

Tournament Club Giveaway

Dan Kolar's second prize winning idea at the 2005 Golf Business Canada Conference & Trade Show in Montréal last November illustrates how 'marketing magnificence' can keep your bottom line growing year in and year out. Keep track of some of your best ideas for this year's conference in Calgary, Alberta from November 15-18!

Manderley on the Green has been a tournament golf course in the Ottawa region for over 40 years. With new golf courses popping up all around us, we noticed numbers of rounds declining slightly. We took on the task of adding a third nine holes to our existing 18-hole layout, and in 2003 we opened the new nine.

Initially we noticed a significant increase in rounds. The next year, we noticed a decline again. Our management decided it was time to come up with an exciting offer to entice new and returning tournaments that no one else was doing and that would give value added to our customers without significant cost to us.



OUR PROGRAM

For years, we offered any tournament a credit of \$1 per player as a pro shop credit that they could use towards purchasing prizes for their event. This was always received well, and helped promote pro shop sales.

However, we decided that it was time to kick it up a notch and offer our customers something more. We wanted to increase the size of tournaments that we currently have and to create bookings for larger new tournaments. We needed to find something that still cost us only about a dollar per player, but gave our customers a much greater value, and so we started shopping around with our golf suppliers for an item that would work.

What we finally decided on was a complete set of 12 graphite shafted clubs with bag and matching head covers. For every tournament that has 135 players or more, we now donate this club and bag package for FREE. Smaller events still receive the \$1 per player in pro shop credit.

COSTS AND BENEFITS

The clubs we had found were Tour Tech Series II golf clubs from Mitsubishi Golf. By purchasing 100 sets, we were able to negotiate a cost of \$160 per package; however the retail value of the package is \$450. This nets the cost to a little over a dollar per player, which is about the same as we had been offering our customers all along.

The total investment was less than \$20,000, and the tournaments generally raffle off the package or sell them as a silent auction item. We are pleased to say the package usually nets the tournament between \$700 and \$1000 for their charity.

This enhances the credibility of the tournament and their organizers, as well as boosting the image of Manderley on the Green. This is a win for everyone.

SUMMARY

We got started with this program well into the season of 2005, and did not have much lead time to market this initiative to our customers. But despite this, the program was received extremely well.

Our existing customers did not know ahead of time of the offer. They were overwhelmed when they found out what they were to receive, and we did pick up several new tournaments later in the season from word of mouth and advertising in season.

What is happening now is amazing. Our new tournament bookings are up by thousands of rounds for 2006. Most events are full shotguns, and we get calls regularly asking "Is it true that you donate a free set of clubs for tournaments?" We now see some of our local courses offering the same deal, as they are losing business to our initiative.

We will definitely continue this program.

RECOMMENDATION

I don't recommend that every club owner rush out and buy clubs to give away - every golf club needs to find something unique to their operation.

We spent a lot of time deciding what would work for "us", and we are currently about to launch another promotion that adds to "The Manderley Experience". We need to keep our customers interested and excited, and we want to keep them wanting to come back again and again.

I'll report back with results on our new initiative next year!



DAN KOLAR

Dan is a 22 year member of the Canadian PGA and is also on the national Board of Directors of the CPGA where he sits on the finance committee and is chairman of the centenary committee planning for the upcoming 100th anniversary in 2011. Dan can be reached at www.manderleygolf.com.