

Planning Your Own Marketing Initiatives - The DIY Option

Like many professional activities, marketing is kept shrouded in mystery and it is in the best business interests of marketing professionals to keep it that way. Before retiring as an international consultant the success of my business enterprise demanded that I maintain the stance that my personal attendance and analysis of the target business was essential. Indeed, it was the nature of international education that this was often the case. However, a golf club is essentially a small local business and most of its marketing activity will be directed at potential customers within a radius of twenty miles of the club. Any club can handle this challenge with very little expenditure.

Given the mystery surrounding the profession and the low probability that your club will have a marketing professional in its ranks, can you run a successful DIY campaign? Certainly! Indeed, if you are not a wealthy club with money for luxuries, you are almost always going to be better served spending your money on your own initiatives than the services of a consultant. Be encouraged by the fact that very few clubs have any credible marketing plan. Most consider they have reached the limits of their marketing obligations if they put a few advertisements in local newspapers. If you succeed in implementing just a few modest initiatives you will be streets ahead of the competition.

How do you get started?

1. Appoint a club officer appointed to be Head of Marketing. The best candidate will always be someone who is personable, has a good sense of humour, is at ease in company and generally well known amongst club members. Clearly he/she will need energy and drive and the ability to see things through. Many clubs have not reached even this basic stage of appointing someone to head up the marketing function.
2. Get together a committee of c4 members who have shown similar qualities to the chairman and are prepared to put in a few hours to promote their club. Popularity among other club members is also an asset, particularly when a few extra hands are needed.
3. Encourage your chairman and his committee to read the information on this site. If your club can afford the £95 for the full document, so much the better. This will help to build enthusiasm. At least download the free abridged version as a start. Remember, most of your new committee members will not have any marketing experience and will have been appointed without any real idea of what is expected of them. After reading the document they will have mentally applied some of the potential initiatives to the situation in 'our club' and will be 'good to go'. If you feel informed by what you have read and feel that you can move your club forward out of the pack, consider a small investment in the subscriber package and join those clubs that have already made substantial improvements to their marketing performance.
4. Tell the members what you are hoping to do and, most importantly, why it needs doing. There is no need to go too deeply into specifics, but you do need to get them on side. Give the members a few statistics and alert them to the possible threat to their club.

Identify the personnel of the marketing committee and tell the members what they can do to help. As part of our package we provide a skeleton text that can be used as the basis of a members' briefing. Before you move on, etch this imperative into your every thought: "Our Golf Club is essentially a business and we exist to sell our product to customers – If our business fails, all other aims and aspirations fail with it"

5. Arrange a series of meetings of the marketing committee, inviting the Club Captain along. He will need to play a big part as the public face of the club. We provide a suggested agenda that is cross-referenced to our main document. That suggested agenda can be modified to suit the needs of the chairman and will need breaking down into sections if you want to avoid the 'all night' meeting.

6. Break down initiatives in Section 4 into manageable chunks for committee members. As a first step get them to tackle the basics. Some clubs set up e-mail addresses and web sites in the early days of the technology and many really need modernising. Set modest targets for the first initiatives. Tough targets that are not met will damage confidence; far better to set modest targets that can be delivered quite quickly.

7. Plan well ahead. Have ideas on the book that may not be achievable at present, but that you could develop for the future. You will find that if you have these ideas in a plan your committee will be developing them mentally as you progress and although they may change dramatically, some will become initiatives for the future.

8. Keep members advised of initiatives and progress. Boast about success! Marketing is about selling what you have to others. Avoid unreasonable expenditure on your Web Site where possible. A few years ago very few clubs had a web site. Today it is essential, but need not be at high cost. Most clubs have a lot of members with the skills to design and maintain a site. A good manager will certainly have the skills to keep the site up-to-date. This site is limited to the essentials needed to achieve the objective. The domain names cost about £12 annually, the site hosting is another £28 and the software used cost £100 a few years ago. The annual cost is now around £50. Moreover, I have total control of my content and can monitor site statistics and make changes accordingly. Don't pay large sums of money for 'pretty'. Stick to 'marketing effective' and make certain that your designers produce what you require, not what they believe will help extend their client base. Above all, be individual. Sites from templates by organisations like HowdidIdo.com just establish you as 'average' and do nothing to differentiate your product from your competitors. They are popular because they are simple, not because they are effective. Do read the information in section 4.