

GO PLAY

A COURSE PARTNER COMMUNICATION FROM GOLFNOW

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FEATURE

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Seasonal transitions, and managing members and leagues

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The Playbook



The Index section on the GolfNow Business website has become a great resource for golf course operators when it comes to business information and best practices. Inside its pages, you'll also find *The Playbook*.

We recently introduced *The Playbook* as a powerful, chapter-by-chapter guide for managing and growing a golf course operation. Over the course of the last 10 years, GolfNow has developed many of golf's most versatile and effective products and technologies for managing your business, controlling expenses, maximizing resources and increasing revenue. *The Playbook* captures all of the strategies and methods for the effective use of these products and services, and combines the instruction with real-world examples from successful golf course operations around the country.

After a first-chapter introduction, *The Playbook* gets down to business in Chapter 2, taking a look at best practices and emerging trends in tee time inventory management - helping you determine the right product at the right time for the right price. You'll hear from GolfNow experts, as well as your fellow golf course operators who have found the courage and discipline to explore new, proven strategies for managing inventory. ■

Visit *The Index* at business.golfnow.com to download your copy of *The Playbook: Chapter 2*.

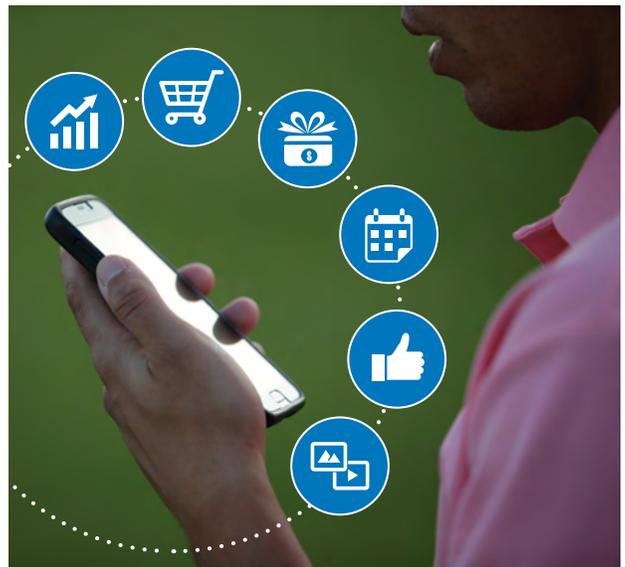
Where to find the easiest revenue streams... your website

Here we are, a good 20 years into the Internet revolution, and many golf courses barely have their toes dipped in the digital water. It is true that virtually all operations have a website, but there is a big difference between merely creating a website and having an effective website that works for you. In today's competitive landscape, golf operations need to be focused on creating multiple streams of revenue, and your website is central to that goal.

For Justin Bolton, a Plus specialist lead for GolfNow, helping customers get there often requires first dealing with a common refrain: "Our website is working fine, why change?" I hear that a lot. It's the old dog that doesn't want to learn new tricks challenge. So it's up to us to show the value of upgrading their website."

With GolfNow offering two tiers of website options, golf courses can match the functionality and amount of support to their needs and comfort level. Features can include analytics measurement, online stores, e-gifting, Google calendar integration, enhanced social media, video and photography.

"Whether you're a DIY kind of operation, you want a little support or you'd prefer to do what you do well and let us handle the heavy lifting, your website can start opening up new streams of revenue," Bolton said. ■



Managing your inventory



Transitions between seasons, and managing members and leagues

When seasons change, you know what that means for many golf courses – checking the calendar to see when their rates change. But several factors—most notably the unpredictability of weather, especially this year—have proven that picking and sticking to a single date on the calendar for rate changes is not only impossible to do with any accuracy; it can also be, more often than not, detrimental to your business.

“Why have a physical rate card that shows your rate is ‘x’ from this date to that date?” asks Brian Skena, senior specialist for Plus by GolfNow. “Golfers don’t need to know the price months from now. Let dynamic pricing come into play.” He’s quick to reference the hotel and airline industries as prime examples; both have driven extensive growth and increased profits by utilizing dynamic pricing while conditioning consumers to expect prices based on demand.

The competing variables of weather, demand, availability, competition and scheduling mean that there really are no hard-and-fast rules when it comes to pricing, aside from one – make your rates make sense for your golfers and your business.

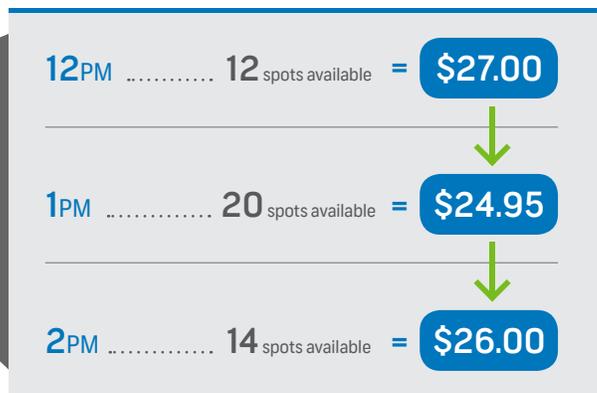
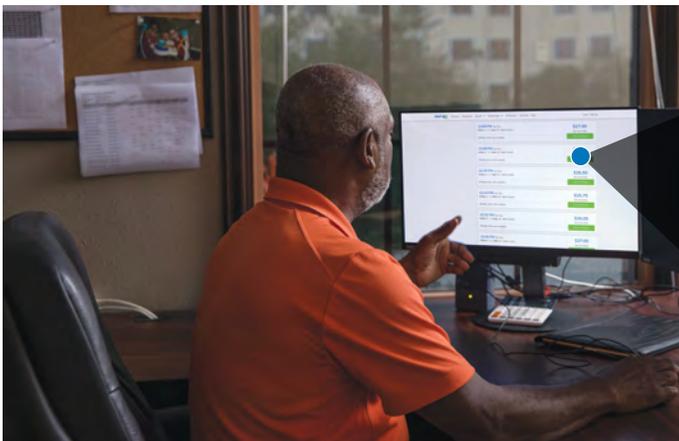
That same rule is true when it comes to the struggle between membership or league rates and public rates for open tee times. According to Mike Dopslaff, GM and head PGA professional for San Carlos Golf Club in Ft. Myers, Fla., “it’s like navigating a minefield.”

Quite often at courses that offer a membership option, it is in their best interest to encourage public play in order to keep their membership dues low. And that’s the rub, according to Skena. “If your members are consuming all of the prime times, there is no opportunity for the public to play and for the club to collect the premium fees for these high-value times.”

Even for courses that don’t have members per se, there can be entrenched leagues or groups who have long-held tee times and, quite often, favored rates. Many operations see value in the guaranteed revenue and customer loyalty. But at what cost to the overall business?

Similar situations can arise for courses that host league play or that may have groups whose standing tee times have become a tradition over the years. “I see a lot of courses that do groups during peak hours, even on Saturday mornings,” Skena said. “You definitely want to be smart about it and not be taken advantage of. Don’t be afraid to push back, test higher rates, and consider moving those leagues and groups away from high-value times. You want to protect your ability to sell those times for the most you can get.”

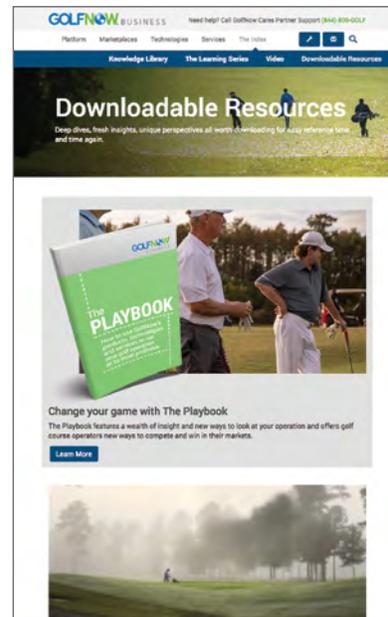
Taking small steps is working for Mike Dopslaff. “I explained to the board that, to make ends meet, we had to put limitations on those member tee times. In our three month test, we increased revenue by \$50,000. It made a huge difference.” ■



Want to know it? Download it

In a golf course operator's quest for knowledge and problem solving, there's always somebody else who's been there, done that. We all want the trusted advice of our peers who have shared the same experiences and come out on top of any challenge - pros who are willing to share tips that are proven accurate and most effective.

You can find this type of advice inside *The Index* at GolfNow Business. Smartly produced video roundtables—featuring professionals who work on the front lines of golf course operations and management—doling out advice about current trends and issues. There's also the opportunity to download and read industry white papers that delve into topics most important to operators today. ■



Visit *The Index* at business.golfnow.com for downloadable resources.



* Photo: Kristin Mesick

National Golf Day

On April 25, GolfNow and Golf Channel joined other golf industry leaders who participated in a record-high 230 meetings combined with members of Congress to discuss the game's economic, social and environmental contributions to society during the 11th annual National Golf Day on Capitol Hill.



GolfNow Industry Roundtable

Golf Industry professionals working on the front lines of golf course management and operations discuss the best ways to train your staff and adopt the most effective technologies to help you optimize reservations. To watch, visit the Video tab found inside *The Index* at business.golfnow.com.