

# Promotional ideas that won't take the shirt off your back

*Promotion and marketing ideas for under \$100*

The goal of every pro shop owner and manager is to increase business, but in today's economy, it is a task that is proving to be easier said than done. Pro shops are competing for customers harder than ever before, with big box stores and internet sales only a few of the concerns.

As we travel around North America, we are hearing a consistent theme from owners and managers – they wish more golfers visited their shop. The dilemma golf courses are encountering is that a beautiful shop with great merchandise is no longer reason enough for golfers to shop. So, what's the solution? Effective marketing programs, promotions, and special events that will generate the type of excitement needed to get golfers into your shop.

**CASE STUDY: DEMO DAY**

The pro shop decides to host a demo day in partnership with a vendor. Shop A-Minus handles the event in the following way: the manager asks the vendor's representative to drop off a promotional poster and two weeks prior to the event; the manager finds the poster and posts it on the pro shop door. The day of the event, a dozen people turn out to demo the product. The event generates a few sales totaling \$1,000.

Shop A-Plus, on the other hand, designs a marketing plan for under \$100 to help promote the event and create excitement. *Their approach includes the following:*

- They establish goals for the demo event; including the amount of product they want to sell, number of guests they want to attend, the amount each staff member should sell, etc.
- They create an aggressive, yet fun, approach to marketing the event
- The whole team takes responsibility for the event's success
- They begin to market the event ASAP

Essentially, Shop A-Plus created more than just a marketing plan; they created an advantage for themselves and sold \$13,000 of product in the process.

**MARKETING YOUR EVENT**

How did Shop A-Plus succeed for under \$100? Here are the steps they took to market their event:

*Low cost, high impact signs, notes and posters placed in key locations that were produced for very little cash (printed either on the shop's computer or by a budget printer):*

- **Signs:** At the half-way house, driving range, on the front door
- **Notes:** In each shopping bag, daily menu, on every golf cart
- **Posters:** In the locker rooms, dressing rooms, common areas, range booths, and on all bulletin boards

**Cost = \$50**



*An inexpensive, but effective display to promote an end of season sale at Saginaw Golf Club in Cambridge, Ontario.*

*Set up a creative display featuring the vendor's products in the shop's key display area, with a sign announcing the event:*

- Vendor's merchandise is free
- Sign and display materials may cost a few dollars

**Cost = \$25**

*Enlisted staff to help promote the event:*

- Staff members reminded golfers about the demo day when they answered the phone
- Shop management sent out e-mail invitations to everyone on their database
- The starter promoted the event at every opportunity
- Shop management started a VIP list offering guests premium appointments with the representative
- Notes promoting the event were put on members' monthly invoice/statements

**Cost = \$0**

By following these steps, Shop A-Plus implemented an effective marketing plan for less than \$100. In this example, they still had \$25 at their disposal, which they could use to reward their highest producing staff-member.

**CUSTOMER'S PERSPECTIVE**

Any facility can follow the example of Shop A-Plus when promoting an event by keeping in mind the "What's In it For Me" principle. Think about the event from your customer's perspective. What

will be "in it" for your guest if he/she participates? Will they win a free golf lesson, receive a free gift with purchase, gain a special discount, earn a bonus gift, or be the first to try out the latest drivers? Once you identify what customers will gain from attending your event, you must highlight those benefits in your communications to them. By doing this, you have given customers a reason to shop in your store. Once you get customers into your shop, you must have staff that is knowledgeable, ready and willing to provide guests with the best experience. Put yourself ahead of the big box stores and internet sales for under \$100, with marketing and promotions that will bring guests in, and excellent service that will keep them coming back.



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