

The First Tee

Message From The Publisher • Jeff Calderwood

I am surrounded by women. My wife, three daughters, and even our dog is female! At the office, the majority of our staff is women. It does change the dynamics of how things get done, decisions are made, structure, preferences, spending, and probably all for the better! It is most definitely different.

This issue of Golf Business Canada features a cover story by Lisa Goulian, focusing on golf's opportunity with women and some advice on how your golf operation can become more effective. We close with Lisa Vlooswyk's parting shot; offering her perspective as Canada's long drive champion. Both articles should provide thought provoking reads that may trigger some new marketing ideas for your golf operation.



Jeff Calderwood and his daughters, Kristi and Lauren.

WALK THE WALK

One of my concerns with our relatively slow evolving industry, has always been that we 'talk the talk' but often don't 'walk the walk' when it comes to women. At numerous conferences and meetings, I hear all about the opportunity with women and what we need to do about it. However, when I play with female family or colleagues, I see them experiencing second rate attention to women's preferences at the golf course.

Often, there is not adequate female staff greeting golfers, or female golf pros for lessons. Washroom facilities may not meet women's standards, both in quality and quantity available. Many golf

shops are not merchandised the way women shop, despite knowing how much women do like to shop. Menus may not cater to the healthier choices female golfers prefer. Tee placements are frequently out of sync with the typical distance women hit the ball. In addition, women's events are sometimes scheduled into off-peak times, rather than structured to actually meet their needs. It all tends to reinforce the impression that women golfers are just an afterthought rather than a true market that our industry should embrace.

The upside is that I see huge potential to better meet the preferences of women, leading to a significant boost in demand, and therefore a strong solution for many golf courses experiencing a more challenging marketplace. The fact that so many golf courses have not yet fully leveraged the marketing opportunity to women is actually a cause for great optimism. We can do better!

One example for consideration is the Get Golf Ready program, designed and well tested by the PGA of America as the most successful format for introducing new adult players to golf in a fun, fast, and affordable set of group lessons. The data from students going through this program last year in Canada shows an exceptionally high proportion of women at 78%. Furthermore, they spent an average of \$907 on golf that same golf season, beyond the original cost of enrolling in the Get Golf Ready program itself. Women are a lucrative marketing opportunity, if we properly deliver on their preferences!

So, I hope this issue of Golf Business Canada contributes to your focus on women this year, and that you take advantage of this high potential marketing opportunity. All the best for a successful 2013 golf season!