



Ohope International Golf Club

# CASE STUDY:

**Customer Service:**

**Creating a customer-centric golf club environment.**

## OVERVIEW

“Warm Welcome: I’m from England staying with my son in NZ. A friend wondered if we could have coffee at the Golf Club, so we drove up and were warmly welcomed. We so much enjoyed our coffee under the sunshade, looking at the fabulous scenery, that we stayed and had a sandwich and a drink for lunch.

The next week we returned with our husbands and had a delicious curry and rice. Everyone was friendly and pleasant. The charming gentleman in charge offered us the use of two golf buggies and we had a great time driving around the whole course. We are all non-golfers, but we thoroughly enjoyed our visit to Ohope International Golf” A Trip Advisor review.

The clubs mantra “We love it – so will you” encapsulates the overriding philosophy of the club. Ron Smythe the clubs General Manager identified that they need to promote the unique location and environment they have. However it is also important to extend this profile beyond that of being just a golf course. They need to be a golf club that interacts with the community.

To achieve this they have a culture of great customer service. Therefore providing a great experience for those that attend the club, be it for a function a coffee or the great golf experience the Ohope International Golf Club offers.

# CHALLENGES



## MEMBERS

Initial negativity from the members and a failure from some to understand the reasons the club needed to extend their resources.



## FINANCE

Financial restrictions in place as not a “bottomless pit”.



## STAFF

A need for the staff to be more customer-centric.

## SOLUTION

To involve the members in the new direction the club used a number of forums including internal promotions, newsletters and numerous discussions to alleviate the members concerns and explain the need for a change. The internet was an important tool in promoting and growing the clubs profile and once the members began to understand the “how” they began to engage more in the process of change. The membership now understand the importance of their visitors and engage in a friendly manner to make their experience more enjoyable.

The club committee itself saw the need to develop the “club and functions” portion of the revenue streams and came to an understanding that through controlled expenditure they could make money. Any opportunity to leverage the clubs profile via the internet in a cost

effective manner (usually free) was also undertaken by the Club General Manager. The Committee also understood that they would also need to make sure that the member’s needs were catered for. They have created a new members bar area for use when the main clubrooms are being used for a function.

To make the club truly customer-centric it was imperative that all the staff understood their role and how they fitted into the “big picture”. The staff became focussed on delivering great customer service at any opportunity, it was important that any enquiry was handled in a positive manner and relevant actions were taken and followed through.

## RESULTS

**39**  
ATTENDEES

Monday night roasts average attendance in the last 2 years.

↑  
**DOMESTIC**  
GREEN FEE PLAYERS

The club saw an increase in local/domestic green fee players.

↑  
**INTERNATIONAL**  
GREEN FEE PLAYERS

The club also saw an increase in international green fee players from Australia, Germany, Finland and Britain.

**15+**  
WEDDINGS

Over 15 weddings booked for the 2015-2016 season (Sept-April).

## CONCLUSION / SUMMARY

The Ohope International Golf Clubs success in expanding its profile and revenue streams is all based upon a premise of great customer service. Ron Smythe the General Manager explains “For example our Monday Night Roasts have been going now for 2 years and directly through that great experience we have booked a large number of functions”. Ron, having come from a hospitality background, has instilled the customer service philosophy in his staff and members. They fully understand the need to engage positively with visitors. “It is not unusual for green fee players to take precedence over our members, our members are great at letting them slot into the field” A refreshing attitude. Ron also agrees that they have a spectacular links golf course but “if we try to be just a golf course we will become a vacant piece of land”.

A further advancement has been the relationship with Golf Tourism New Zealand- Ryan Brandenburg Executive Director comments “My family and I had a spectacular trip to Ohope, with much of that credit going to Ron. The welcoming culture that Ron has created is something that I hope is carried forward for years to come” “When golf Tourism New Zealand was formed, we were tasked with finding the best portfolio of courses to promote. From the very beginning, Ohope has been part of our program. Their seaside links is a beautiful experience and enhances any trip to the Bay of Plenty and New Zealand”

“We love it- so will you”





### **THE VALUE OF GOLF**

The Game of Golf Provides Unique and Lifelong Enrichment

#### **VISION**

Golf is New Zealand's Favourite Pastime

#### **MISSION**

To Grow the Love of Golf

[www.golf.co.nz](http://www.golf.co.nz)

[nzgolf@nzgolf.org.nz](mailto:nzgolf@nzgolf.org.nz)

Tel +64 (0)9 485 3230 - Fax +64 (0)9 486 6745