



Gulf Harbour Country Club

CASE STUDY:

**Membership Retention
Creating a Customer-Centric Golf Club
Environment.**

OVERVIEW

While many clubs are looking at how to attract more new members, Gulf Harbour Country Club (GHCC) have opted for a different approach. The club has identified that in order to attract new members, a strong internal focus on providing a top quality experience and very high member satisfaction is key. To achieve this, the Club needed to understand the thoughts of their members and opened up a dialogue to discuss how they could provide a better experience.

Kim Bond, Secretary Manager at GHCC notes, "We know most people are introduced to golf by other golfers, so it makes sense to keep members as happy as possible. They are the ones most likely to bring new members to the club."

"If we get our product/offers right they will sell themselves, or potentially, our members will sell them through word of mouth" notes Bond.

CHALLENGES



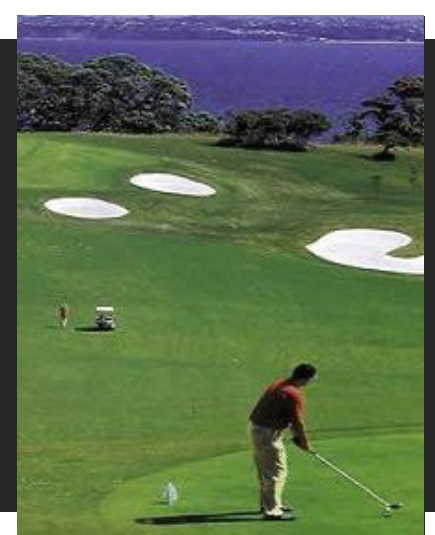
LOCATION

The club is located at the end of a peninsula which can seem like a long travel time for members based in the city or further afield.



MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Keeping members engaged so that they feel valued, giving them a voice.



TIME POOR MEMBERS

Busy members find it difficult to justify membership.

SOLUTION

Time poor members need to justify any time spent on the course, particularly if they have to travel some distance to get to the club. Both of these challenges can have a large effect on the engagement of members at the club. GHCC have focused on the membership experience and satisfaction levels to combat these issues.

Bond notes "Our location is both our best asset and potential liability – for this reason our focus is heavily on the experience at GHCC. This can be getting away from the hustle and bustle of the city, bonding with your mates or building relationships with clients/colleagues."

In order to better understand what the member experience is like, GHCC engaged in an independent survey conducted by New Zealand Golf. The survey was extremely in depth with over 70

questions covering all aspects of customer experience throughout the club. The survey was sent to all stakeholders in the club via email and collated independently.

"The responses from our members have helped to shape change within the club. It was a great way for us to understand what the members would like to see. We have already implemented some changes and we are planning more, it helps our members feel more valued" says Bond.

GHCC also promote the benefits/value of membership through exclusive membership offerings – Complimentary Member Clinics, Club Fittings and Member Only events held by the club are a few examples. The promotion of these benefits are exclusive to members, giving them a reason to be a member, as opposed to a casual golfer who plays a green fee round.

RESULTS



92% of members have put their own reputation on the line by encouraging other people to join GHCC.



94% of members believe the staff are friendly and helpful.



A list of members willing to volunteer their time to the club has been created.



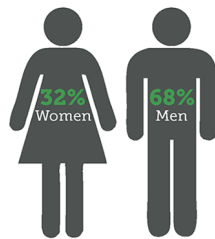
An increase from 3 Sports Members to 75.

KEY LEARNING LESSONS

Bond has noted that some of the member responses can directly contradict each other. Where data is split down the middle and there is no clear evidence as to which way to lean, she suggests you need take an educated guess and try things "There seems to be no rhyme nor reason as to why [the members] support some events and not others." Bond also suggests it's important "Not to give up if an initiative or promotion doesn't work first time. Being versatile and adapting works, a draconian attitude does not."

GULF HARBOUR COUNTRY CLUB STAKE HOLDER SURVEY 2015

WHO RESPONDED?



93% Members
2% Staff
2% Other
3% Committee

36% Age 65+
27% Age 45-54
20% Age 55-64
12% Age 35-44
3% Age 25-34
2% Age <25

30% Member 10+ yrs
29% Member 1-3 yrs
15% Member 5-10 yrs
13% Member <1 yr
12% Member 3-5 yrs
1% Non members

CONCLUSION / SUMMARY

GHCC have committed to generating a great member experience at their club. The initial phase of this has been to open the discussion with their members through an independent stakeholder survey and to promote the value of being a member at the club. There has been some very quick wins with member suggestions being implemented immediately. Longer term, the club will continue to implement some of the ideas suggested and continue to improve member satisfaction. Bond believes that the key to great customer experience is "Putting yourself in your member's shoes." and adds "They have choices. Golf is competing with many sports for people's time, money and commitment." She also notes "One thing is for sure – whether you are doing something extremely right or a little bit wrong, people will talk."

Contact Carl Fenton (Club Capability Manager) for more information on a survey like this for your club: carl@nzgolf.org.nz



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