

Newcastle West Golf Club: Attracting Lady Members

Newcastle West Golf Club is set in mature woodland in rural West Limerick, Ireland. Recently, the Club worked hard to increase its female membership.

The Issue:

The number of lady members was falling and the Club realised that extra effort and new ideas would be required to ensure that the membership of the Ladies' Section was maintained and expanded.

The Solution:

The Club initiated a ten-week Get into Golf programme, targeting first-time lady golfers. A local marketing campaign was carried out, mostly using social media.

The organisers expected around twenty women to take up the challenge, however an impressive fifty-five lady beginners signed up. This generated a great deal of local interest in Newcastle West Golf Club.

Alongside this, a second initiative was implemented: the Club started a new "casual golf" membership category for the lady beginners. Two membership options were offered: a one-year Casual Membership for 2014 priced at €100, and a two-year Casual Membership for 2014 and 2015 at €400.

The Challenges

The implementation of the Get into Golf programme ran very smoothly and the Club experienced no difficulties. All Committee members were dedicated to making it a success. They worked hard to ensure that all beginners were made to feel welcome and were encouraged at every opportunity.

At a Glance ...

- The Club wanted to boost its female membership.
- It implemented a 10-week Get into Golf programme.
- This was expected to attract around 20 women but 55 signed up.
- The Club also offered a new Casual Membership option to the lady beginners.
- Thirty-three lady beginners took out either one or two year Casual Memberships.
- Committee members all helped to encourage the new ladies and make them feel welcome.
- A similar programme to attract junior girls is being planned.

As a result of the increased number of ladies at the Club, the Pro-shop, bar and restaurant benefited from significantly increased revenues.

Impacts:

The initial benefits were significant: the scheme attracted a large number of new ladies to the Club. Now that the Get into Golf programme has finished, several of the ladies have enquired about obtaining handicaps and taking part in competitions, but do not yet feel ready to become full members.

For these beginners, the option of Casual Membership has proved very popular. Already, eleven ladies have taken out a one-year Casual Membership and twenty-two have become two-year Casual Members. Casual Membership was originally only

“ Expected approximately 20 ladies to take part ... 55 lady beginners took up the challenge, which generated great interest in the Club. ”

available to the lady beginners; however, a handful of non-members heard about the initiative through word of mouth after the Get into Golf programme had ended, and the Club extended this membership option to them.

Next Steps:

The original ten-week Get into Golf programme has ended, however, the Club is presently reviewing its options for the future. The Club feels that more needs to be done to ensure that the interests of the Casual Members are retained.

A second initiative is currently being planned to encourage junior girls to try golf.

Tips & Advice:

Newcastle West Golf Club recommends that clubs considering a similar venture ensure that the organisers have full commitment from the club's committee members. Aside from needing their help in organising events, the more people helping to promote the Club to prospective members the better!

“ Ensure you have commitment from various Committee members. ”

A final word from Newcastle West Golf Club:

The Club's spokesman confirms that the Club is extremely happy with the Get into Golf initiative. It was highly successful in attracting golf first-timers to the Club. The social side of the Club has been given a lift and friendships have been established.

Based on surveys and follow up interviews, the UK and Ireland's Golf Home Unions have identified and showcased examples of "what works" in golf club management in a series of case studies. The focus has been on clubs that have been successful in achieving more players, more members and stronger clubs. The intention is to share information and guidance on effective practices in business planning, customer service, membership, and women's and girls' golf. For further information about this and other case studies and for further support, please go to www.golfcasestudies.businesscatalyst.com.



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