



## The Right Pace

As I set out to write this page, it is a pleasant summer day and I have just arrived at the office. My drive in from the small country town where my family lives was 30 minutes. My normal morning commute is 50. However, the lighter traffic due to many people taking vacation time is a breath of fresh air, avoiding that frustrating stop and go rush hour nonsense. So here I am, in a good mood, appreciative of the driving experience I just had.

In addition to hoping that all those missing cars on the road are sitting in golf course parking lots, my thoughts turn to our feature story on pace of play. The parallels between my morning drive and the concerns of slow play are meaningful. A better pace equals a better experience, and traffic jams are just plain frustrating.

Your golf course provides an overall experience to your customers, and their pace of play is frequently quoted in golf industry studies as being very high on the list of factors that determine how golfers evaluate their golf experience. It is a customer service issue with a wide range of potential outcomes, very dependent upon management decisions and staff execution. The net effect, for better or worse, has big impact on golfers' perceptions of value, satisfaction and loyalty, ultimately influencing your long term revenue management results.

Bill Yates, author of our feature story, is the world's leading expert on managing pace of play. His insights address the root causes of slow play and his solutions take advantage of proven analytic tools to properly diagnose problems and

implement customized management systems. With over 100 golf course clients, from Pebble Beach to St. Andrews, numerous Canadian operators included, Yates has a wealth of direct experience to draw upon. He also authored the NGCOA's Pace of Play Manual, has spoken at our Golf Business Canada Conference and Trade Show and several NGCOA Canada chapter meetings, and has been featured in other publications and events around the world.

His article dispels some myths about slow play, highlights five key factors that all golf courses should be evaluating, notes some general best practices for your immediate consideration, and encourages you to implement a more formal pace management system. From there, each golf course has unique circumstances to manage so you either customize the general principles yourself or hire a consultant to do so professionally. If the latter, I highly recommend Bill Yates.

As golf continues to evolve, the perceived barrier of golf being too time consuming is almost certain to continue. If anything, the busy lifestyle of today's society will only increase, putting more pressure on our need to streamline the time consuming perception that golf has. Some of that will engage strategic alternatives such as better positioning of short course golf, but the actual pace of play part of the time consuming perception is arguably the most critical time factor of all.

Hopefully this issue of Golf Business Canada helps you get there a little faster, like my morning drive.

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