



CASE STUDY REVIEW

Manawatu Golf Club

Innovative ways of creating a female friendly environment.

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Purpose:

The Manawatu Golf Club Initiative to get women in to golf has been a huge success. The purpose of revisiting this specific Case Study is two-fold.

- To show that the initiative is a sustainable programme
- To provide some inspiration/idea of what clubs can do to engage in the She Loves Golf campaign

What does my club have to consider?

The original Manawatu programme has seen real success by directly addressing challenges faced by women;

- How do we get them to come to our course?
- How do we make them feel comfortable and not on display?
- How do we remove the pressure to perform?

Understanding that most golfers are introduced to the game by other golfers, Manawatu used a Member get Member approach to attract women to the game. This approach gave the women a reason to go to the club and made sure they knew at least one other person.

By providing a group setting it made sure the women felt comfortable and removed the pressure to perform. Women stayed in their groups throughout the duration of the programme so that they grew familiar with the people and felt comfortable.

What about the results?



Originally the club had 66 participants, 36 of which were women.



This time around there are 78 total participants 50 of which are women.

What changes did the club make?

Head PGA Professional Andre White noted that they had made "loads of tweaks" to make the programme more effective. Most notably a change to the length. Previously it had been a 5 week programme with a little bit of follow up. After assessing the results the Club changed the programme to 4 weeks with much more emphasis on follow up. This allowed them to keep the people engaged in the game. White laments that "golf is just an innately hard game and to integrate someone in to a club you need ongoing support, that's why we've adjusted the set up."

One of the other changes the club has made is to get the group using the club rooms as early as possible. After the first session the group is invited in to the clubhouse where they are awarded café vouchers, membership cards and an explanation that they have full access to the training facilities during the programme. This is covered over a few nibbles and a note that there will be a small social gathering held at the end of every weekly session.

What has been the biggest proof that this is a sustainable success?

White notes that outside the increase in numbers and the fact that the programme is now three years old, "One of the guys went through the clinic, introduced his wife the next year, the following year after that, he was volunteering to help us clean up afterwards." To White, that shows the real value of the programme.

If you or your club are interested in learning more about this particular project contact:

The New Zealand Golf Community Golf Team, 09 485 3230 - michael@nzgolf.org.nz or
Geraldine Speed of Mangawhai Golf Club, 027 492 4583 - speed5nz@gmail.com

Or to get involved in the She Loves Golf campaign this summer contact:

New Zealand Golf Marketing Co-ordinator, Melanie Evans on 09 485 3230 - melanie@nzgolf.org.nz

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Manawatu Golf Club

CASE STUDY:

Female Environment

Innovative ways of creating a female friendly environment

Get Women into Golf

Right from the outset the Manawatu Golf Club decided that the Get Women into Golf program would have to be very deliberate in its process. The aim was to get more women into the game and to overcome the barriers of participating in golf. Manawatu GC designed simple coaching clinics for women to come to the club and learn the basics of the game.

Clinics were 1 hour – 1 hour and 30 minutes long and staged on two nights per week over a five week period. A total of 66 women enrolled in the Get Women into Golf program. The cost of the five week program was \$69 per person. The 66 women were divided into groups of 12 to learn in the coaching clinics.

Coaching sessions were focused on learning a little bit of everything in the game (sessions

on the putting green, chipping green and driving range and rotated through each of these areas with the three professionals at Manawatu leading each area).

After the five week coaching clinics were completed the women progressed to playing on the Manawatu Golf Club in a shortened format of the game. To begin with they played one hole and then five and then nine holes.

All participants were initially required to "tee it up" on all shots except putting as this gave them all a far great success rate and accelerated their learning. After their five holes the groups would meet in the clubhouse for coffee and catch up to talk about their rounds. Women were offered special rates for nine hole membership at the completion of the program.

CHALLENGES



CONNECTION

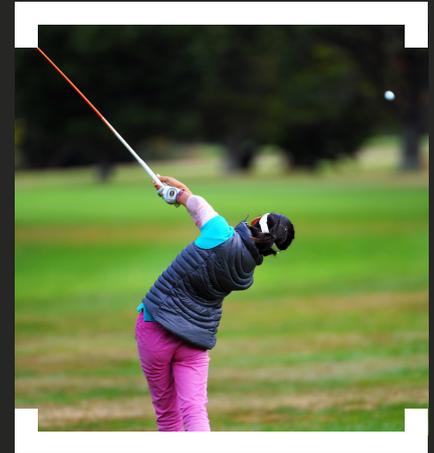
One of the biggest challenges identified was getting women to come to a golf course. (This was recognised as not an easy thing to do as women, who have no connection to the golf course, simply don't come there for any reason).



ENVIRONMENT

Another challenge was making the golf course a less intimidating environment for women. There was two parts to this:

1. Women didn't want to feel like they were on display – while guys like to be seen and show off to their mates, women were happier being part of the group. This was very important.
2. Women also didn't want to feel any pressure to perform – they didn't want to feel any accountability for their performance that they were letting someone down if they didn't play well.



EQUIPMENT

Lack of equipment was identified as a main barrier to women getting involved.

Women do not like turning up to an event feeling like they don't have the right equipment or feeling ill-prepared.

SOLUTION

The entire program was geared around the challenges outlined. The Member get Member approach, sisters, daughters, wives of existing club members were encouraged to participate in the Get Women into Golf program.

The program was designed for beginners and people new to the game. The golfers learned the basics in a fun and positive environment. Doing everything in a group was key as the women were never on show.

The women stayed in the same groups for the duration of the coaching program so they were with familiar people and this extended out onto the golf course for their first games. Keeping the women in the same groups also encouraged them to participate together which has continued into their memberships.

The sessions were light-hearted and fun with a flow on from the previous lesson. This made it easy to explain how after they had learnt one part the next follows on from there.

Each participant received a printed booklet of the sessions so that they did not feel that they had to retain everything all at once. There was no pressure on the women to perform at any stage.

All women were provided with equipment – they had four clubs (driver, six or seven iron, wedge and a putter) to keep things simple.

All parts of the golf game were covered to ensure the golfers felt prepared to play out on a golf course.

RESULTS

66

PARTICIPANTS

The results were very pleasing for the Manawatu Golf Club. Of the 66 involved in the program 24 signed up for nine hole memberships with the club and another 4 joined Taihape GC and 1 joined Feilding GC

All 66 women were asked to complete a feedback survey of their experience and all but one of the returned surveys marked the program 5 out of 5, an excellent initiative.

24

NEW MEMBERS

The only woman involved who didn't give an excellent review did not agree with the format and even though she gave the series a better than pass mark, she probably should not have entered.

5

WEEKS

The Manawatu GC believed that these results showed it has achieved the outcome of introducing more women to the game and also making the golf club environment far less intimidating.

1-1.5

HR SESSIONS

The Club was pleased with the profitability of the venture. The club was nominated for a Regional Sports Trust Award for an innovative way to encourage participation in their sport.

CONCLUSION / SUMMARY

The Get Women into Golf was hugely successful and achieved the outcome of introducing more women to the game. Head professional Andre White described it as the perfect way to introduce women to the game. The club achieved 24 new members and a group of 66 women were introduced to not only the game like they hadn't been before but they also saw that the club has a café and function facility open to the public.

The key to the program was getting women to the golf course and introducing them to the game. The most important aspect of the program was the environment had to be non-intimidating or threatening and fun.

The progression to playing on the golf course was only made once the women had got a grasp of the basics and felt comfortable taking it to the course.

The only change the Manawatu GC would make would be shortening the sessions from five to four. There was a huge feel-good factor achieved



from the improvements in the early sessions and this waned towards the end of the five sessions. Three to four sessions would be ideal as they have got a grasp of the basics and their enthusiasm is high as they get to the golf course.

The club will definitely be running the Get Women into Golf again and many of the women from the first series will look to return to relearn the basics of the game. The club will also use this template to expand into a Male series to get men into the game.

The positive feedback rated it an excellent initiative is pleasing because many will recommend the Get Women into Golf for the second and third program – therefore the source of the getting women to the course is not just coming from existing members.



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