

COLLABORATE

www.proponent-group.com

Summit 2015: Timely Topics, Knowledgeable Speakers and Unparalleled Networking

What Proponent Group does best is summed up in the title for this year's Summit: **Connecting with the Future of Teaching and Coaching.** Members who have regularly attended our summits have been among the first to learn about the industry's move to a coaching model, AimPoint, Golf Channel Academy and the debut of various teaching technologies and innovative products before hardly anyone else was aware of them.

Our goal is to always keep you ahead of everyone else in the teaching business and we'll do it again this Fall at our eighth annual summit taking place **November 1-3 (Sunday - Tuesday) at Las Colinas C.C. in Irving, Texas.**

A few key themes thread their way through this year's agenda. One recurring item will be: How we can bring more golfers into the instruction fold. PGA Tour winner **David Ogrin**, who is now the Director of Instruction at Topgolf, will explain some of the secrets to the wildly successful Topgolf's ability to attract young adults to their facilities to sample the game.

Chris O'Connell, long-time coach to Matt Kucher and other touring professionals, will discuss *Why So Many Golfers are Scared to Take Lessons and What to Do About It.*

Meanwhile **Ed Oldham** and **Patrick Leahy** will lead our panel on *How to Engage More Golfers in Instruction.*

The next wave of training methods is

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PGA Tour winner David Ogrin is now Director of Instruction at Top Golf. He'll share some secrets of this wildly successful company that will welcome 2 million-plus guests this year.



Darren May (left) and Bill Davis will show how Every Ball Counts is changing the way students train.

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another area that receives lots of attention this year. **Darren May** and **Bill Davis** of Every Ball Counts will show how they are creating more efficient training habits by creating a new level of accountability for student practice.

Iain Highfield of Bishops Gate Golf Academy shows how he has taken a fresh approach to creating the ideal training environment for juniors.

Dr. Bob Neff, a sport psychologist who works with Cameron McCormick, Jeff Isler and the students of other top teachers in the Dallas area will present Overcoming the Three Biggest Mental Issues in Golf.

Finally, we'll be shining a spotlight on some critical core business issues that have a huge effect on our members' financial success. Learn the keys to creating a compensation package that is fair for both you and your facility during our Compensation

Consternation Panel Discussion led by **Don Parsons**, **Kenny Nairn** and **Brandon Stooksbury**.

Jackie Beck of Beck Communications recently conducted an exclusive Secret Shopper study of customer service issues at 50 of our members' teaching operations.



Dr. Robert Neff

She has identified the common customer service mistakes which can drive students elsewhere and she will share her thoughts on best solutions. We've also got **Jeff Penson**, Marketing Operations Manager for Golf Channel Academy, showing how a few simple changes in how you manage and use your customer databases will grow your business.

Finally, the biggest new addition to this year's summit will be "Building a Top-Tier Teaching Career." This special session exclusively for our Associate Members from 2-5pm on November 1st takes place before the full summit kicks off. It will feature a number of career building topics that will be extremely valuable to all of our younger members. Among the featured speakers will be Brandon Stooksbury and the authors of the hottest blog in golf instruction: The Curious Coaches themselves **Corey Lundberg** and **Matt Wilson**. Proponent Group President **Lorin Anderson** will also participate in the discussions.

The full agenda and more summit details can be found on pages 3-4 of this newsletter and summit registration is now open on the members website. You'll find Summit Registration at the top of the left hand menu. Save \$50 with our "early bird" special until the end of August.



Chris O'Connell

New Social Media Guides Added to Members-Only Website

Jeff Penson, who oversees all Marketing Communications for our sister company Golf Channel Academy, has created three very easy to use guides to marketing your services on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. These guides focus on the mechanics of how each of the three services functions and each guide covers specific ways to leverage each platform from simple to more advanced options along with links to additional resources.

You may pick and choose the items in each that will work best for your situation and comfort level. All three guides can be found in the Business Guides section of the members-only website.



International Clubmakers Guild is Newest Proponent Group Partner

Proponent is pleased to introduce The International Clubmakers Guild (ICG) as our newest partner. For our members who are clubfitters or clubmakers the ICG is the preeminent network of experts in these specialties.

The group provides its members with monthly webinars

from top professionals in the industry including manufacturer experts, golf media equipment experts and the top custom fitters. As an incentive to join all Proponent Group members will receive their second year of membership for free when joining. For more information about the ICG and their offerings check out page 17 of this newsletter. You may also take a look at their programs on their website at: www.clubfittersguild.org.



Summit 2015

Connecting with the Future of Teaching & Coaching

November 1-3, 2015 (Sunday - Tuesday)
Las Colinas C.C., Irving, Texas

Registration Now Open. Early Bird Discount Through August 31st.

Join us for our eighth year showcasing what's coming next in golf instruction and highlighting fresh opportunities to grow your teaching business.

Join Us in Dallas to:

- Learn how "Every Ball Counts" is changing the way golfers practice
- Discover the keys to building a fair compensation package for you and your facility
- Learn new ways to create the ideal training environment for junior golfers' improvement
- Avoid costly customer service mistakes that drive students elsewhere
- Learn how to overcome the three biggest mental issues in golf
- Learn five new industry trends you can leverage
- Check out the latest teaching technologies
- Make new friends and expand your network of peers from across North America

PLUS – New for 2015 – "Building a Top-Tier Teaching Career" A special pre-summit session on Sunday afternoon exclusively for our Associate Members.



Summit 2015 Agenda

Sunday, November 1

- 11:00am Registration Opens
- 1:00pm Optional Golf at Las Colinas C.C.
- 2:00-5:00pm For Associate Members Only:
Building a Top-tier Teaching Career
- 6:30pm Opening Night Dinner at Las Colinas C.C.

Monday, November 2

- 7:00am Breakfast Buffet
- 8:00 The State of Instruction: 5 Trends to Watch (Lorin Anderson)
- 8:30-10:00 Compensation Consternation: Why it's So Hard to Get Instructors and Facilities to Agree on Pay (Panel Discussion)
- 10:00 Break
- 10:30-11:15 What a Junior Golfer Needs to Evolve as a Player and Person (Iain Highfield)
- 11:15-Noon Turbo-Charge Your Business Through Improved Customer Relationship Management (Jeff Penson)
- Noon Lunch Buffet

- 1:00-3:00pm Every Ball Counts: Merging Elite Coaching with Golf Intelligence (Darren May and Bill Davis)
- 3:00-5:30 Teaching Tech and Training Aids Demo Day
- 5:45pm Cocktails and Dinner at Las Colinas C.C.

Tuesday, November 3

- 7:00am Breakfast Buffet
- 8:15-9:15 Overcoming the Three Biggest Mental Issues in Golf (Dr. Bob Neff)
- 9:15-10:15 Secret Shopper: Customer-Service Mistakes by Coaches and How to Fix Them (Jackie Beck)
- 10:15 Break
- 10:45-11:45 Panel Discussion: How to Engage More Golfers in Instruction
- Noon Lunch Buffet
- 1pm Lessons We Can Learn from Topgolf's Success (David Ogrin)
- 2pm Why So Many Golfers are Scared to Take Lessons and What to Do About It (Chris O'Connell)
- 3pm Summit Ends

Summit 2015 Details

Host Site: Las Colinas C.C. in Irving, TX is located approximately 15 minutes from Dallas-Fort Worth Airport.

PGA/LPGA Education Credits: Agenda will be submitted to the PGA and LPGA for continuing education for association members. Approximately 13 hours of education will be included in the summit.

Lodging: Proponent has negotiated a summit rate at Aloft - Irving (972-717-6100) for \$149 per night. Aloft will provide shuttle service to and from the Summit. This hotel is within one mile of Las Colinas C.C. Many other hotel chains including Homewood Suites, Omni Mandalay, Hotel

Las Colinas and Dallas Marriott Las Colinas also are located within a few miles of Las Colinas C.C. Contact your preferred hotel directly to book a room.

Meals: Six meals from Sunday dinner through Tuesday lunch are included in the summit fee.

Cost: Our Early Bird Special is only \$445 for our full and International members. Associate members are welcome to attend for \$495. **Summit rates increase \$50 on September 1st.** NOTE: Optional golf Sunday afternoon at Four Seasons Las Colinas TPC Course is an additional \$50 (tee times are limited and will be filled first-come, first-served).

As Instruction Market Evolves, Do Money Back Guarantees Have a Place?

Whatever you're selling, there's value in giving potential new customers a no-risk means of sampling your product. The trick is to do it in a viable, dignified way.

By David Gould, Staff Editor

Marketing has its complexities but it's mostly driven by two goals—"getting trial" and building loyalty. One follows the other. You can't make a customer a regular if you don't recruit them in the first place.

As golf instruction evolves and develops, there's a push to get many more people to try the product. Filling up lesson books has always been important, but what's happening these days has more of a grow-the-pie drumbeat to it. Traditionally, eight out of 10 golfers don't give instruction a chance. A slim minority seems inclined toward it, so teaching professionals end up jostling for that fraction of the golfer population. Things would bump along in this manner indefinitely if new energy and ideas weren't given a try.

Which is why, in this newsletter, we've written about Brown Golf Management and its free-lessons-for-members business model. Likewise with the effort by some Proponent Group members to create a "No Member Left Un-Coached" scenario at clubs. Colorado-based Ed Oldham, among others, is working to get every golfer in his facility involved at some level with formal instruction and goal-driven skill development.

Golfers could stand to be educated about the game-improvement value proposition. They don't realize how much better equipped the modern academy is, and how greatly they could benefit by becoming a client. In that context, it makes sense that the subject of cash-back guarantees is getting attention. This article and Lorin Anderson's column on page 12 are a two-pronged approach to the tricky topic. This spring, on Proponent Group's Facebook forum, the question of money-back guarantees was knocked around. In that forum string and in other conversations, members have hit on a series of valid and interesting points:

- Full satisfaction or your money back, as a marketing tool,



is much harder to apply to a service or product that requires the consumer to work hard at skill-acquisition. It's not like rubbing auto wax on a fender or chopping vegetables with your new knife.

- Advertising a money-back guarantee is tough to do without sounding like a 2 a.m. TV commercial. The tactic has been used by so many hucksters that a legitimate business feels undignified deploying it.
- "Full satisfaction" is an elusive concept. Perhaps golfers and their teachers need a detailed set of metrics to define it?

Glen Coombe, a Proponent Group member from Ocala, Fla., is one teaching pro who has built his practice around the money-back guarantee. But take note—Coombe makes a living teaching putting. It's true that his program and product (literally "The Money-Back Guarantee Putting Experience") requires practice, but not long hours of it. And you can accomplish this practice indoors on a carpet. That's a far cry from the ball-banging that a student must do in order to make a swing change, regardless who their coach is.

Coombe first offered his Money-Back Guarantee Putting Experience some 25 years ago. "The premise was that focused practice can and will make the difference," he explains. "This was of course long before we knew the benefits of blocked and random practice." As Coombe points out, the "lesson plan" that came with his booklet "was in fact a practice routine." In order to get the student to engage in the program, Coombe believed, a hook was necessary. "That hook was the money-back guarantee," he says.

Think about it: The point of the money-back tool was to make the customer take ownership of the program. Why? Because if they ever went to demand a refund, they would first have to check with their conscience and confirm that they had held up their end of the bargain. A sense of fairness and responsibility would be triggered, and that's a powerful force.

BUSINESS PRACTICES

Coombe designed a report card of sorts and placed it in the back of his booklet. Golfers would use it to log their practice dates and times, and confirm which exercises they had done. Three exercises, twice a week for four weeks—that's the level of effort he found to be effective. "I've only had two of what I'll call suspicious requests for money back in 20 plus years of selling this lesson plan," he reports. "Few people will actually ask for money back in any situation," he believes.

Expanding on what his experience has taught him, Coombe identifies a link between some type of guarantee for the golfer about lesson fees paid and some type of guarantee for the instructor about player commitment. "I think for many this opens the door to supervised practice," he says, adding that "many of our members are taking on a new coaching mentality and business model" that enforces the practice discipline and calls for some type of reassurance on the part of the pro. "If you can build a program around practice—as well as sound teaching and coaching—then you should be able to stand behind the product with a guarantee," Glen surmises.

At the 2013 Proponent Group Summit, a California-based member, Will Robins, gave an in-depth presentation of his signature program, which guarantees 10 strokes of improvement over the player's baseline average. "We guarantee we will get them to their goal or we will teach them for free," explained Robins. "Dramatic improvement and lasting change comes when a player fully understands and accepts the concept he is learning," added Robins. "It becomes an internal experience. It is self-learning." Again, the guarantee to the student—either cash refunds or free instruction as a make-good—dovetails with a guarantee to the coach, that the golfer will practice.

In the Robins approach, all first lessons are playing lessons, involving a "stroke harvest" analysis. The student is shown the shortest route from his score of, say, 96, down to 86. "You are teaching them how to be coached toward a result," he says. "You are charging them for results, not for your time. They have lots of repeated contact with you and you'll find that they want

to play well for their coach."

The mechanics and the arithmetic go like this: Golfers form into "teams" (they provide important support to each other) of six, participating in 10 sessions over 12 weeks. Five of those sessions take place on-course, five happen on the short-game practice area or the driving range. The cost is \$695 per person, broken into \$470 for the "tuition" (at \$23.50 per hour) plus \$145 in green fees and \$80 in range ball value. The sales deck Robins uses for his presentations is loaded with dollar figures and percentages showing small to medium-sized bursts of revenue throughout the golf facility's income statement, all from the group coaching and guaranteed-results marketing premise.

Proponent member Scott Hogan gave feedback in the forum about his own approach to the guarantee of satisfaction. Hogan, who teaches at Deer Path Golf Course outside Chicago, makes a deal with the new student that if they don't drop a certain number of strokes from their average score in a preset time, he will coach them for no-charge. "It's up to me to be able to show people what they can realistically do," Hogan says, "but also they get practice cards and homework and need to be bringing me back the cards filled out with their homework. If we are getting close to the end of the time and it's not close, we are on the course for the remaining time." So far he has not conducted any free coaching sessions, not even with the gentleman "who didn't get his goal but he liked the value of what he got," according to Scott.

Paul Ramee, director of golf at the Bulls Bridge Golf Club in rural Connecticut, says he and his assistants recently kicked around the idea of a money-back guarantee.

"We ended up deciding against it," says Ramee. "We felt like

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The Tricky Psychology of Customer Satisfaction

We as consumers make a lot of skeptical comments about whether products are worth the price and whether they will live up to advertising claims. We're nobody's fool and we know quality when we see it, is what that chatter means to say. But we're actually saying it about products and services in general.

The things we ourselves plunk down money for end up in their own special category. "Post-decision product evaluation" is the scientific phrase for this syndrome.

"After we buy something that's not right, we convince ourselves it is right," explains psychologist Jeremy Dean. "Marketers know this, so they use things like money-back guarantees" as a foot-in-the-door technique. "Once you've made a decision," says Dr. Dean, "you convince yourself it

was the right one and start to value [the item] more because you own it."

When a cash-back guarantee works, it's almost always about getting trial. If you patronize a dry cleaner or an upscale restaurant over many years, you're way past the trial stage. That vendor has earned your trust and put you at ease. Therefore when a good silk tie gets wrecked or your dinner takes an hour to get to the table, you will likely get a cash rebate or establishment credit to offset your dissatisfaction. But even when that happens, you probably won't equate it with the unknown marketer who "guarantees 100 percent satisfaction or your money back!" Instead you'll tell a friend that XYZ establishment didn't want to lose a good customer, so they took care of you. – D.G.



Now You Have **FOUR** Ways to Find Answers to All of Your Business and Career Questions

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Tap into the combined knowledge of nearly 100 of our members who have offered to assist fellow members by sharing their expertise in dozens of relevant topics. Just find your topic of interest and contact those listed for advice to tap into our membership's shared wisdom.

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Ask our Private Facebook or Edufii group of more than 400 Proponent members your questions and you'll get answers from your peers across North America.

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For our full members, call our office anytime you need help with a career or business-related issue. We talk with half-a-dozen members or more each day and provide recommendations and advice in dozens of areas that can affect your bottom line.

Log on to www.proponent-group.com or call 407-878-1235.

Master Storyteller = Master Marketer

By Ian James, CEO, RetailTribe

Jeff Clause is one of the sharpest PGA professionals I've ever come across. He's an American plying his trade in South Africa at a beautiful coastline golf course. He has just won the PGA Professional of the Year award (again) and the top-of-the-line Mercedes that goes with it.

Country club CEOs and golf club captains do their best to tempt him away, while encouraging their own directors of golf to be more like him. Uncomfortable with Clause's success and innovation, they dismiss him as "a good self-promoter," failing to spot the basic marketing tactic Jeff lives by.

Jeff Clause is a story-teller, every day of the week. Ask him about Facebook and whether you should have a business page or a personal page, or how to pin posts, or whether there's value in Facebook advertising, and he'll throw his hands up and say "I don't understand Facebook."

But no Professional I know uses Facebook as brilliantly as Jeff.

Ask him about the RetailTribe marketing service and he'll give all the credit to his RetailTribe campaign manager, but that's not accurate. No one uses email and local content like Clause to inspire his community. His content is packed full of stories.

Clause isn't big on coaching videos, but he's huge on photographs of individuals or groups enjoying the experience such as the picture at right showing a group at the club learning, accompanied by his words of praise for an achievement someone has made.

As he sees it, every day brings new stories of golfers enjoying the game, enjoying their friends, and enjoying the whole social experience from the moment they enter his property. And in Clause's words, "they take their stories with them and



Jeff Clause at St. Francis Links wins Ian's award for best marketer

spread them for me." I have to differ with him once again—Clause doesn't leave the spreading of these great stories to chance and the wind. He collects and records the stories. He takes photographs of people enjoying themselves at every turn. He takes photographs of their scorecards. He takes photographs of them on No. 1 tee, out on the course, on No. 18 green, on the lesson tee, at the practice green, in the bar, enjoying a meal.

A scorecard is a wonderfully sensual image (as shown on the following page). It's more than little squares filled with numbers. It has its own hints of the tragedies and elations of a day on the golf course. As golfers know, behind every number is a story.

For Jeff, every engagement with a golfer is an opportunity to hear a new story, make a new story or share a new story. And Facebook, Twitter, Email and the Web all



Pictures typically convey the story in more detail and bring readers closer to the action than words alone.

RETAILTRIBE ON MARKETING

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SPHORE	5	3	7	17	15	11	15	9	1	102		
STHORE	105	110	150	85	75	102	95	120	95	102		
A	4	2	4	3	6	3	3	4	3	30		
RESULT												
B												
RESULT												
A+B-RESULT												
C	1	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	27		
RESULT												
D												
RESULT												
C+D-RESULT												
ASSURANCE												

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12	3	4	3	3	4	4	5	2	4		32	59	



Examples of story telling: A scorecard contains 18 individual stories while Tony's Get Golf Ready picture clearly conveys: Come join the fun!

offer endless opportunities, which Jeff exploits to tell stories or encourage others to tell their stories. He has established a valuable brand—in fact he's gone beyond conventional branding to create what's known as a "lovemark" in modern-day marketing. Without doubt, he

is the master of fun at the theatre of golf, i.e., his own club. His golfers and the club management love what he does.

What can we, as coaches and instructors, learn from Jeff?

Proponent Successes

World-class marketing in less time is worth over \$12,000 just in time

"I consider myself a top quality golf coach and that's what I need to spend my time doing" says Paul Kaster, the recently appointed Director of Instruction at Forsgate Country Club, NJ. "The less time I'm in the office, the better it is for my club and my golfers. Over this summer season RetailTribe will not only help me to continue to grow my business, they'll save me the time to create an additional \$12,960 of revenue".

There are many email or web Marketing solutions on the market. They all provide some sort of template choice. The Professional still has to do the hard work of adding the content and keeping it updated. When we started RetailTribe 8 years ago, our mission wasn't to design templates for email or web sites, it was to create the 'content', the 'online conversations', and the 'marketing campaigns' to inspire golfers to want to improve and to talk to their 'expert' PGA Professional.



Paul Kaster

We also recognized that, for an 'expert', their time is money. We therefore built a service that allows the PGA Professional to spend more of their time with customers (and their family at the end of the day) rather than sitting at their computer screen.

Paul also endorses the quality of content produced: "The look and feel of the RetailTribe content is high-class. It is clean and professional. Everything they produce attempts to stimulate the golfer to talk to me about improving their game. That's exactly what a golf coach needs."



"And just as importantly RetailTribe has improved my marketing while saving me 9 hours of time per week. That is gold for a golf coach in the summer. If you're looking to grow your business this summer, don't wait. Contact RetailTribe". – Paul Kaster, Director of Instruction, Forsgate Country Club.

"Selling the Result Really Works"

"Rick (a RetailTribe Campaign Manager) told me to run a 30-yard pitch shot challenge for three hours. I sold more wedges in three hours than I'd sold in the previous three months. And guess what? I also sold coaching programs.

Then he encouraged me to run a "Speed Challenge" for three hours. I sold over \$5,000 of merchandise in those three hours, with more in the week after. Selling the result really works." – Bill Abrams, PGA Professional, Balmoral Woods

Bill is another PGA professional who has embraced "Better Golf as a Merchandising Strategy."

You'll be surprised at how easy we can make effective marketing for you. Just give us 20 minutes and we'll show you how we can make an impact for you.

Contact Ian James at IanJames@retailtribe.com or 972-743-0038 or visit us at www.retailtribe.com.

RETAILTRIBE ON MARKETING

Storytelling, storytelling, storytelling

Put creating great stories and then telling and re-telling those stories first, second and third in your priority list. Only then worry about the design of your marketing communication and which marketing medium to use.

Your camera is key

Take lots of photos. Don't let a lesson or clinic pass without taking photos. Write simple captions that focus on people and fun (as well as achievement).

Post at least once a day

Don't let a day pass without telling at least one happy story in the online world.

Appeal to the senses

Don't be afraid of emotion in your captions to accompany photographs. "Three months of hard work has paid off. Robert has dropped his handicap to 12 after correcting his over the top start to his downswing" is boring, monotone, uninspiring. It's actually off-putting to most of us.

"Great golf swing, Robert. Robert now has the ball really fizzing off his irons. It's a joy to watch him strike iron shots." That message is full of praise. It's personal. And never mind emotional, it's sensual. And nothing appeals to consumers more than the promise of a sensory experience.

For example, who wouldn't want to join Tony's Get Golf Ready program, (shown on the previous page)?

If you didn't make an instruction video for a year, but did post a photo of a golfer(s) enjoying the experience and



"The Little Linksters are showing GREAT form with their chipping!"

- Dee Forsberg



"Playing golf for many years, never broke 100. Dropped handicap index from 27.4 to 22.1 with the help of a Customized Monthly Coaching Program."

- Gman-GOLF



"A game of dodge ball - just for fun!"

- Rob Noel Golf Academy



"Our goal is to achieve your goals! Come out for a free evaluation with our PGA Instructors Gavin Witzer and Blake Jirges!"

- Henry Brunton Golf at Strawberry Farms



"Congratulations to our student Julia Johnson for qualifying for the Junior PGA Championship! We are so proud of you!!!"

- Rob Noel Golf Academy



"Congratulations to #PKGC clients Amanda Phillips, Clement Shao, Austin Liao, Adrian Jordan and Franklin Zhu on their great finishes today at U.S. Kids Golf events in PA and NJ. Amanda (pictured) who is a member of the Forsgate Country Club PGA Jr. League Team won her age division with a 37 for nine holes. Clement also won his age division, and Adrian came in second with a strong score of 40 for nine holes. Franklin won his age Division at the Penn State Invitational with a score of 69! So happy to be part of these talented young players' games and that their hard work is paying off."

- Paul Kaster Golf Coaching

Proponent Group members engaging their audiences by telling stories.

benefits of instruction in your social networks, in your web site, and in your email marketing every day, then your business would grow, and you'd develop a brand consumers can identify with.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: INTERNATIONAL CLUBMAKERS GUILD

You're already a member of Golf's preeminent teacher's group, now join Golf's best clubfitting/clubmaking group - The International Clubmakers Guild.

What's in it for you?

Learn more about club fitting and making. We offer monthly webinars from top professionals in the industry including Kim Braley (KBS), Gawain Robertson (Accra Golf), Chris Marino (MRC Golf), JC Beeson (Veylix), Mike Stachura (Golf Digest), Bob Bettinardi, David Nel (Flightscope), Bill Lange (True Temper), Mark Timms (Cool Clubs) and many others. All webinars are recorded and close captioned. We have active member forums where you can ask and have answered any possible questions about Launch Monitor data, and other fitting and club making issues.

Network with some of the finest clubfitters/clubmakers in the business (we have 12 of Golf Digest's Best 100). Our top fitters and club makers can add value to your top students' games by providing them with the best fitted and built clubs. No more headaches dealing with the custom departments of top OEMs when the clubs you fitted and ordered arrive incorrectly built and your students complaining that they just don't feel right. Already cutting back on hard goods sold in your shops? Many of our top fitters/builders have proponent accounts with Callaway, TaylorMade, Exotics, Adams, Miura, etc, and can fit and build your students clubs from scratch. You can earn referral fees from your students (typically a percentage of the total sale), be confident that your student's club needs will be taken care of, and gain teaching referrals back from our fitters/builders.

Some Proponent Group members (Jess Hansen, Cathy McPherson) are already in the ICG. To recognize the full service golf professional, we've created a Clubfitter of the Year Award. Our first winners will be determined this Fall, and presented at the 2016 PGA Show. All ICG certified clubfitters can submit their COY applications online at our web site, www.clubfittersguild.org

ICG COY awards promote professional development via certification, the Guild, and most importantly your business. The ROI on your time and cost is very high, potentially returning tens of thousands of dollars of value in business and publicity.

As an incentive to join, we're offering two years of membership for the price of one. When you join, please indicate that you're a Proponent Group Member, and our admins will add a second year.



International
Clubmakers Guild

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

Satisfaction Guarantees: Why They Make Sense



A member recently reminded me that selling high-quality golf instruction is a complex process. Choosing the best instructor and program for their needs is often not self evident when they are exploring options. This can create some anxiety and confusion. In the case of any complex sale, this lack of clarity raises the barrier to making the sale.

As you read our feature on Money Back Guarantee's earlier in this newsletter, you learned about many of the pros and cons to offering Money Back Guarantee's and/or Free Trials.

My view is that you are already guaranteeing your services because you understand that one ticked off student is going to tell all of his golf buddies to avoid you. And most of our members are smart enough to minimize this sort of damage by attempting to make things right with a disgruntled student. I know many of our members will spend extra time with that student at no charge or will credit their account to make things right. Fortunately, because our members are generally very good instructors these situations are very limited.

Which is why you should consider offering a 100% Satisfaction Guarantee. Instead of simply offering a golfer's money back or giving them a chance to try before they buy, you create an offer that benefits both the customer and your business and removes the psychological barrier for the initial sale.

A 100% satisfaction guarantee is a brand promise that casts a positive light on your operation, and it's a structure that gives you the chance to save the student relationship. From a customer's perspective, you're not only reducing risk, but you're reducing it almost completely. You're guaranteeing a result, which as we talked about earlier, is the most important

aspect of the conversion. You're negating the opportunity for regret.

It's a win-win.

Hampton Inn, where I stayed a couple of weeks ago, offers a similar guarantee. If you aren't satisfied, you don't have to pay. Being that they trust in their overnight experience, they can offer this guarantee, knowing that 99 percent of their guests won't use it and when someone does, they get the feedback they need to improve.

Guarantees also act as a differentiator for you from the rest of your local competition since most teachers don't officially announce that they have a satisfaction guarantee. This creates an opportunity to increase your credibility with every potential new student, in turn increasing the number of golfers trying your services. So if you gain 5-10 percent more new students because of the guarantee and only have make goods or refunds for 1-2 percent (which is typical for most business environments), the guarantee grows your business.

While we haven't made a big deal out of our policy, Proponent Group has always given a member their money back if for any reason they haven't felt they received value from our services. In eight years we've given three members their money back and in two of those cases it was because they were overseas and they had poor internet connections that made accessing our members website very difficult.

Come to think of it, it's time to formalize our Proponent Group Satisfaction Guarantee, too. I'll be adding our official guarantee to our website this month. That's the way I like it anyway because if you're not happy, then we're not happy. And that makes Proponent Group more valuable to you.



Proponent Group Partners



MEMBER BENEFIT

More Than 125 Articles Now Searchable on our New Expanded Newsletter Archive

Proponent Group is always looking for ways to make it easier for you to access all of the unique information that we've created over the past eight years to help you grow your teaching skills and grow your business.

Each month we produce a members only newsletter called COLLABORATE which is well researched and provides a unique inside look at the golf instruction industry. Over the years we've covered dozens upon dozens of critical topics that can affect the success of your business. Until now, finding individual articles from back issues was difficult. That's because our back issues were archived in their entirety without a master table of contents.

Now we have created PDFs of each significant article – 128 and counting – and they are located by subject category in the **Newsletter Archive** section of the members-only website.

A prime example would be the "What I've Learned" interviews. There are more than 30 of these insight-filled Q&A articles with leading teachers, catalogued alphabetically and available for instant download. These interviews alone are a treasure trove of insights from the best in the business. For our younger Associate Members they are must-reads.

Articles have also been sub-divided into categories including Business Development, Career Development, The Job Search, The Library, Social Media, Teaching Buildings, our State of the Industry columns, Marketing and a separate full complement of the very popular Retail Tribe marketing columns.

"We're committed to making it as easy as possible to access the specific information you are looking for whenever you need it," said Lorin Anderson, Proponent president. "As we continue to generate our industry-leading content for our members, we'll continue to add streamlined ways to access this information."

To download any of the articles, simply click on the hotlinked title and the article will immediately appear on your desktop or mobile device.

SUMMIT FOLLOW-UP: TIME MANAGEMENT

Time-Management Skills Start with a Knack for Saying "No"

TEACHING BUILDINGS

Inside the Coaches' Studios Academy Building Sampler: Three Distinct Looks

By David Gould, Staff Editor

When golf came to America and curious businessmen took up the game, their expert guides were Scottish immigrants who built clubs and taught lessons. Being humble teachers, these pros couldn't venture inside the clubhouse. They were confined to outbuildings found alongside simple practice grounds. Thanks to Walter Hagen's prodding and a change in social attitudes, clubhouses would eventually include a golf shop plus office and work space for the pro.

And now a century later you could say we have come full circle. The clubhouse golf shop does still handle golf retailing and administration. However, golf expertise covering the swing and the equipment is again headquartered in separate, dedicated buildings. Slowly at first, but now at a fast clip, clubs from coast to coast are planning, designing and building impressive structures with hitting bays, coaching technology, clubfitting gear, fitness space and a few creature comforts to enhance the learning experience.

As we go through 2015, Proponent Group will be taking a few pages in the monthly newsletter to spotlight teaching buildings from the member website's extensive photo archive. Next month we'll also include a bonus article from Tim Cushman. Many of you recognize Tim as a bona fide expert on teaching buildings and in particular on their infrastructure technology.

Space won't permit us to show every angle of the three buildings we've selected. For that you can go to the Proponent member-only website and click on Member Benefits, then Business Guides, scrolling down to where you'll find the Learning Center Photo Gallery. Meanwhile, here's a sampling to spur your thoughts on new, improved, or slightly tweaked facilities you might establish for yourself.

It's a core belief of Proponent Group that, within a given market, smart facility owners and top-rank coaches should



Eagle Springs in Waldorf, MD is home to this top teaching facility. The building cost about \$250,000 and allows members to make quick learning "hot stops" as needed.



published the world's two largest golf magazines. They spent significant sums of money to make sure managers and sales teams received world-class training. They were looked in a fiery competition for advertising dollars and a \$1 million or more in revenues. So, their annual training budgets ran well into six figures, and generally the return on investment was huge.

Instructors tend to over-focus on the sticker price of the training and not recognize the payback it provides. If a certification costs you \$2,000 but it provides the tools for one or enhanced programs that earn you an additional \$5,000 to \$10,000 annually, that's a great ROI. It makes the price of certification a steal!

Don't ever forget that you work in an intellectual property business. Enrolling in certification programs lets you quickly obtain significant intellectual property. You can then turn around and sell this knowledge to stu-

Our Proponent Group Partners:



Overall trends in the graphics world strongly influence logo design: Compare a 20-year-old Time Magazine with this week's issue and you'll see striking differences. Typefaces, color palettes and other design ele-

What I've Learned: Mike Malaska

Superstition Mountain G.&C.C.

Interview by Paul Ramos, Jr.

This issue we turn the spotlight on Proponent member Mike Malaska. Mike is known throughout his profession as upbeat, analytical, quiety intense—com-

position of high schools trying to save electricity and not being able to do it until they installed light switches with built-in timers. Likewise, to save water, big institutions had to install more faucets that automatically shut off after a few seconds.

Baronemore's comments kept coming back to the structure of the lesson time slot. "An hour lesson can't mean the full hour," one of them pointed out. "The students have to be trained that by a quarter to the hour the session is ended." For that to be

enforced, some teachers would have to emulate the high school timer that signals the formal end of the lesson. In general it was noted that "the busier you get the more structure you need." To enforce that structure you have to practice saying "No" without actually using the word "No."

For many Proponent members, time management is critical to fatigue prevention and the quality-of-life watchdog that says we must balance work and play. It's been observed that golf instructors tend to schedule personal peak time then renege on that promise to themselves. Secondary offerings from the breakout sessions involved tactics for sticking to the original intent.

The concept of the "sticker man" inserted into the teaching book drew lots of enthusiasm. For some members it meant "sticker man" was

Are They Worth It?

The Internet is making it incredibly easy for your students to tap into teaching from thousands of instructors. At this level, golf instruction becomes a commodity. At your level, with help from certification programs, it remains a high-value service that's scarce in the marketplace.

The best teachers are always learning. It's what sets them apart. But your certification decisions require strategy. There are two basic routes you could take: Shallow and Wide or Deep and Narrow. Shallow and Wide is the Godiva sampler pack. You attend a variety of certification programs and develop a solid understanding of a variety of swing methods and training ideas. The tradeoff is that you aren't necessarily an expert in any specialty. Deep and Narrow is when you work to become world-class in a specific area, such as putting. You would then likely go through certification with Aim-Point, SAMI Putt Lab, Frank Thomas and others to try and dominate that niche. As a marketer, I like Deep and Narrow because it fits you above the competition in a recognizable way. That's a powerful selling advantage.

Having said that, I do notice that some of you combine the two strategies. That may be the best decision, if it's practical for you to do it. One Proponent member specializes in long-term player development coaching but keeps herself well-versed in the most respected swing methodologies. She plans her annual education budget to include one swing-related certification such as the Golfing Machine or Stack and Tilt and one coaching-related program such as CoachIt or TPI Coaching Track. Her goal is to be able to competently explain any method her students may have seen elsewhere while creating credibility to be known as a cutting-edge coach.

INSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TRENDS

Date Night Meets Player Development: TopGolf – Does It Augur Well for Coaches?

Instruction I got in college, it turns out that the camera angles were off and we were being things that were not taken. I began to learn that you need to understand who you are and how you want your class and cannot do it and how important it is to understand what you cannot do. It's pretty simple. If you can't do something and you continue to try, you are going to get hurt.

Over the following years, I played according to five different methods—looking for the one that would give me the most fun. In my mind I just could not recall or reconcile what was going on. I need to do so, I tried with Peter Epstein and being short when I got here. It became apparent that physically I could not do what I needed to do so, I tried with Peter Epstein and looked at these specific to this game. He asked me if I wanted to change myself physically. It was while working with Peter that I started to learn how the body works, how it reacts and absorbs force.

That approach was foreign at the time—the idea of the golfer as an athlete and what his body's capabilities were? I began to learn that you need to understand who you are and how you want your class and cannot do it and how important it is to understand what you cannot do. It's pretty simple. If you can't do something and you continue to try, you are going to get hurt. I continued to play, I believed I was critical to my teaching.

He did the work with Eugene using my methods in his teaching. Basically I learned to not get trapped in technique and to identify what others perceived that I was not working with. It was important to me to understand how they move, how they walk, how they move and transition. These skills are developed from the time you started walking. I came to understand that if you do not understand how someone moves, it is going to be a lot

its tell me that their ing baseball any- "Baseball is bad for n incorrect belief. 90 percent of the terns associated with eball bat are ident- do in swimming a - Mike Malaska

some or get hurt. I continued to play, I believed I was critical to my teaching.

Follow These Five

ments from 1992 have given way to new looks. Virtually all golf instruction logo use type and color, so it stands to reason that many older designs have colors and fonts that the graphics world has abandoned. You don't want to be the last person using styles everyone else has given up on.

3) In graphics, you always forget in order to gain. Designers face a huge array of possible shapes, images, yuxtaposes and color schemes. When they create a billboard, flyer, a magazine page or a logo, they must choose one style or color palette over countless others. Check out the two Proponent Group logos and see the last used by Curtis School of Golf—faded, shaky, because club members are the audience and they grow suddenly what their frowning script says. Based on the market position of these two businesses, and the message each one sends, they could not exchange logo styles and achieve their respective goals.

4) There are "pure logo" design choices and "field-specific" choices. Recently, my neighbor Bill Gardner of Eaglepointe.com wrote about a "logo of the classic" in logo design. "Micrograms are compared to the classic" and "initials are being re-replicated and recombined"—some are classic, some are contemporary. That observation puts a good light on the next two member logos.

5) Your 15th Club by Dr. Bob Rotella The 15th Club is the first golf stars like Tiger Woods use to block out negative thoughts, doubt, and fear. It is what allows champions to perform at their peak both in practice and during the game. Golfers who lack it find the game elusive and frustrating. Confident golfers play the game as they have always seen they could play. Dr. Rotella provides a detailed plan that anyone

one or competition and an everyday.

6) #4 Your 15th Club by Dr. Bob Rotella The 15th Club is the first golf stars like Tiger Woods use to block out negative thoughts, doubt, and fear. It is what allows champions to perform at their peak both in practice and during the game. Golfers who lack it find the game elusive and frustrating. Confident golfers play the game as they have always seen they could play. Dr. Rotella provides a detailed plan that anyone

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TopGolf facilities are a great trend review. While both are the way they hit balls to the range targets, order food and drink and watch sports.

There will be more than 1,000 visitors per day with that of them never leaving the TopGolf facilities a great trend review. While both are the way they hit balls to the range targets, order food and drink and watch sports.

There will be more than 1,000 visitors per day with that of them never leaving the TopGolf facilities a great trend review. While both are the way they hit balls to the range targets, order food and drink and watch sports.

Professional Library

did the self-image of a winner. He offers a one-yearly and calendar form that will incorporate the daily as that he assigns to players in his PGA Tour. This is meant to ignore negative influences, focus on product of late prices in their abilities.

Mastering the Mental Game by Joseph Parent Zen Golf presents a simple system for building "mental game mastery." Dr. Parent's unique P.M.A. Approach (Focusing on Preparation, Action, and Response to Results) guides golfers with specific techniques for each aspect of their games. By combining classic insights and stories from Zen tradition, Zen Golf helps eliminate the mental distractions that routinely cause poor shots and loss of concentration, allowing golfers to feel in "the zone" that professionals have learned to master. Clear, concise, and Zen Golf shows golfers how to prepare for, execute, respond to the results of any golf shot.

Second Golf Swing by T.J. Tomasi At every level of competitive golf, from the Saturday afternoon ball to the U.S. Open, champions need to use more than just a grooved swing to come out on top. Playing to your talent level involves great mental control in addition to having a good swing. T.J. Tomasi demonstrates how to harness the power of mental control to successfully plan, execute and evaluate each and every shot. The techniques in this book will help correct mental errors as well as grow confidence and provide tactics to regain control.

Keys of Champion Golfers: How To Develop The OF A Pro by Deborah Graham and Jon Stabler The most valuable tool a golfer can bring to the course is a strong mental game. Using their unique GolfPsych program, Graham and Stabler challenge you to explore the crucial elements of your personality as well as grow confidence and provide tactics to regain control.

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Why is Local SEO So important?

You might all be asking, how do I increase my SEO? When you look at Search results, you probably also wonder, how do I get on page one? The fastest and best way to improve your ranking and be seen on the first page is to focus on your Local SEO.



What is Local SEO?

Local SEO is focused on providing results that are relevant to a searcher based on their current location. In Layman's terms, it's the results that show location pins on the map.

“The third biggest negative ranking factor is a mismatched NAP. Ouch. Inaccuracies like these will kill your local SEO.”

How do I control my listings?

Claim your Google+ Local listing and make sure all the information is correct, especially the Name, Address, Phone number (NAP). Additionally, make sure the NAP is consistent across all business listings (Yelp, Bing, Yahoo, Travel Advisor, etc.). Consistency in these listings is crucial because if the information is the same (meaning identical) it is a positive ranking signal. If they are inconsistent from each other, it is a negative ranking signal.

Are there services out there to help me control my Local SEO?

Are there services out there to help me control my Local SEO? Yes! There are many companies that will help you push correct information to various local listing websites. Companies in this space will help you to make sure your listings are correct and then push the correct listings across all listing agencies (Yellow Pages, Garmin, Facebook, Trip Advisor, etc.). Below are some of the companies that can assist:

yext MOZ localeze  imavex

Local SEO is something every business should be focusing on and can help you be found by people when they are looking for your product. For more information on Local SEO, Website, or Digital Marketing, please feel free to contact Zach Miller, zach@imavex.com with any questions!

The Number 1 negative local ranking factor, according to Moz, is a listing detected at false business location.



MEMBER MILESTONES

Please Welcome Proponent Group's New Members for June 2015

Tyler Muench, The Territory Golf and Country Club, Duncan, OK – Associate Member

Matthew Stein, The Haven Country Club, Marlboro, MA – Full Member

Rod Thompson, Palmetto Dunes Oceanfront Resort, Hilton Head, SC – Full Member

"Money Back Guarantees" continued from page 6

that would introduce the idea of an exit just as the relationship was getting started. In turn that would defeat what we're trying to do in our long-term development plan."

Ramee uses Shot by Shot as a tracking tool with all his serious students. When the GolfScrimmages.com website of fellow Proponent member Trent Wearer debuted a couple of weeks ago, Ramee gave it one look and jumped on board. "I'm all over GolfScrimmages.com," he says. "Tools like that are where you get student commitment and full engagement," says Ramee.

One alternative to the cash-back guarantee that marketing expert Neal Patel favors is the age-old "free trial offer," in which the goods or services are obtained by the customer without need for any payment, at least initially. Patel reported on a long series of experiments he conducted mixing and matching the free trial with the money-back warranty, concluding that free trial is more comfortable for the customer and easier to manage for the vendor. "The difference between a money-back guarantee and a free trial was huge," Patel reports. One study found twice the sign-ups for a 7-day free trial that required a credit card upfront versus a money back guarantee.

Veteran coaches opposed to these sorts of tools—hey, "gimmicks" is not an incorrect term for them—may simply be in a position where the trust is fully established, the reputation stellar, and large volumes of new business not exactly necessary. For others, some test or experiment with these risk-removal devices could be quite profitable.

Proponent Group Members' Favorite Video and Webinar Presentations

One of Proponent's most used member benefits is our collection of archived video and webinar presentations on the members-only website. In a typical month the archive will serve up more than 500 video viewings.

We thought you'd like to know which presentations have become the most popular. If you haven't watched these presentations, do yourself a favor and check them out.

Here are the current Top 17 most watched with more than 250 viewings each:

Cameron McCormick – The Journey to High Performance (945 views)

Faults and Fixes Panel (Mike Bender, Martin Hall and Gale Peterson) (906 views)

Martin Hall – How I Teach the Short Game (863 views)

Kate Tempesta – How I Teach Very Young Golfers (702 views)

Kevin Weeks – How I Teach Putting (589 views)

Dr. Mike Duffey & Eric Handley – Opening the Front Door to Ground Forces: How We Create Velocity in the Golf Swing (497 views)

Brian Manzella – How to Utilize New Ball Flight and Golf Swing Science to Improve Your Teaching (478 views)

Tim Mahoney – Secrets for Group Instruction (432 views)

Gale Peterson – "Achieve and Leave" Practice Plans (404 views)

Trillium Sellers-Rose – A Framework for Teaching All Motor Skills Including the Golf Swing (324 views)

Andrew Rice – Things I've Learned So Far (308 views)

Dr. Rick Jensen – The New Coaching Model (306 views)

Virgil Herring – How to Dominate Your Market (300 views)

Marketing Workshop: Creating Emails and Collateral that Really Sells Your Services (267 views)

Martin Hall – Teachers Can't Be Too Creative. (264 views)

Andrew Park – Live Lesson: Full Swing (262 views)

Mark Sweeney – Greenreading Through Aimpoint Technology. (254 views)

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