

# platform 77

## Golf Club Marketing and Communications Planning Information

### Overview

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The club has a fantastic history and something national and international visitors especially will value greatly. The course is often commended for its layout and condition

The club has historically been viewed as the 'business persons' club in the area and not as welcoming as some. The club therefore wishes to showcase their family friendly approach and have held events (Bonfire Night) to engage with members and the local community. Other events of this type are being considered.

Membership numbers are dropping slightly per annum and there are a growing number of golfers that are deal driven, rotating around clubs in the area that are providing offers on membership. There is a desire to increase loyalty within the membership and initiatives are being considered with regards improving the member experience and adding value to membership. There is also an opportunity to develop competitions that appeal to all members including scrambles and category 2 prizes. An Overseas membership category can provide revenue via subscriptions and additional spend when visiting the course.

Visitor numbers are steady, but there is a desire to increase visitor golfers from the local, national and international markets. Golf societies have been identified as offering a growth option.

Current club communications include social media and a newsletter. Social media is managed by multiple stakeholders, meaning communications are not as consistent as they could be. There is an awareness communications are member focused and there is a desire to include a greater amount of visitor content. Visitor data collection has proven difficult, as Golf Now withhold all data collected. The club is therefore considering implementing data capture of their own. The Foremost member newsletter database has increased to 520 from 250 which is excellent.

There was a general feeling that the customer experience for both members and visitors could be improved and steps are being considered to address what changes can be introduced.

A Local Business and Golf Media day are being considered to increase exposure of the club in the local community and media.

## 1 Brand and Customer Experience

The brand of a golf club goes far further than the logo - it goes right through the business from top to bottom. Individual brands mean different things to different consumers and differentiation from competitor brands (other courses) allows your business to stand out from the crowd. Your club name, logo, website layout, website font, ease of booking, colours used and content of communications, language, catering, pro-shop and welcome. Put simply, the overall customer experience from sourcing information about your club, booking to leaving after their round reflects on your brand.

Think about how you want your brand to be perceived by members and visitors and identify ways your brand consistency can be improved.

Once you have identified your main brand components, these can be used to help form your aims and objectives through identifying gaps or developing certain aspects of your business. (See overleaf)

## 2 Aims and Objectives

Setting focused aims and appropriate objectives provides a clear route to improving identified aspects of your business. Ensure these are S.M.A.R.T. - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound.

### 2.1 Aims

Identifying the aims of your club is critical when defining your business to different customers groups. Examples of these aims could be 'Make the golf course the most welcoming in the area', 'Create the best value golf experience in the area' or 'Increase visitor numbers'. Make sure your aims are realistic and achievable. Remember your aims can change as the business changes and choose no more than 3 that are most important at this time - this will help ensure they are deliverable within the desired timeframe.

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### 2.2 Objectives

Once you set your aims, attach achievable objectives to each. e.g. if your aim is to 'Create the best value member experience in the area' your objectives could be 'Improve ease of member bookings', 'Give a free junior membership with every full paying adult' and 'Create added value non-golf benefits for members'. If your aim is to 'Increase visitor bookings' your objectives could be 'Improve ease of visitor bookings', 'Set net rates and develop relationships with Tour Operators' and 'Develop visitor focused communications'.

Aim	Objectives
1. Improve customer experience of current membership	1. Better communications 2. Host more member events 3. Added value relationships with local businesses
2. Increase visitor golfer numbers	1. Collect visitor email addresses via data capture spreadsheet/cards

	<p>2. Develop visitor focused communications including a bespoke newsletter and targeted social media content</p> <p>3. Use events like Bonfire Night to push visitor offers</p>
3. Increase general footfall at club	<p>1. Host events to attract interests i.e. Bonfire Night example</p> <p>2. Identify golf/non-golf activities i.e. senior coffee mornings, parent coaching session with childcare</p> <p>3. Potentially re-introduce Christmas Day lunch</p>

### 3 Customer Groups

A golf club, unlike many businesses, has a large variety of customers. Members and visitors can be segmented by a number of criteria that helps to define what products and messaging should be developed to make them wish to engage with your golf club.

#### 3.1 Members

Every golf club has different demographics of member and different membership groups have different relationships with their golf club. Think of your club as a town and the different membership groups as communities that live there. Age, address, place of work, income, occupation, number of dependents, golfing ability will all contribute to their interactions with their golf club. The simplest demographics to split your membership with are sex, age and handicap category. List what you feel your club could do to improve the service you provide to each. e.g. New members are eligible for discounted group coaching from the PGA Professional.

Demographic	Service
Mums and Dad's	
Senior Members	
Low Handicap	
Mid handicap	
Ladies	
Men	
Juniors	

##### 3.1.1 Categories

Membership categories differ from club to club, so list them below and then think of any others that could be introduced to increase member loyalty and attract new members in each. e.g. if there is a factory nearby, would it be prudent to develop a 'Shift Worker' category that is promoted directly to the organisation? Or is there the potential to develop an 'Overseas' category?

Category	Benefit to Member	Benefit to Club
Overseas Membership	Provides golfer with membership of a club. Great value, especially with reciprocal options. Maybe opportunity to provide a handicap?	Increased revenue from fee and spend in bar and pro shop when visiting. Increased communications reach given location of membership. Increase in footfall.

### Communications

Communications are critical when demonstrating value of membership. These take a number of forms (e.g. club notice boards, e-newsletters, social media, point of sale materials, video) and list below these channels and the type of content currently used by the club. Then also add additional information you feel would help improve communications to the membership.

Note: A need to join up communications e.g. when information is posted on social media it should also be visible on the other relevant communications channels.

Channel	Current Content	Improved Content	Responsibility
Noticeboards	General club information	Also targeted at visitors	David
Newsletter	Foremost Golf e-newsletter. Sent to 250, with 270 sign up on the back of it to total 520.	No data – kept by Golf Now. Data capture cards	
Social Media	Mostly member focused	Use to also target visitors	

Point of Sale	Limited – no information with regards greenfees visible.		
Video			
Other			

### 3.1.2 Open Days

Open Trade Days work well to inform customer facing individuals at businesses in the local area as to the excellent experience your club offers. These individuals include receptionists at hotels, restaurant workers and basically any organisation that engage with customers who would be interested in playing golf at your club. These days should take place early in the season and should be held annually to ensure the most relevant individuals in each business are invited. All participants could be provided with a show round of facilities and relevant literature. Golfers could also be offered the opportunity to play a complimentary round, whilst non-golfers could take part in a clinic run by the club professional.

## 3.2 Visitors

Visitors fall into a number of categories and the simplest way of grouping these is local, regional, national and international. Each has their own way of sourcing information for their golfing experience and making bookings. However, there is no real difference between the visitor and tourist, as both are looking for a very similar experience.

### 3.2.1 Local

Local visitors can provide an excellent income stream to golf clubs. These visitors are not only more likely to play at times that other visitors may not (twilight), but also offer the opportunity to build on the experience and turn local visitors into members. Local visitors can be attracted via promotion and also through direct contact with businesses and organisations.

List businesses you think could offer you channels to promote local visitor offers and how you could best communicate with these.

Business	Contact/Communication


### 3.2.2 National

Golfing societies, small groups (4-8 players) and couples/individuals all look for different experiences and communicating to these groups can be challenging. Think how you communicate to these groups already and how you could improve the reach of these communications.

Group	Current Channel	Additional Channels
Reciprocal outside of the area.		
Golf Societies	Advert in GB&I Golf Societies Guide 2017.	Newsletter and social media. Communicate through membership.

### 3.2.3 International

The international golfer falls into two main categories - those on a golfing holiday and those who are holiday golfers. Those on a golfing holiday are more (but not always) likely to book in advance and holiday golfers only see golf as a part of their overall holiday experience. Think about the type of club you are and what you offer to the prospective visitor - is the golf holiday market more suited to your course, the holiday golfer or a mixture of both?

### 3.2.4 Tour Operators

Tour Operators offer golf courses with an excellent opportunity to reach targeted markets. They come in all shapes and sizes and are spread across the globe, with most concentrating their business on specific targeted geographic markets. Some will only offer high value vacations for their clients and others a cross section of packages that offer a selection of products to suit all tastes and budgets.

Something Tour Operators require is a 'net rate' - this is basically a marketing commission or discount for selling your golf course to their clients. These net rates vary greatly and are typically up to 20% cheaper than offered to customers directly. When considering a rate, remember you don't have to make tee-times available at busy times and you can limit the number available per week if required.

Fife Golf can help you identify target markets and provide guidance and contacts for Tour Operators in these regions. Please write your target countries below.

Target Regions/Countries
1
2
3
4
5

### 3.3 Partnership Working

Partnership, or collaborative working, can provide businesses involved with a far greater reach than individual promotion and gives the customer a 'package' rather than just one element of their trip. The concept is simple - golf course A and B (and possibly more) work with accommodation provider C (more than one is also possible) to pull together packages for promotion and the package is then marketed by each business.

Think of courses and accommodation providers close to you that your club could work with and write them in the box below.

Courses	Contact	Accommodation	Contact
Local pubs, social golf clubs.			

### 3.4 Communications

Now list the ways you currently communicate to the groups identified and list the channels that could be used to reach them.

Groups	Channels
International visitors	Social media, newsletter, PR.

Members	Social media, newsletter, club notice boards, Pro Shop
Non-golfers	Via membership database passing on communications

## 4 Social Media

If used properly, Social Media can provide an extremely valuable communications channels for a business. They can be used at any time to instantly provide up to date information and content can also be scheduled as part of a longer term social media strategy.

When you have set the content of your strategy, use free websites like Tweetdeck [www.tweetdeck.twitter.com](http://www.tweetdeck.twitter.com) for Twitter or Hootsuite <http://hootsuite.com/> for multiple platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc) to schedule communications.

Make sure you use lower resolution images (especially on Twitter) as this allows you to include more typed content. Also, include a link bit link back to the relevant page on your website (see how to here <https://bitly.com/>).

A Social Media Planner will be provided after the marketing plan has been completed.

### 4.1 Member

At the start of each season, think of the key events you would like to communicate to the membership and list these below. The events can be club championships, open events, charity dinners, course information (green coring dates, green condition), success stories - the list can include anything that your club feels is relevant and of interest to the membership. Don't forget to schedule the repeat of content for specific events e.g. the Men's Open or Charity Golf Days up until the event takes place.

**Note: Social media not currently co-ordinated. This is something to consider in order to provide a joined up approach. The Golf club to identify key events for the plan and upload to Hootsuite or a similar platform.**

Dates	Event	Message



## 5 Added Value for Members

As previously mentioned, obtaining loyalty of members to clubs is becoming increasingly challenging given the changes to the golf industry in Scotland. Put simply, loyalty has historically been created through member feelings towards a club, as even an increase in price would not affect a golfer's desire to continue their membership.

Prices often now have to decrease in order to maintain membership levels, which can impact significantly on club finances. Adding value to membership can make members more loyal and make other golfers more likely to join. This can be done by offering value within the club (like a family soft play area), but can also be generated by utilising the membership and local businesses. Your membership card can be used to offer discounts locally e.g. present the card at a local shop and receive 10% discount. List added value benefits you think your club could offer - these benefits don't have to be golf related and think of members who are involved with businesses that could help provide these incentives. Use the additional information section for contacts and other information that will help you implement the benefit. Family friendly restaurants or activities would work well here.

**Note: Opportunity to increase this to be discussed in order to build relationships with businesses that can add value to membership. Using the current membership database to reach local businesses via their network can be an effective way of doing this.**

Benefit	Additional Information



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## 6.2 Visitor Content

The visitor newsletter, in addition to other targeted content should act as an overview of the customer experience discussed earlier in the plan. Write these down and think of the news each newsletter could contain.

**Note: Club to decide on content after discussions.**

Date	Title	Content
e.g. October	e.g. Visit xxxx in 2017 and experience links golf at its finest.	Introduction, Course Information, Catering Options, Accommodation in the area, other courses in the area, costs (including any group discounts), booking information, and partnership offers.

## 6.3 Tour Operator Content

If your business is keen to work with Tour Operators, a regular newsletter containing course and net-rate information helps keep your course at the forefront of the Tour Operators mind. The newsletter should include general course information, catering options, customer testimonials and high quality imagery.

## 7 Website

Your website is the customer facing platform where all your customers will be directed to from social media and other marketing channels. As such, it requires showcasing the very best of your club and being relevant for your members and visitors alike. Choosing the right template and content (see brand in Section 1) will allow for simple navigation and differentiation from your competitors that provides a user experience customer groups will value.

**Note – Consider targeted visitor information on the homepage.**

### 7.1 Text

Text should be concise and regularly updated. New pages should be provided for any news or information promoted via social media or other channels as this allows customers to find the information quickly.

### 7.2 Imagery

Good quality imagery is an essential promotional tool and it is well worth utilising the skills of a professional golf course photographer to capture images of your course. These images can then be used on your website, social media and traditional marketing materials to provide the look and feel you wish to promote to your customers. It is also prudent to ask the employees of the club to capture images for social media promotion e.g. the bar manager taking a picture of a visiting group, or a greenkeeper capturing an early morning shot of the course on a beautiful day all help to showcase the club.