

Membership recruitment

Recruiting new members is one of the major areas of focus for any board/committee and management.

Current members are the best vehicle for recruitment of new members and they should be regularly encouraged to undertake this exercise. Increasingly, clubs have to undertake their own promotion to their local market to communicate the club's opportunities for membership and the benefits of membership.

Beginners need to feel welcome and comfortable with the club surrounds. A lack of knowledge of the rules and limited ability to play the game means the beginner may be feeling a little intimidated. All efforts should be made to overcome these concerns by making the beginner feel welcome, relaxed and comfortable. The involvement of a golf professional will be of great benefit to a new golfer.

Recruitment ideas

The following is a list of different recruiting initiatives:

- Open Days – introductory days focus as much on the social side of membership as the golf itself. Open Days may include things such as competitions, a raffle/prize draw, barbeque and refreshments. Current members can be encouraged to invite family and friends. Key representatives, including the club's golf professional, of the club should attend Open Days and meet the potential new members.
- Guests of members – target and promote opportunities to guests of members, who are already golfers and may be interested in membership. Ensure to capture their e-mail address (building the visitor database).
- Activities outside of the golf club – Does your local community or school have a market or fair where your club could book a place, pitch a small marquee and show its activities and promote membership? Interactive golf demonstrations and sessions can be appealing to the public.
- Create partnerships with local sports clubs – men and women who attend sport and recreation facilities already enjoy sport and may be looking for opportunities to try something new. The partnership may just be promotional or provides for a discount membership or green fee.
- Free Taster Sessions – a great way to introduce beginners to the game and the golf club environment.
- Driving ranges and mini-golf facilities – for many newcomers to the game, these are most likely where they will get their first taste of golf. A partnership may be appropriate to ensure that golf club opportunities are promoted at these facilities, and vice versa.
- Green fee vouchers – each member receives a small number of free green fee vouchers per year on renewal of their membership e.g. 5 vouchers. They can use these vouchers as they wish e.g. to introduce friends to the club or as a gift. The vouchers have space for the visitors name, address and e-mail (building the visitor database) which is then presented at the pro shop when the visitor registers for golf.

Golf clubs should be innovative with their recruitment ideas and look at a variety of target markets as well as their current membership. Follow-on activities and/or coaching packages are ideal to make the most of the recruitment efforts. Beginners need to be able to see how they can progress within the game.

When planning recruitment activities, golf clubs should try to include a variety of individuals from all areas of the club to get buy-in to the recruitment process, including current members.

Beginners may have little or no golf or golf club knowledge and it is therefore important to cater for these individuals accordingly. Therefore ensuring that your club is friendly and inclusive environment is essential.