late Alexander Dul, who also owned the busy and prosperous Shady Hollow in Romulus, MI. As an entrepreneur and definitely a woman before her time, Estelle provided the ideal role model for Sandy and Kathy. In 1954, Estelle founded Clips and Clamps Industries, a manufacturer of automotive parts. The two daughters learned first-hand how to make a business grow by watching their mother make her manufacturing company successful.

Getting the course up to par and rebuilding the clientele was the biggest challenge the women had to face.

But by 1980 Fox Hills had a regular clientele and tees that were backing up with 45 minute waits. In 1982 the two sisters added nine holes, increasing the number of golfers able to play comfortably on the course. Another addition was made in 1989, when the 225-acre, 18-hole Championship Course was built. The Golden Fox, designed by world-class architect Arthur Hills, is the result of expansion plans initiated and financed by Kathy, Sandy and Estelle.

A very large part of Fox Hills’ success stems from customer feedback and attention to customer satisfaction. Surveys play a large part in the overall “marketing” effort. Visitors to the club are surveyed in at least five different ways.

A survey, attached to a thank-you note, is sent out after each golf outing, wedding or party. Each Friday evening the club hosts its popular “Fish Fry,” which is separate from the golf operation. Surveys are located at each table. On Sunday, Fox Hills hosts a Brunch, also open to the public. Surveys adorn those tables as well. In addition, surveys are also located in the pro shop.

Is this survey overkill? Sandy and Kathy don’t think so. “They are very informative and many people like to let us know how we are doing,” says Kathy. “The surveys give the guests the chance to tell us what is upsetting them, and it often prompts us to change a policy.”

For example, the course previously allowed bartenders to display tip jars at wedding receptions. But via the surveys, the course began receiving complaints that the guests didn’t like that and the policy was changed.



Certainly one of the most useful survey programs at Fox Hills is the individual information golfers fill out after a round at the course. These surveys provide valuable customer feedback as well as boosting the database of visitor's names that Kathy and Sandy have been collecting over the years. Persuading golfers to fill out the surveys has not always been easy, though. Kathy and Sandy realized that the golfers didn't want to take the time to fill out a survey after being on the course for three or four hours. They were only seeing 2-3 completed surveys a month.

The solution: an incentive drawing offering a free round of golf as the prize. Each month one name is drawn from the pool of surveys to win the free round. The program has increased the number of surveys now coming in to 35-40 per month. All that valuable customer information for the price of just one round of golf!

It has not only paid off in terms of customer service, but the two have dramatically increased their mailing list, which now includes more than 8,000 names of golfers and diners that have visited their facilities. They consider this to be one of their best marketing tools and don't hesitate to use it. Once in the fall and once in the spring they publish a newsletter that is sent to their mailing list. The newsletter and word-of-mouth continue to be their best source of advertising, according to Kathy.

The two sisters have come a long way since 1974 when one golfer a day at the first 18-hole course was a small victory. Last year the facility played host to two professional tournaments attracting heavy-hitters like Peter Jacobsen, Nancy Lopez and Dave Stockton.

In addition, the course was certified last Spring in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. The program, sponsored by the USGA and the New York Audubon Society, was developed to encourage and recognize golf courses taking a leadership role in conservation projects. The staff at Fox Hills has worked continuously for the past four years to meet the requirements of certification. They are now one of 33 in the United States and one of three courses in Michigan to receive this status.

According to Kathy, life and running a business is a continuum of both successes and problems. "You're never at a point where you just say 'OK, everything is perfect now, I can stop.' Business is always moving and if you cause yourself to become stagnant you are only hurting yourself," she says. "Being successful doesn't eliminate your problems, it just brings up new ones."

For example, the women at Fox Hills no longer worry as much about affording to *have* employees, but more about how to staff the 200 plus positions that need to be filled.

To help ease the burden, they instituted a bonus program that offers \$25 to any current employee that recommends someone for a position. The new employee must stay with Fox Hills for at least 90 days for the cash award to be granted. This program serves several purposes – employees are motivated to find someone who will fit in and do a good job, morale is lifted by the \$25 award and Fox Hills gains a new employee. According to Kathy a classified ad to attract a new employee would run close to \$40 and it doesn't necessarily guarantee any of the benefits.



Although the two sisters get along very well, they are two very different types of people in terms of business. According to Kathy, she takes care of the accounting and finance end while Sandy is the public relations magician. “We compliment each other well,” says Kathy. “The corporation gets benefits from two different sides and strengths.”

Despite what they feel is a lack of marketing strategy, their combined strengths plus intuition equals success. Their ability to create simple and workable solutions has created remarkable results for Fox Hills. “In our opinion we have never been exceptionally good marketers,” Sandy says. “We have always flown by the seat of our pants and never really had a strategic plan. If it felt right we did it. I don’t know how much you can plan in advance because you really don’t know what’s going to happen until it happens.”

# Customer Comment Card

Thank you for allowing us to serve you.

We want to provide you, our valued guest, with a quality golf experience each and every time you visit us. So we may continue to measure our service, please take a moment to answer the following questions, adding any comments, and return it to a member of our staff, or to me personally.

Sincerely,

Sandy Mily  
General Manager

**What brought you to our facility?**

- Newspaper Ad       Magazine Ad       Live in Area  
 Referred by others       Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Would you recommend our facility to a friend or associate?**

- Yes       No

**How often do you play golf?**

- Once a Week       Once a Month       5 Times a Year or Less

Additional Comments \_\_\_\_\_

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
<b>Golf Shop</b>					
Staff Courtesy					
Staff Efficiency					
Staff Cleanliness					
Selection					
Service					
<b>Food &amp; Beverage</b>					
Staff Courtesy					
Staff Efficiency					
Food Quality-Snack Bar					
Cleanliness					
Food & Beverage Cart					
<b>Starter/Ranger</b>					
Courtesy					
Efficiency					
<b>Golf Carts</b>					
Mechanical					
Cleanliness					
<b>Golf Course</b>					
Overall					
Greens					
Tees					
Fairways					
Roughs					
Maint. Staff Courtesy					

How can we improve? \_\_\_\_\_

What is our best attribute? \_\_\_\_\_

## Welcome to the Fox Hills Friday Nite Dinner

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey to help us provide you with the best possible service.

Thank you

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Friendliness of Service					
Quality of Food					
Value for Price					
Quality of Service					
Cleanliness of Establishment					

Who was your server? \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about us? \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be on the mailing list to be notified of upcoming events? If yes, please give us your name and address: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Welcome to the Fox Hills Sunday Brunch

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey to help us provide you with the best possible service.

Thank you

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Friendliness of Service					
Quality of Food					
Value for Price					
Quality of Service					
Cleanliness of Establishment					

Who was your server? \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about us? \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be on the mailing list to be notified of upcoming events? If yes, please give us your name and address: \_\_\_\_\_

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To assist us in providing the highest quality service and product, please take a moment to rate our efforts in the following areas:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**BANQUET OPERATIONS**

**Excellent**

**Very Good**

**Good**

**Fair**

**Poor**

Banquet Room

Presentation of Food Items

Quality of Food Items

Professionalism of Service

Friendliness of Service

Cleanliness of Operation

Overall Enjoyment of Banquet

Please make any additional comments or suggestions concerning your experience at Fox Hills.  
Feel free to use the back of this form if necessary.

To assist us in providing the highest quality service and product, please take a moment to rate our efforts in the following areas:

OUTING AT: Golden Fox \_\_\_\_\_

Fox Hills \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF OUTING: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF OUTING: \_\_\_\_\_

**GOLF OPERATIONS:**

**EXCELLENT**

**VERY GOOD**

**GOOD**

**FAIR**

**POOR**

Condition of carts  
Condition of course  
Friendliness of Pro Shop  
Helpfulness of Pro Shop staff  
Friendliness of rangers/starters  
Helpfulness of rangers/starters

**BANQUET OPERATIONS**

**EXCELLENT**

**VERY GOOD**

**GOOD**

**FAIR**

**POOR**

Banquet Room  
Presentation of food items  
Quality of food items  
Professionalism of service  
Friendliness of service  
Cleanliness of operation  
Overall enjoyment of banquet

**SNACK BAR OPERATIONS**

**EXCELLENT**

**VERY GOOD**

**GOOD**

**FAIR**

**POOR**

Quality of food items  
Friendliness of service  
Promptness of service  
Cleanliness of operation  
Beverage cart

Please make any additional comments or suggestions concerning the golf operations, the banquet operation, or the snack bar operation on the reverse side of this form.

Thank you for your cooperation.



### III. Public Fee Course, Private Country Club or Both? A Developer's Dilemma

Developers of golf course residential communities often find themselves at cross purposes when it comes to marketing the golf course. The concept chosen could have profound effects on the revenue generated by the course itself, as well as on the price commanded by the residential lots within the development. To market the course as a public fee entity would mean the course could immediately begin producing green fees needed to cover the operating costs of the course and attract golfers that could be prospective home buyers. However, a private golf club concept could mean the generation of initiation fees to help recoup the expensive construction costs of the course and appeal to the more affluent home buyer, desirous of an exclusive private club development. But can a developer have the best of both worlds? Can a developer begin with a public fee course, while marketing the promise of an eventual private golf club community? Are there other membership concepts that can help a developer with the financing and construction of a golf course while ultimately reserving the memberships for future home owners?

Some of the most recent research done by the National Golf Foundation shows that 90 percent of the new daily fee courses that opened in 1995 are charging middle to high end green fees. These courses draw the new and not-so-frequent golfers because they make the most sense for them from a financial standpoint. While average green fees on high end public fee courses may go as high as \$65 to \$75 (including cart fees), the golfer has not had to pay an initiation fee to join or commit to monthly dues often beginning at \$200 or higher to have access to a good quality golf course.

From a developer's perspective, however, it is important to implement the concept that would bring the greatest dollar for the residential lots. Arthur E. Gimmy, MAI, and Martin E. Benson, MAI, in their book, *Golf Courses and Country Clubs – A Guide to Appraisal, Market Analysis, Development and Financing*, state that, "On average, the daily fee course will enhance lot values by almost 25 percent, while the private course will increase lot values by 37 percent." Such statistics may steer the developer towards a private club concept.

Statistics having been quoted, the smart developer begins his real estate endeavor with a detailed market analysis, both from a real estate and a golf perspective. The real estate analysis should include home prices and sales velocities of all area residential communities, comparing those without golf courses, those with public fee courses and those with private golf courses. Profiles of buyers should be included in the comparisons, along with interviews of the more knowledgeable, experienced real estate brokers who sell in all areas of the market. Such professionals can provide valuable insights into current and future home buying trends.

The golf market analysis should include detailed demographic studies showing population depth, future growth projections and average as well as median household incomes. A comprehensive competitive analysis should also be done including information on all area golf facilities, public, semi-private and private.



All of this initial homework provides data on the highest growth areas in the market, popularity of public fee courses versus private courses and insights into what golfers in the area are accustomed to paying for both. It should also be a key indicator as to what concept might be appropriate for the planned golf course given current market conditions.

Should research indicate for instance, that the area public fee courses are crowded, yet the private clubs are avidly seeking new members, beginning with a course that accepts public fee play is wisest for a developer from a revenue generating standpoint. Permanent memberships should also be offered from the outset, in addition to the acceptance of public fee play. It is important though, that pricing escalations be announced and implemented as the number of members increase. Such escalations lend credence to the value of joining early and to the intent of the developer to eventually take the course to a totally private status.

Many developers feel it is critical to the success of the residential lot sales to reserve permanent golf memberships for property owners within the development. They also want to maximize the course revenue and tap the market outside of the development through some sort of temporary membership offering while the lot sales are ongoing.

One such developer was planning an upscale, gate guarded private country club residential community twenty miles outside of a major metropolitan area along the high growth corridor for the city. While such upscale communities supporting high dollar private country clubs had proven successful within the city, there was nothing comparable to the proposed development in the suburban areas. Demographics for a 15 mile radius around the site showed in excess of 4,000 households that had incomes of \$100,000 or greater. The only private country clubs available to these households included one medium range country club located five miles from the site and further from the city offering memberships at \$5,000 and two high end successful private country clubs within the city offering memberships in the \$35,000 range.

The developer was seeking a concept that would allow for reserving the \$30,000 permanent memberships for the buyers of the \$400,000+ homes in the development, generate revenue for the financing and construction of the golf course and other amenities and yet support the upscale image of the development. The following options were considered:

- Offering annual memberships was deemed inappropriate because they had been unsuccessfully offered by other private clubs in the area and individuals interviewed felt offering annual memberships would cheapen the image of the development.
- Accepting limited high-end public fee play was also considered and deemed inappropriate because the development was to be a gate-guarded community. To allow public access on the golf course would negate the whole security advantage of a gate-guarded community. Interviews found that many believed accepting public fee play might detrimentally affect the ability to command the targeted high dollar fee targeted for the permanent memberships.



The developer decided to offer “recallable” memberships at \$10,000 to non-property owners while offering new home owners the permanent \$30,000 memberships.

For this developer and others with similar objectives, a “recallable” membership concept should be considered in addition to their permanent memberships. A recallable membership is one offered to non-property owners at some pre-determined, marketable initiation fee. The recallable member generally pays the same dues as the permanent member, but understands that at some point, the membership will be recalled as a property owner buys a home and requests a membership. When the membership is recalled, the member is either given a full refund of the fee paid to join, or given a prorated portion based upon how long he enjoyed membership privileges. Recall procedures vary as well, with some developers recalling memberships on a first in, last out basis giving those who commit first the longest possible time as member. Others recall on a first in, first out basis so that the prorated share they refund is much less.

The good news for developers of golf course communities is that they are dealing with a more sophisticated home buyer than ever before who understands their club dues are lower because public fee play is allowed or temporary “recallable” memberships are offered. Home buyers will be more amenable to paying private golf course home prices, initiation fees and dues if they are convinced the developer has a master plan that will at some predetermined point convert the course to a private club primarily for the property owners. Developers can choose whether their plans include replacing public fee play with member play as membership increases or converting the recallable memberships into property owner memberships as the development matures. These are just two membership strategies that will give today’s developers flexibility in generating revenue from non-property owner play while eventually providing a private country club for their home buyers.



## IV. Marketing/Promotions Ideas for Golf Course Owners

### Promotions and Special Events

Special events and promotions are a vital part of an effective golf course marketing plan. Below are examples of promotions and events that have been successful:

#### Attracting Women Golfers

##### *Getting In Touch With Your Feminine Side*

In 1996 Carefree Resorts introduced its Women to the Fore program. The components, although designed specifically for the program, can be instituted at other courses as well. For example, tee locations on Carefree's golf courses are not designated by gender, but rather by color. In addition, the pro shops at Carefree are stocking high quality equipment for women to rent and buy, and are staffed with female personnel.

Other aspects of the program are not so mainstream. Thirty-minute "refresher courses" are offered at no charge, twice a week, on a sign-up basis to resort-goers. Short-course loops have been designated on each course, where women can play three or four holes at a discounted rate without feeling pressure from other golfers.

In addition, new women golfers are given a golf manual to take home which includes golf instruction and a list of LPGA offices throughout the U.S. to encourage their continuation of the game at home.

Another company, Club Marketing, has recently introduced etiquette classes as a way to attract women golfers. The firm introduced the program at the Half Moon Bay golf club and is now incorporating it into all of its daily-fee membership plans. The idea is to remove the intimidation factor. The classes, which are taught by the club pro, include everything from repairing ball marks to club selection.

Other facilities have created all-women clinics that have been very successful. The two or three day one-gender setting creates a supportive environment where it is more comfortable for women to learn. The clinics foster a bond that allow the women to not only learn, but have fun while doing it. The clinic becomes like camp. For example, at one facility, the campers perform yoga in the mornings, and some evenings have their tarot cards read.

#### Anniversary Parties

##### *Free Golf Wins Big*

Kathy Aznavorian from Fox Hills Country Club in Michigan took first place in the 1996 Idea(r) Fair with an idea that many golf course owners would balk at: Free golf.

However, her idea had the cash registers at her club ringing. To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the club, Fox Hills offered free golf to its customers during the third week of October 1995, including both their 27-hole course and their 18-hole championship course. The stipulation on the championship course, where carts are mandatory, was that golfers had to pay a \$12 cart fee.



On the 27-hole course, carts were an option. Tee times went like hotcakes, selling out a full two weeks prior to the event. The result? Cart fees alone during that week - which weather-wise could have been better - exceeded both golf and cart fees from the previous week, which was a picture-perfect weather week. In addition, food & beverage sales rose as well as pro shop sales. In total sales, the "Free Golf" week exceeded the previous week by \$10,000. Did you say free?

### ***Wisconsin's Oldest Course Celebrates Centennial***

Tuscumbia Country Club, Wisconsin's oldest golf course celebrated its 100th birthday during the 1996 season. Many events were planned to commemorate the occasion, including a Shot of the Century Shootout, Gala Dinner and Charity Auction, and an Invitational Golf Outing. The proceeds from the Centennial events will be donated to the Make-A-Wish foundation of Wisconsin.

### **Customer Appreciation**

#### ***Thank You Very Much***

What about trying a League Appreciation Day to show your league participants that you are delighted they chose your course as a place to play? Sally Marrell of Bob-O-Link Golf Course in Ohio proposes the celebration be about 75% of the way through a league. During the festivities, course owners should reduce pro shop merchandise - especially surplus merchandise. Owners can also offer a free drink and/or sandwich for league members.

### **Environmental Programs**

#### ***Amelia Island Plantation Adds New Leaf to Environmental Tree***

Amelia Island Plantation recently formed the Green Team, a group of employees committed to protecting Amelia Island's natural resources. One of the Team's most innovative new projects is the initiation of Green Lights, an EPA program focused on pollution prevention. Green Lights is a volunteer-based program aimed at promoting energy efficiency through investment in energy-saving lighting. Amelia Island is one of the first resorts in the United States to implement this eco-friendly program.

### **On The Course: Special Tournaments**

#### ***The Turkey Shoot***

Each year Willowcreek Golf Club in Big Flats, New York holds a season-ending Turkey Shoot for its members. The tournament has a dual purpose: to entice members to renew for the next year; and good, clean golfing fun (with turkeys as prizes).

In 1996, club manager Kathy Tremaine and owner Bob Adams were concerned that members would be hesitant to renew for 1997 due to the course's condition in early 1996. In January 1996 a flood washed 3" of silt onto the course, claimed 80 carts as casualties, and caused several long-term maintenance headaches.

Tremaine and Adams decided to be proactive and heavily market the October Turkey Shoot by sending out flyers and hiring a local radio station to do a live remote from the course on the day of the event.



For the Turkey Shoot, Tremaine used a local radio station that she had traded services with before - the radio station received rounds of golf in exchange for on-air advertising.

The radio station began doing commercial spots for the live remote one week prior to the event, attracting early publicity for the Turkey Shoot, and building up excitement in the community.

On the day of the Turkey Shoot, the DJ, an avid golfer, was at the course for three hours, announcing membership deals, pro shop discounts, and interviewing members of the pro shop staff and tournament players. Willowcreek offered several deals the day of the Turkey Shoot: discounts on membership for the next year (even bigger discounts than the previous Turkey Shoots), raffle tickets for a set of golf clubs, turkeys as prizes, and a special deal offering members unlimited greens fees for the remainder of 1996 for the price of \$100 down on their 1997 membership.

The DJ also tried to attract non-tournament players to the course on the day of the event. Because Willowcreek has 27 holes, the DJ was able to entice people to come out and play the nine that were not being used for the tournament.

With a little help from the airwaves, Willowcreek had the most successful Turkey Shoot ever, with 32 teams entered. The course took in 11 memberships, an increase of 100% over last year, which garnered no memberships. The income from memberships and increased sales in the snack bar and pro shop more than paid the \$750 live remote fee charged by the station.

### ***A New Kind of Shotgun***

Ole Hansen & Sons, Inc. put a new spin on the term shotgun tournament in 1996 when the course held its first ever Golf and Sporting Clays Invitational charity tournament to raise money for the United Way.

The people had a blast, said the marketing director for Ole Hansen. Literally. The invitational, which raised \$25,000 for the United Way, paired the ancient game of golf with an up and coming sport: sporting clays. Sporting clays differs from other shotgun sports in that the shooter moves from station to station and takes clay targets from several different angles and velocities. The targets come in six different sizes and are made to simulate different animals such as rabbits, quail, and duck.

Most of the participants were golfers who were getting a first or second try at sporting clays. The event included golf at Blue Heron Pines Golf Club in Cologne, New Jersey and shooting at Red Wing Sporting Clays Range in Port Republic, New Jersey. Red Wing donated the facility for the day for the tournament.



### ***The Pink Ball Prize***

Following are some ideas to help make sure everyone goes home happy from a tournament at your course.

One idea to try is a Pink Ball Tournament. Each foursome receives one pink ball. On the first hole, golfer number one plays the pink ball rather than his own. The score he gets is written down in his own score column as well as on a separate “pink ball” score sheet. On hole two, golfer two plays the pink ball, recording her score on her own score sheet as well as on the “pink ball” score sheet. This is done for all 18 holes, rotating the pink ball between players one through four. At the end of the round, the foursome that comes in without losing the pink ball and records the lowest total number of strokes with the pink ball, wins the competition. Tournament coordinators may want to distribute pink balls labeled with the course’s logo to dissuade golfers from grabbing another pink ball if the first one is lost.

While it may seem impossible for tournament players to golf better than your course’s head pro, another fun tournament game is Beat the Pro. At one of the course’s par-3 holes, the pro tees off with each group that arrives. The pro hits first followed by the participants. Any player who hits the ball closer to the hole than the pro wins a prize. To raise the golfer’s chances, ask the pro to hit blindfolded or left-handed - unless he or she really is left-handed! While the fun is going on, the pro can actually be giving participants mini-lessons on their individual swings.

A String Tournament will help players who are not always accurate. Participants get pieces of string of identical length at the outset of the event. As they play, they are allowed to move their ball a distance less than or equal to the length of the string. However, each time they do so, they must cut off a length of string equal to the distance they moved the ball. Uses for the string include moving the ball from a sand trap, moving the ball from the rough to the fairway, etc.

Another great tournament contest is the Target Green. In this event, two concentric circles are marked around the cup on a par-3 hole, one 10 feet in diameter and the other 20 feet in diameter. This is sometimes used for wagering - for example, one dollar per player. As each golfer arrives at the tee of the selected hole, he gives his dollar to a group representative who is also at the tee. If his tee shot stays on the green, he gets his dollar back. If he gets inside the 20-foot circle, he gets his dollar back and he wins an additional dollar. If he gets inside the 10-foot circle, he gets his dollar back and wins an additional two dollars.

The Longest Drive is another favorite. In this event, the first foursome to go out is given a flag with a tag attached to it. The golfer in the first group who has the longest drive on the selected hole writes his name on the tag and places the flag where the ball came to rest. If following groups have an individual who has a longer drive, that player writes his name on the tag under the previous name and then moves the flag. The last name on the tag is the winner. The last group should be instructed to bring in the flag.



If tournament participants will be bringing children, host a Father/Daughter or Mother/Son hole. Prior to the actual tournament event, have one hole where the participant and the child play the hole together. The participant can tee off and the child can play from there. The child/participant group that plays the hole with the lowest number of shots wins a prize. If time is of the essence, move the contest to the driving range. Create an area on the range where players can step up and take three shots at knocking a ball into a large garbage can placed out on the range. Have the child/participant team take turns. Give prizes for "closest to the can" for the children.

To help keep children busy - and out of harms way on the tournament course - while mom and dad are playing, create a four or five-hole miniature course, laid out on the practice green. Have an assistant pro there to help kids with their swing. It will not only be educational, but might help spark more of an interest for them in the game of golf.

Once you have decided on your tournament prize booster, try to find a sponsor to help defray costs. Call a few businesses in your area to help sponsor the "fun" events at the tournament. In return for the costs of supplies and props, prizes or the cost of prizes, offer to let the company put its logo on the pink ball, or name the event after the business. For example, the Supersaver Grocery Pink Ball Tournament, or the Earl's Shoes Mother/Son Garbage Pail Pitch.

## **And Off the Course**

### **Bad Weather Blues**

All golf courses have endured nasty spring rains, cold temperatures and delays in opening at some time or another. The following are some promotional ideas to keep golfers coming out to the course - and revenue coming in:

- Host seminars at the course: Offer mini-courses taught by the golf pro on putting, swing techniques, etiquette and even the mental game of golf. Provide a luncheon or specials in the pro shop before or after the seminars.
- Host a wine tasting or cigar dinner: Position your wine tasting and cigar affair as a dinner party. Send invitations to your members or current customers. Not only will you stimulate F&B sales, but you will find out what kinds of wine and cigars you should stock for when the weather turns nicer!
- Have an equipment or trunk show at the pro shop: Host a special show for women's equipment and clothes or for men's equipment and clothes. Offer a luncheon, prizes, decorations and discounts.

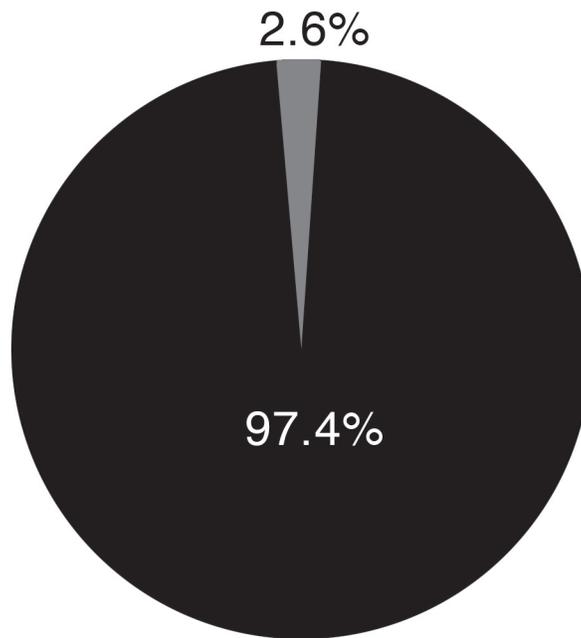


## Appendix

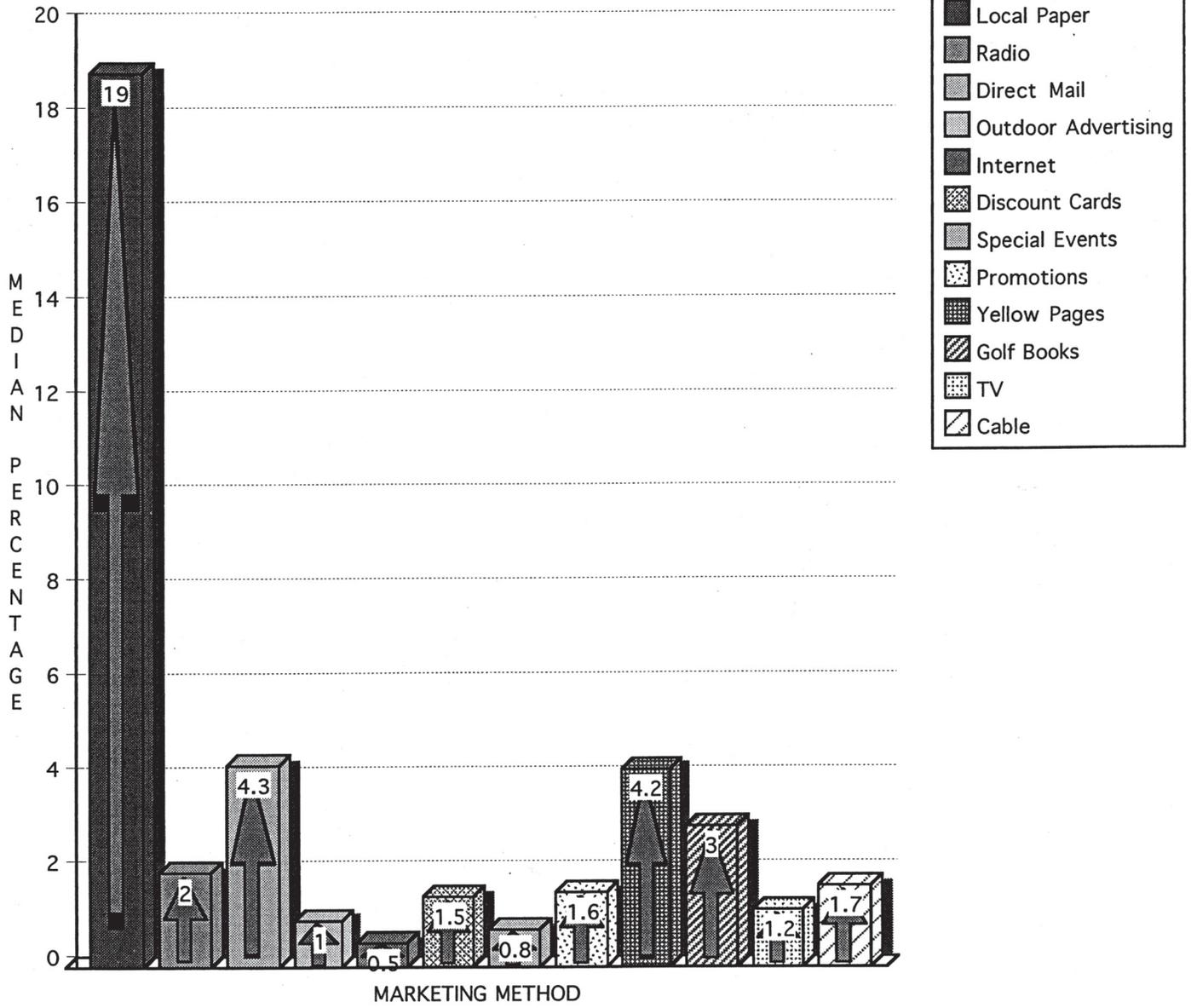


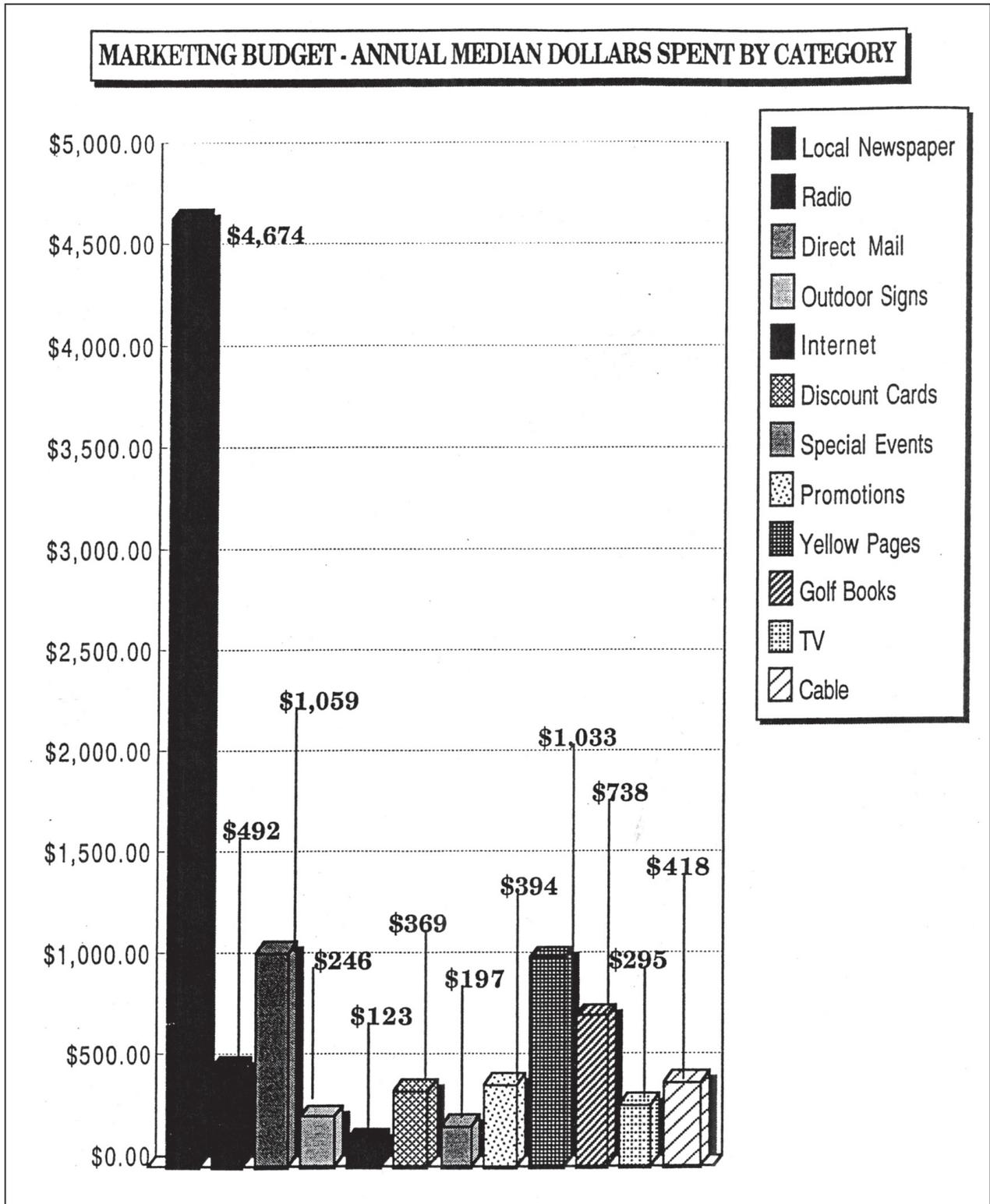
**EXHIBIT A  
NGCOA ADVERTISING SURVEY RESULTS**

**MARKETING BUDGET- AS A PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE (ANNUALLY)**



### MARKETING BUDGET RESULTS





**MEDIAN ANNUAL MARKETING BUDGET - \$24,600**



EXHIBIT B  
SAMPLE OF AN EFFECTIVE NEWSPAPER AD

**AWESOME  
OFF-SEASON GOLF!**

**\$00 | \$00** PLUS  
1/2  
CART &  
TAX

*Fri. afternoon, Sat. & Sun. Mon.-Thu., Fri. morning*

**THREE  
RIDGES  
GOLF COURSE**

*Our fairways are lush & green and you'll love the savings with our off-season specials. **Call for Tee Times 904-221-1012.***

Must present coupon. Not good with other offers. Amex, VISA, MasterCard, Discover. Expires 0/00/94

**GOLFCORP**

**GET YOUR  
GAME READY  
FOR SPRING!  
ASK ABOUT  
OUR CLINICS &  
LESSONS**

GOLFCORPOverseeded.2colx3"





# TCl Media Services

## Dallas - Fort Worth First Quarter 1997

### :30 Gross ROS Rates / Monday-Sunday 6am-12midnight

Effective 11/1/96 Previous card superseded

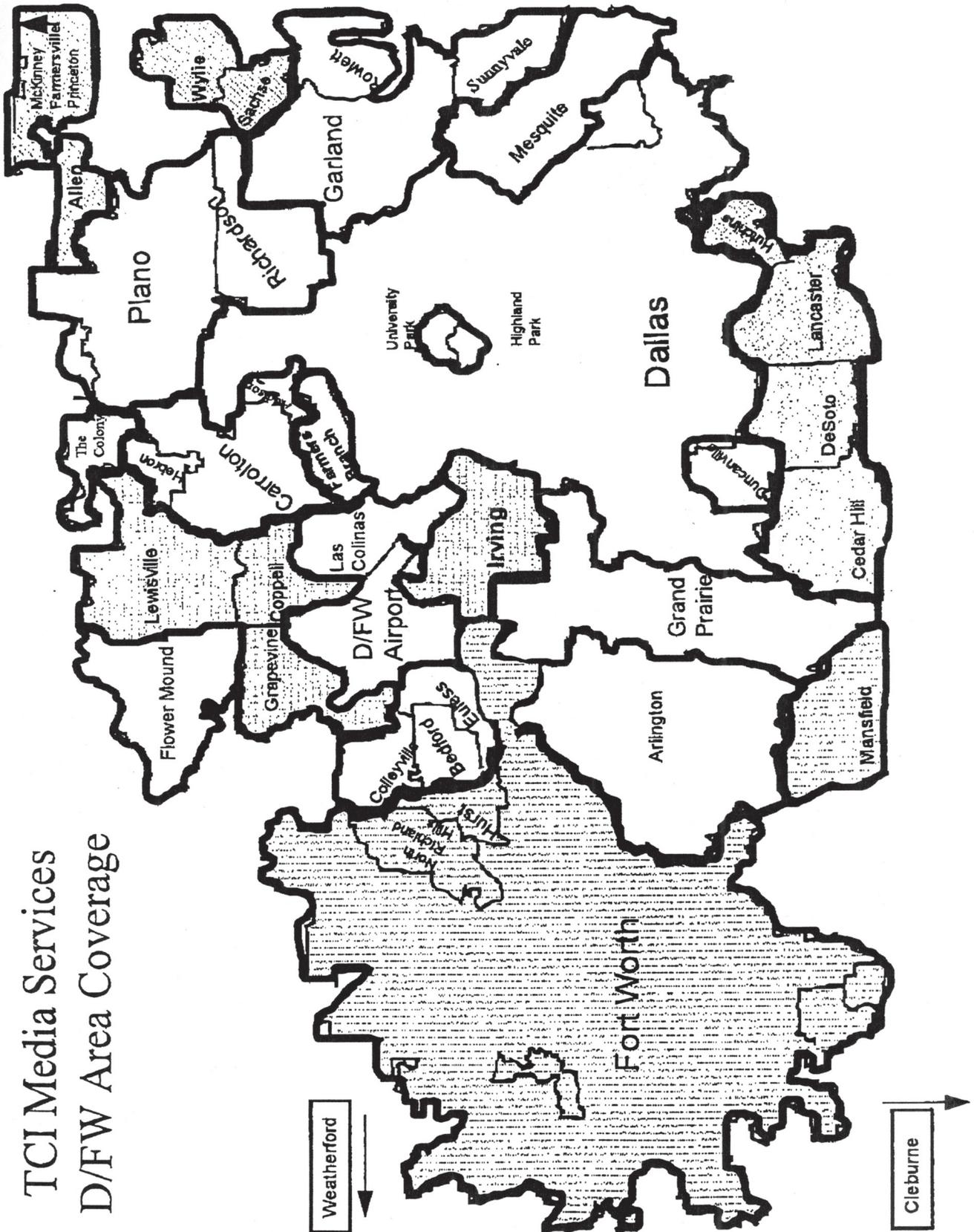
ZONE	AMS BYCODE	SUBS (000)	ARE	BET	CMT	CHBC	CNN	COM	DISC	ESPN	ESPR2	TX	GAIA	HDLN	LIFE	MTV	MCK	FOX SW	TNN	TNT	TWC	USA	VHT
Arlington	89	64.0	\$18		\$18	\$18	\$22		\$18	\$23	\$18	\$18		\$18	\$18	\$18	\$18	\$18	\$18	\$18	\$18	\$18	\$18
Bedford	1859	24.4	7p-7a	\$4			\$9		\$4	\$9				\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$9
Carrollton	1205	19.6	7p-7a	\$4			\$9		\$4	\$9				\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$9
Cleburne	3052	4.1					\$4		\$4	\$4							\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4
Dallas	2041	140.3	\$27	\$27	\$27	\$27	\$45	\$27	\$27	\$45	\$27	\$27	\$27	\$27	\$27	\$27	\$27	\$27	\$27	\$27	\$27	\$27	\$27
DeSoto	1861	11.7	7p-7a	\$4			\$4		6p-6a	\$4				6p-6a	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4
Duncanville	1605	5.4		\$4			\$4		\$4	\$4				\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4
Farmers Branch	1300	4.6					\$4		\$4	\$4				\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4
Flower Mound	1301	9.7					\$4		\$4	\$4				\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4
Fl. Worth	78	111.7	\$23	\$23	\$23	\$23	\$40		\$22	\$22	\$22	\$22	\$22	\$22	\$22	\$22	\$22	\$22	\$22	\$22	\$22	\$22	\$22
Garland	1858	44.5	\$9	\$9	\$9	\$9	\$13		\$9	\$13				\$9	\$9	\$9	\$9	\$9	\$9	\$9	\$9	\$9	\$13
Grand Prairie	1860	16.2	7p-7a	\$4			\$9		\$4	\$9				\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$9
McKinney/Allen	775	20.6					\$9		\$4	\$9				\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$9
Mesquite	3609	16.8	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$9		\$4	\$9	\$4			\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4
Park Cities	81	8.5	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4		\$4	\$4				\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4
Plano/Richardson	624	63.0	\$18	\$18	\$18	\$18	\$23	\$18	\$18	\$23	\$18			\$18	\$18	\$18	\$18	\$18	\$18	\$18	\$18	\$18	\$18
The Colony	792	3.9					\$4		\$4	\$4				\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4
Weatherford	3053	3.4					\$4		\$4	\$4				\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4
<b>TTL \$ ALL TCI MEDIA SVC ZONES</b>		<b>\$103</b>	<b>\$66</b>	<b>\$103</b>	<b>\$77</b>	<b>\$77</b>	<b>\$220</b>	<b>\$27</b>	<b>\$142</b>	<b>\$221</b>	<b>\$49</b>	<b>\$67</b>	<b>\$27</b>	<b>\$106</b>	<b>\$130</b>	<b>\$106</b>	<b>\$146</b>	<b>\$146</b>	<b>\$126</b>	<b>\$189</b>	<b>\$96</b>	<b>\$189</b>	<b>\$71</b>
<b>TCI M.S. AVAILABLE SUBS</b>		<b>572.4</b>	<b>448.8</b>	<b>304.9</b>	<b>464.7</b>	<b>423.5</b>	<b>572.4</b>	<b>140.3</b>	<b>572.4</b>	<b>572.4</b>	<b>284.1</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>140.3</b>	<b>484.3</b>	<b>551.3</b>	<b>476.1</b>	<b>572.4</b>	<b>572.4</b>	<b>546.4</b>	<b>572.4</b>	<b>512.2</b>	<b>572.4</b>	<b>332.8</b>
<b>OTHER REGIONAL ZONES</b>																							
Denton	2063	25.1	\$13				\$18		\$18	\$18	\$13			\$13	\$13	\$13	\$13	\$13	\$13	\$13	\$13	\$13	\$18
Irving	79	72.0	\$15				\$20		\$18	\$20	\$13			\$20	\$18	\$15	\$15	\$15	\$15	\$15	\$15	\$15	\$20
<b>TOTAL SUBS-ALL 20 ZONES</b>		<b>669.5</b>	<b>\$45.9</b>	<b>\$304.9</b>	<b>\$464.7</b>	<b>\$423.5</b>	<b>\$69.5</b>	<b>\$140.3</b>	<b>\$69.5</b>	<b>\$69.5</b>	<b>\$309.2</b>	<b>\$316</b>	<b>\$140.3</b>	<b>\$581.4</b>	<b>\$648.4</b>	<b>\$73.2</b>	<b>\$69.5</b>	<b>\$69.5</b>	<b>\$643.5</b>	<b>\$69.5</b>	<b>\$37.3</b>	<b>\$69.5</b>	<b>\$332.8</b>
<b>TOTAL \$ ALL 20 ZONES</b>		<b>\$118</b>	<b>\$66</b>	<b>\$103</b>	<b>\$77</b>	<b>\$77</b>	<b>\$258</b>	<b>\$27</b>	<b>\$178</b>	<b>\$259</b>	<b>\$62</b>	<b>\$67</b>	<b>\$27</b>	<b>\$139</b>	<b>\$161</b>	<b>\$134</b>	<b>\$177</b>	<b>\$179</b>	<b>\$154</b>	<b>\$227</b>	<b>\$109</b>	<b>\$227</b>	<b>\$71</b>

:10 & :15 second announcements are billed the :30 rate.  
 :60 second announcements are billed two times the :30 rate.  
 Daytime fixed position and/or rotations of 3 hours or less are 25% above ROS.  
 High impact sports events use SPORTS Rate Card.  
 • 5% discount for six month non-cancellable order.  
 • 10% discount for twelve month non-cancellable order.  
 • Other deviations from this card require prior approval of sales management  
 • DISCOUNTS CANNOT BE COMBINED

TCI Media Services Dallas  
 Ph: 214/637-7744, FAX: 214/638-6402  
 TCI Media Services Ft. Worth  
 Ph: 817/268-0255, FAX: 817/282-8119



# TCI Media Services D/FW Area Coverage





# TCI Media Services

Zones with cities, subscribers & zip codes

Total Subscribers = 668,700



**1 Dallas - 140,300**  
Dallas  
75201-12; 75214-20; 75223-38;  
75240-41; 75243-44; 75246-49;  
75251-53; 75270; 75287

**2 Farmers Branch - 4,600**  
Farmers Branch - 75234; 75244

**3 Carrollton - 19,600**  
Addison, Carrollton, Hebron  
75006; 75010; 75240; 75248;  
75234; 75244; 75007

**4 The Colony - 3,900**  
The Colony - 75056

**5 Plano - 63,000**  
Murphy, Parker, Plano, Richardson  
75002; 75023-25; 75074-75; 75080-82;  
75093-94

**6 McKinney-Allen - 20,600**  
Allen, Farmersville, Frisco, McKinney,  
Princeton, Sachse, St. Paul, Southfork,  
Stonebridge, Wylie  
75002; 75070; 75048; 75069; 75034;  
75098; 75407; 75442

**7 Garland - 44,500**  
Garland, Rowlett, Sunnyvale  
75040-44; 75048; 75082;  
75087-88

**8 Mesquite - 16,800**  
Mesquite  
75149; 75150; 75181

**9 DeSoto - 11,700**  
Cedar Hill, Hutchins, Lancaster  
75115; 75104; 75134; 75141; 75146

**10 Grand Prairie - 16,200**  
Cockrell Hill, Grand Prairie  
75050-52; 75060; 75211

**11 Arlington - 64,000**  
Arlington, Pantego  
Dalworthington Gardens  
76006; 76010-18

**12 Bedford - 24,400**  
Bedford, Colleyville, Euless  
76021-22; 76034; 76039;  
76040

**13 Flower Mound - 9,700**  
Double Oak, Flower Mound  
Highland Village  
75208; 75067

**14 Fort Worth - 111,700**  
Benbrook, Blue Mound, Burleson,  
Crowley, Edgewood, Everman,  
Forest Hill, Fort Worth, Haltom City,  
Hurst, Keller, Kennedale,  
Lakeside, Lake Worth, Mansfield,  
North Richland Hills, Richland Hills,  
Saginaw, Watauga, Westover Hills,  
White Settlement  
76008; 76028; 76034; 76036; 76039-40;  
76053-54; 76060; 76063; 76092;  
76097; 76102-24; 76126-27; 76129;  
76131-37; 76140; 76147-48; 76155;  
76161-64; 76179-82; 76185; 76244;  
76248; 76262

**15 Duncanville - 5,400**  
Duncanville  
75116; 75137; 75138

**16 Park Cities - 8,500**  
Highland Park, University Park  
75201; 75204-06; 75209; 75219;  
75225

**17 Denton - 24,300**  
Corinth, Denton, Hickory Creek,  
Lake Dallas  
76201-08; 75065

**18 Irving - 72,000**  
Coppell, Grapevine,  
Irving, Lewisville  
75038; 75060-62; 75056-57;  
76051; 75019; 75067

**19 Cleburne - 4,100**  
Cleburne  
76031; 76033

**20 Weatherford - 3,400**  
Weatherford  
76086-87



**EXHIBIT D  
SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE**

**Contact: *Contact Name***  
***Phone Number***

**For Immediate Release**  
***Date of Release***

**Local Course Owner Elected As Association President**

Cliff Rampy, owner and operator of Treeline Golf Club in Tomball, Texas, has been elected to serve as the President of the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) for 1996. The elections were held at the Association's 14th Annual Conference in Palm Springs, CA.

A native of Texas, Rampy has been managing the 18-hole, public course for 16 years. A graduate of Texas A&M University, Rampy spent a few years in the engineering profession before he decided to take the challenge of running a golf course.

In 1996 Rampy's goals for the NGCOA are to build the Association's membership and maintain and create positive environments for the game of golf to be played. "We will work to serve the members by bringing them knowledge, trends and up-to-date news in the golf industry," he says. "We will also work to create an outstanding relationship with allied associations, working together to benefit the game and the business of golf."

Prior to his term as President, Rampy served two terms as Vice President. Other officers elected to serve during 1996 are Bill Stine, Kissimmee Bay Golf Club, Kissimmee, FL, secretary; and Jerry Hollingsworth, Singing Hills Golf Club, El Cajon, CA, treasurer. Stine will be serving his second term as secretary, and Hollingsworth will be serving his third term as treasurer.

The NGCOA is the only national association devoted exclusively to serving golf course owners and operators. Established in 1979, the NGCOA now represents over 1,700 courses in the U.S., Canada and Europe. For more information, call the NGCOA office, 1-800-933-4262.

-END-



**EXHIBIT E**  
**RESEARCHING AREA ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES**

**Research on Area Media Opportunities**

<b>Media</b>	<b>Contact/ Phone Number</b>	<b>Ad Prep Details</b>	<b>Cost/ Time Period</b>	<b>CPM Other Notes</b>
Newspaper				
Yellow Pages				
Area Golf Books				
Radio				
Cable				
Outdoor Ads				
Internet				
Others				

**Details on data to be gathered for each media listed above:**

**Contact and phone number:**

Always make note of the name of the individual contacted and their phone number. Establishing a relationship with one individual can help decrease frustration and expedite the process of advertising.

**Ad Prep Details:**

It is important to know what the final form of the advertisement must be when delivered to the media used.

**Cost/Time Period**

When listing cost of the advertising medium, all variables should be included. For instance, if its newspaper advertising, the dimensions of the ad, the section in which it is run and the day(s) of the week it is printed are all important variables.

**CPM/Other Notes**

The "CPM" measurement is explained in the "Marketing Budget" section of this manual on page 34. It should be applied to any medium used if circulation or exposure numbers are available. "Other notes" should comment on the quality of the medium and the audience it will reach in relation to the golfing market targeted.



## Notes



## Acknowledgements



The National Golf Course Owners Association and the author, Kathy O’Neal, would like to gratefully acknowledge the following individuals for their contributions to this manual:

- \* Dr. Philip Kotler, Northwestern University
- \* C.J. McDaniel, Club Corporation of America
- \* Gordon Law of HadelerLaw, Dallas, Texas
- \* Edelman Advertising Agency, Dallas, Texas
- \* Trent Kelly of TCI Media Services
- \* Hank Johnson, Low Country Golf Course Owners Association
- \* Vince Alfonso, Alfonso Creative Golf Enterprises
- \* Mike Klemme, GOLFOTO, Inc.
- \* Debra Hesla, Myrtle Beach Golf Holiday



## About the Author



**K**athy O’Neal began her researching career upon graduation from The University of Texas at Austin, when she was hired as a paralegal and executive secretary to the Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court. Two years later she returned to school and obtained her M.B.A. from Southern Methodist University in 1979.

Club Corporation of America hired Ms. O’Neal to be the Director of Marketing and Membership for a resort and private country club outside of Houston, April Sound Country Club and Resort. Eighteen months later she was promoted to a position of Assistant to the Director of Country Club Membership with CCA at their corporate offices in Dallas, Texas.

During her initial eight years with Club Corporation, Ms. O’Neal was promoted to Vice President of Membership and became the company’s first Vice President of Market Research, assisting the company by evaluating potential new markets and analyzing the depth and opportunities within CCA’s existing club markets.

Ms. O’Neal left CCA in 1986 and became an independent Marketing Consultant, doing consulting work for CCA and other owners and developers of private country clubs, public fee courses and resort courses. Her international work includes projects in Canada, Mexico, Ireland, Singapore and Bangkok. Her specialties are in the areas of market studies and developing marketing business plans for existing and to-be-built golf courses. She is the author of *Essentials of Market Research for the Golf Course Owner* published by the National Golf Course Owners Association.

Ms. O’Neal is currently the Vice President of Membership and Market Research for Club Corporation of America. She is married and has two children.