



NEW GOLF
BACK 2 GOLF
MONTH


Langland Bay Golf Club

Langland Bay have had some hugely successful years, and led by club manager Andrew Minty, the club has seen growth in all areas of the business. Golf Development Wales caught up with Andrew to get an insight in to the clubs successes and also what the future holds.

What have been the key elements to the success of the club?

Langland Bay pride themselves on providing good value for money and a product that golfers will enjoy whether this is the golf course itself or the experience they have after the round. At Langland the value of the product is never undermined so they move away from offering deals or lower prices on areas such as green fees or membership. One of the key areas in which Langland drive the business is by 'doing things differently'. This includes offering things such as member benefits by linking with local businesses, member packs, tee sheet for visitors and members, Pin Placement sheets every day, welcome boards, reciprocal deals with other golf clubs, an up to date diary and regular communication to ensure that both members and visitors are aware of everything taking place at the club.

The club has been hugely successful in the way in which it markets itself using stunning imagery to sell the course to visitors and members. In the past the club has tried a variety of marketing techniques and now have a set way in which they market through avenues such as South Wales Golfer and National Club Golfer. But as Andrew Minty explains it wasn't always this way at the club. 'When I arrived at Langland Bay, there wasn't a marketing budget in place. We then put a 5 year marketing plan together which was supported by a significant budget with a focus on photography, marketing literature and packs for visiting societies etc.



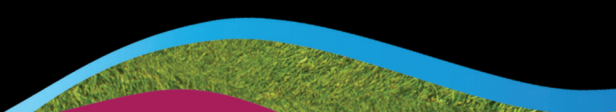
I would encourage every club to put a marketing budget in place and use it effectively.' The club have also used marketing techniques such as aerial shots and social media to sell the club in terms of its 'Unique Selling Point' the golf course. The use of social media has been a huge success for the club. A social media campaign was run initially to develop interest in the club and its facilities. It is now the role of Andrew to consistently use social media which has resulted in over £35K in visitor green fees and approximately 7 new members. When asked how the club has achieved this Andrew said that 'the use of imagery and simple messaging has had a significant impact of the business benefits to the club. Twitter is a free platform for all clubs to use and can reach a wide audience across not only the UK but the world as a whole. The important thing to remember with social media is to Engage, Educate and Entertain the customer.'

A significant success of the club has come on the golf course by insuring that the quality is kept as high as possible. The focus for the club is to ensure that the greens and tees are at an excellent standard. As part of this, the club has engaged with a professional agronomist who visits 3 times a year to advise the greenstaff and to ensure the programme and plan is being followed. The playing surfaces are at the highest standards possible which also includes hand cutting the greens & tees and paying attention to detail on areas such as green aprons, surrounds and definition. This has proved to be significant in terms of aiding in the retention of current members but also ensuring that visitors return to the golf club.

What have been the challenges for the club?

The club have had a variety of issues over a number of years such as land, buildings and challenges in staffing. Although the club are hugely successful with almost £90K of green fees in 2015 this created its own issues with the club having to ensure that the balance of society/visitor bookings did not impact on member's times. The club also runs successful charity days throughout the year so this had the potential to create another logistical problem for the club. On top of this increased visitors being sent to the club on a Friday by Tour Operators was also adding to the footfall on the golf course.

To overcome this the club entered in to a reciprocal agreement with Celtic Manor, Pennard and Machynys to provide its members with the opportunity to play golf during busy periods. The dates are set in advance and communicated to members at the start of the year which has also added to the retention of members.





How has the structure of the club helped the club to grow?

The structure of the club at Langland Bay has had a significant impact on the business and its success to date. Currently the club has a board of directors which is led by a chairman. The captain of the club also sits on the board but does not have the overall power of the club. Andrew added that 'in many clubs the captain for the year can be responsible for shaping the business. At Langland Bay we wanted to ensure that the captain is involved but personal agendas were kept to a minimum in order for the club to progress and be consistent in its approach.' Each of the board members is voted on for 3 year terms which again ensures consistency throughout the business. Each of the board members is provided with a role descriptor allowing them to understand what is expected of them as part of the directorship. The club is working towards a 5 year plan which was predominantly based around the golf course. This is a working document and it is the role of the board and club manager to implement the plan that has been set. The club also has a club development document which allows them to plan and implement the changes needed to progress the club.

The club continues to be forward thinking and the success of the past few years has resulted in a waiting list being created for new members. The club currently have over 1000 members in a variety of categories. But will the club stop there? No.....The club are already in talks with Golf Development Wales and Swansea Active to create a membership option for beginner golfers and its current membership utilising a short course just a 'wedge shot' from the club. The club have run hugely successful New2Golf programs over the last 2 years and this is something they wish to continue in 2016. This new project will hopefully allow the club to continue to develop the game and at the same time add to its retention program at the club.

