

Case Study

**The value of surveying
your members**

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Introduction

Conducting a survey is an invaluable way to get feedback from your club members to understand their current satisfaction

levels and to provide insight into how you can enhance the overall experience at your golf club and course.

Current Trends

Whilst there are a variety of methods to attain feedback from your members, the benefits of undertaking a well designed survey include:

- **Cost-effectiveness** and **less intrusive** compared to conducting face-to-face interviews or focus groups.
- **Technology** has made it easier to **reach** a small or large audience, analyse and visualise results to share the findings with your board or club members. The ability to segment responses by gender, age, handicap or the length of time a respondent has been a member can provide a collective view and clarity if there are segments within the club that are more satisfied or dissatisfied than others.
- **Transparency** – Online surveys provide a platform for respondents to speak freely. The anonymity means respondents are less likely to feel any awkwardness in providing feedback and have confidence that they are not being judged as their information is confidential.

Ask the right questions

Listen to your members feedback

Make positive changes

Communicate with impact

Sport New Zealand has recently undertaken research to understand the key drivers of satisfaction of a member's club experience. The research identifies seven factors for clubs to recognise as important touchpoints in order to grow and retain membership or participation.

- Welcoming and friendly environment
- Social environment
- Good coaching
- Course conditions and club facilities
- Professional and demonstrate expertise
- Good communications
- Fulfilling potential

Maximising response rates

Communicate early

Let your members know that you are preparing to conduct a survey and their contribution is important to the future of your club.

Keep it simple and short

Provide an indication of how long the survey will take, time is precious and long surveys are an extra barrier for people to participate.

Reward

If you can, offer incentives to your members who are willing to complete the survey.

Making it interesting and avoid information overload – Whilst the objective of a survey is to gather insights for your club, the survey design needs to put the respondent at the centre as this is their opportunity to discuss matters that are important to them – avoid asking leading questions that lead to bias in responses.

Close the loop

Share the results. If this will be the first time your club undertakes a survey, let your membership know how you plan to use the results and the changes you will be implementing once the results are available. A transparent process will increase the member's likelihood to engage. Poor communication will result in less engagement in future surveys which diminishes the ability to observe change over time.

The success

The following example demonstrates insights from a survey that have helped inform a number of improvements.

NORTHLAND GOLF CLUB

- Whilst there was a positive response from members, they wanted more communications about the club's future direction and planning. To improve the accountability and transparency of the leadership, the Board has started to circulate a bi-monthly newsletter to share key decisions and progress of their strategic plan.
- Responses from members provided the Board an understanding of what members were proudest of within the club - the standard and presentation of the course. In response to where the club could make improvements, members were able to provide their own ideas to the Board, which ranged from exploring opportunities for amalgamation, making improvements to the practice facilities, establishing a sponsorship committee and growing youth memberships.
- The survey found that there were members who were skilled and were willing to volunteer their time, however did not know how or what opportunities were available to assist. Management have used this information to create a volunteer database to identify skills required by the club and uses volunteers to staff the pro-shop on Mondays.

The next steps

New Zealand Golf is working in partnership with Sport New Zealand to develop standardised surveys to help golf clubs to understand the club members experience, specifically:

- What are the member's current levels of satisfaction? What do they like and don't like?
- How likely is it that members are willing to recommend your club? Commonly referred to Net Promoter Score, an indicator of loyalty and willingness to generate referrals as golf club memberships are strongly driven from an existing member's personal network.

- How likely is it that a member will re-join the following year?
- Comparison with other clubs.
- Provide clear direction to management and the committee where your club is performing well and where it can make its improvements.

If you are considering conducting a club member experience survey, get in touch the Club Capability Manager in your region to find out more.

